

Peace in Our Times



A Veterans For Peace publication exposing the root causes and enormous costs of war



**VFP Team
Makes
Asia-Pacific
Peace Pivot**
See pages 12–15 for more

Photo by Ellen Davidson

Veterans For Peace delegation blocks construction vehicles at the gates of Camp Schwab in Okinawa; the team did the same in Jeju Island, South Korea.



Margaretta D'Arcy attempts to block runway of Shannon Airport.

War Clouds Over Shannon

By John Lannon

Shannon Airport, located on the west coast of Ireland, has long been a transatlantic gateway between Europe and America. Since the 1940s it has supported a thriving tourist industry in the region and it spawned the world's first duty-free industrial zone.

But at start of the 21st century, business was slack. Some airlines were cutting their services, while others were operating in and out of Shannon with empty seats. At the same time, the “war on terror” was being stepped up by the United States in response to the horrific attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The Irish government, while claiming to maintain a longstanding position of neutrality, supported the illegal invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and

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Letters

Open Letter To Donald Trump

Mr. Trump, I am an American of Christian Arab background who grew up in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.

I attended Catholic and Orthodox schools all my life. In fact, it was Lubbock Christian University in Texas that attracted me to immigrate to the United States.

Christmas has always been an important holiday for me, not only as a marker for my religion, but also as an opportunity to reflect on my life, as it's been shaped by love and friendships.

This Christmas, Mr. Trump, I found that my reflection oddly involved you. You see, those friendships have been defined in many ways by the people you seemingly like to vilify: Muslims.

But I'm writing to tell you that the Muslims you've been portraying—the fears you've been stoking as you paint a religion with a disturbingly large brush—stand in far contrast to the Muslims I've been blessed to meet throughout my life.

So let me briefly tell you about the Muslims I know:

The Muslims I know showered my family with gifts and boxes of produce every Christmas—all to be sure that our family of nine children was well fed and happy.

The Muslims I know always told me “not to worry” as they (shopkeepers) bagged and handed me the items I needed, despite being short on cash.

The Muslims I know took off whatever they were wearing and handed it to me, should I have happened to tell them that I admired it.

The Muslims I know donated their time, money, and efforts to provide clothing to the needy and feed poor

Christian families.

The Muslims I know rushed to my rescue when I had car trouble, or simply needed a ride.

The Muslims I know said “follow me” whenever I asked them for directions, always choosing to show me the way.

The Muslims I know didn't only call me a “sister” ... they treated me like one.

Perhaps if you knew those Muslims, Mr. Trump, you would never judge more than a billion followers of a religion based solely on the actions of a few.

So as we begin yet another year, I'd like to challenge you to a resolution. Resolve to end these blanket generalizations, and instead, stop and think about the Muslims you personally know, the ones you have surely met through your countless business interactions, both in the Middle East and here at home.

Think about them as individuals, and let them be defined by their good deeds.

After all, that is what Christianity asks of us.

Amal David, PhD

Director of Community Outreach
Arab America, arabamerica.com



A Note from the Editors



Doug Rawlings delivers a letter to The Wall, Memorial Day 2015.

Letters to The Wall

Brothers and Sisters:

If the Vietnam War still causes you to reflect deeply about the meaning of that war and its place in your life, then we need you. We need your help. We need your words. Veterans For Peace wants to deliver 1,500 letters to The Wall in Washington, D.C., this coming Memorial Day as a way of acknowledging the impact of that war on our lives. We need you to write one of these letters.

As a direct participant in that war, I have come to realize that one of the most difficult journeys of my generation involves coming to terms with the American war in Vietnam. I consider everyone and anyone who was directly affected by it to be a fellow Vietnam veteran. The soldier, the conscientious objector, the war resister, the grieving family member, the daughter or son of a soldier, the so-called “boat people,” all of us have something to say. But to whom? One profound “audience” is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial itself. The Wall, the very embodiment of that war, sits in Washington, D.C., and is crying out to us, if we listen.

Last Memorial Day we delivered 151 letters and 32 postcards to The Wall. It was a solemn ceremony of remembrance and, yes, for many of us, of grief. Two refrains that I picked up on in many of these letters were: “I am sorry. I am sorry that I didn't do enough to save your lives,” and “We haven't done enough to keep this from happening again.” These were from medics who indeed saved many lives as well as from antiwar resisters who also sacrificed much of their youth here at the home front fighting to bring me and my buddies home in one piece.

This year we are upping the ante. We

want to increase our letters tenfold—to 1,500 delivered on Memorial Day. Won't you join us? You can either email a letter to us at vncom50@gmail.com or send a print copy directly to me, Doug Rawlings, at 13 Soper Road, Chesterville, ME 04938. The letter will then be placed in an envelope, open at the top, with the words “please read me” inscribed on the the outside. If you need a starting point, you can read some of last year's letters by going to the website vietnamfulldisclosure.org.

Please think of The Wall as a living monument inscribed with not just the names of the more than 58,000 American soldiers killed in that war but infused with their souls. And in doing so, never forget that if The Wall were to represent all who died in that war—the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians—then the keening of lost souls would extend for miles beyond the confines of our nation's capital.

We are asking you to take on the Pentagon. If you haven't heard, they are committing millions of dollars to tell the history of this war from their perspective. So far they have succeeded in ignoring the antiwar movement, which included formidable GI resistance, as well as the voices of the Vietnamese people, whose descriptions of many events are either taken out of context or given no context at all.

The Pentagon purports to serve future generations with a so-called educational resource that honors veterans within a historical vacuum. But we want our children and grandchildren to know the full story of that war. That's why we need your voice to join with ours, in letters delivered to The Wall on Memorial Day 2016.

Thank you.

Doug Rawlings

Veterans For Peace

Peace in Our Times

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Loyal to Their Class, Unhinged from Democracy

“Commerce defies every wind, over-rides every tempest, invades every zone.”
—Chiseled above the entrance to the U.S. Department of Commerce

By Mike Ferner

As shocking as it may sound, an argument can be made that neither the Nazi Party's rise to power nor even WWII itself would have happened without the backing of U.S. industry and finance.

Cash contributions through the 1920s and '30s helped elevate Hitler's brownshirts from street thugs to a political party and financed “off-budget” ops for the SS. Before and after the United States entered the war, military equipment and critical technology transfers flowed from U.S. corporations and subsidiaries to the Third Reich.

The Power Elite

The record reveals more than just self-serving opportunism. It proves the existence of what sociologist C. Wright Mills called a power elite: born to privilege; attending the same prestigious schools; belonging to the same insular, rarified social circles; naturally assuming some God-given right to rule the world and in these particular cases, blinded by fanatical anti-communism and completely unhinged from democracy. Mills described them further, “By the power elite, we refer to those political, economic, and military circles which as an intricate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at least national consequences.”

Big Finance

U.S. firms like J.P. Morgan made millions financing World War I, a business that grew with postwar reconstruction and reparations.

The Bank for International Settlements (BIS), still operating today, was created to administer Germany's WWI reparations. Run by Thomas McKittrick, a Wall Street banker and friend of the Dulles brothers, it was “effectively controlled by Hitler's re-



Nixon getting brimmed by Prescott Bush, a good friend and business partner of the Dulles brothers ... and a director of a Nazi Bank.

gime” and by 1940 had laundered hundreds of millions of dollars in looted gold, from coins to tooth fillings, writes David Talbot in his 2015 book *The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA and the Rise of America's Secret Government*. Five BIS directors were charged at Nuremberg with war crimes.

Between 1924 and 1931, Germany paid 36 billion marks to the Allies, 33 billion of which was borrowed from investors who bought German bonds issued by Wall Street firms, paid to England and France as reparations and then sent to the U.S. as loan repayments. The bond holders received interest payments and “International bankers sat in heaven, under a rain of fees and commissions” made by lending other people's money to Germany, says Antony C. Sutton in his book *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler*.

During this period, John Foster Dulles, later Eisenhower's secretary of state, was CEO of Sullivan and Cromwell (S&C), at which his brother, Allen, later Eisenhower and Kennedy's CIA chief, was a partner. Dulles structured deals that funneled U.S. investments to German companies like IG

Farben and Krupp. Sullivan and Cromwell “was at the center of an international network of banks, investment firms and industrial conglomerates that rebuilt Germany after WWI,” according to Talbot.

An open secret throughout the '20s was

An open secret throughout the '20s was Henry Ford's financial support for Hitler. ... Ford's money helped fund Hitler's failed 1923 Beer Hall Putsch.

Henry Ford's financial support for Hitler. A December 20, 1922, *New York Times* story claimed links between new uniforms and sidearms for 1,000 young men in Hitler's “Storming Battalion” and Ford's portrait and books the Fuehrer prominently displayed in his well-staffed Munich office. Ford's money helped fund Hitler's failed 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, which gave the fledgling dictator time in jail to write *Mein Kampf*, incorporating whole sections of Ford's *The International Jew*.

In 1932, Wilhelm Keppler, Hitler's secretary of state, started a “Circle of Friends,” later combined with Himmler's Circle of Friends to raise “off-budget” funds for Himmler's SS. One contributor, the German-American Petroleum Co., was owned 94 percent by Standard of New Jersey and made payments until 1944.

In February 1933, Hermann Goering held a fundraiser at his home for the National Trusteeship, a front group from which Rudolf Hess paid Nazi Party elec-

tion campaign expenses. Industrialists and financiers pledged 3 million marks including 400,000 from IG Farben and 60,000 from General Electric Corporation's subsidiary, AEG. On the board of IG Farben's U.S. subsidiary were: Edsel Ford; Walter Teagle, board member of the New York Federal Reserve, Standard Oil of New Jersey and FDR's Warm Springs Foundation; Paul Warburg, Chairman of the Bank of Manhattan and a director of the New York Fed; and Carl Bosch, who was also on the board of Ford's German subsidiary, Ford AG. One week after that massive infusion of funds, the Reichstag was burned. A week later, national elections swept the Nazis into power.

That same year, during a meeting with Hitler to see what might be in store for S&C's German clients, Allen Dulles remarked on Goebbels' “sincerity and frankness.”

U.S. Firms Partner With German Industry

Opel, a wholly-owned subsidiary of General Motors Corp., and Ford AG produced a significant number of the Wehrmacht's vehicles. In 1938, Henry Ford received the Grand Cross of the German Eagle award. In December 1941, Ford Afrique was incorporated in Vichy France and granted all rights of Ford's British subsidiary in Algeria, Tunisia, French Morocco, and Equatorial and West Africa. In 1942, Vichy France paid Ford Co. 38 million francs for damage RAF bombs caused a French Ford plant.

General Electric Co. of New York owned 25 percent of AEG, the largest electric company in Germany. GE's board chair at the time, Owen Young, founded RCA Corp., was a director of GM, NBC, the International Chamber of Commerce and deputy chairman of the NY Federal Reserve.

In 1938, the Luftwaffe urgently needed 500 tons of tetra-ethyl lead, the anti-knock compound critical for aviation fuel. Ethyl Corp. (jointly owned by GM and Standard of NJ) “loaned” the amount to the Reich Air Ministry despite a U.S. Army Air Corps prohibition. Brown Bros., Harriman and Co. of New York arranged collateral security.

By 1944, German oil (85 percent synthetic, produced with Standard of New Jersey technology) and high explosives production were controlled by IG Farben and Vereinigte Stahlwerk, respectively. Both companies were financed by Wall Street loans. An internal Farben memo, coincidentally written on D-Day, 1944, said Standard's technical expertise in synthetic fuels, lubricating fluids and tetra-ethyl lead was “most useful to us,” without which “the present methods of warfare would be impossible.”

Treason

Churchill and FDR met in Casablanca in January 1943 and agreed to fight Ger-

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Opel “Maultier” troop transport delivered by an ME 323 cargo plane.

WWII Veteran Sam Winstead Rides for Peace

By John Heuer

In 2011, I received a call from North Carolina Peace Action Director Betsy Crites, describing a *Durham Herald-Sun* op-ed submitted by WWII veteran Sam Winstead. Sam shared both the first name and birthday, May 22, with his grandson, a North Carolina National Guardsman serving his second tour in Iraq. Young Sam wrote about his distress, “We don’t want to be here, the people don’t want us here, we’re tearing this beautiful country apart!”

The WWII vet had a unique perspective. Not only did his own father serve in WWI, but his grandfather was a Civil War veteran, while he himself had fought in some of the most ferocious battles of WWII on the Pacific islands of Peliliue and Okinawa. Sam could hear the cries echoing through the generations in what struck him as a host of Winstead family trials reflecting a world gone mad.

Sam didn’t know how to respond to his grandson’s plea, but he knew he had to do something. He finally decided on a bicycle ride from Raleigh to Washington, D.C., a 350-mile seven-day Ride for Peace. It’s not like Sam was a bicycle rider. In fact, he hadn’t ridden a bicycle more than five miles since his 16th birthday in 1941. But the idea struck Sam as something the retired farmer from Person County could do. He wanted to get the attention of our leaders in Washington.

Fast forward to 2015, and Sam has now made four Rides for Peace, all supported by both NC Peace Action



Sam Winstead on his Ride for Peace from Raleigh, N.C., to Washington, D.C.

and Veterans For Peace. Meanwhile, he launched a new group “Americans for Peace,” which he thought might have broader appeal than either NC Peace Action or Veterans For Peace.

The 2015 Ride for Peace represented a quantum leap from a handful of riders to several dozen. Sam made other advances in 2014, as he gained international recognition. He was invited by Rotary International President Sakuji Tanaka to address 2,600 delegates from over 50 nations at the 2013 Rotary International Peace Forum in Hiroshima.

This year he has received invitations to join peace rides in Russia and Japan. Since Sam has already established good relations with veterans from Japan, VFP is working to restore the cordial collaborations with teams of veterans from Canada and Russia that existed back in

the late 1980s.

At a time when U.S.-Russian tensions are more severe than at any time since the fall of the Soviet Union, what better opportunity exists than supporting veterans’ partnerships to build a culture of peace in 2016?

But Sam’s Ride needs help. Sam will be building his own website and has received his 501(c)(3) not-for-profit IRS status to receive tax-deductible contributions to recruit riders and help with ride logistics, travel, and hospitality.

Stay tuned for the launch of samsrideforpeace.com coming soon, as well as updates for the ride scheduled May 14–21, 2016.

John Heuer helped found the Eisenhower Chapter 157 VFP in the NC Triangle and is a member of the VFP Board of Directors.

Please Don’t Thank Me for My Service

By John Ketwig

Please don’t thank me for my service. I was taken against my will, yanked away from all the hopes and plans I had for my life, and made to see and experience

things that contradicted anything and everything I had ever been taught about right and wrong.

I heard the screams of someone dying, far away from home, a fragile human being blown apart, for no good reason. I saw burnt, bloodied, maimed children. And men, and women.

I smelled the scent of open wounds, of flowing blood and burnt flesh. I felt the splatter of someone’s loss of life as it exploded across my face, and no matter how many times I have washed my face over the past 47 years I cannot wash away that horrible stain.

And you would thank me for that?

I abandoned my morality. I lost my equilibrium. I cannot tell you much of what I learned, but it wasn’t worth a damned thing in the civilian workplace, in my baby’s nursery, or at the checkout of the grocery store. It is only a spectre, a dense dark monster that pursues me in the night, that colors my view every day in ways no one else can see. Too many nights, almost half a century later, the horror twists my stomach into knots.

Oh, I know, you thank me because you

don’t know anything else to say. You still hope that it was all about freedom and democracy and good things like that, and not just about profits and power, authority and career advancement, and some ancient illicit definition of the word masculine.

It was about corporate profits and garish stripes sewn onto a sleeve, about genocide and the screwed-up notion that you can make a total stranger’s existence better by killing or maiming him.

I was playing in a rock ‘n’ roll band when they came for me, reciting songs about understanding and brotherhood and love. They took me against my will, stripped me naked and beat me bloody, and then sent me to the other side of the world where death fell out of the sky and exploded, and its shards tore up anything and anybody they hit.

I learned to lie as flat as possible on the mud, to will my body to become a puddle and sink down into the ooze. I learned to overcome the terror, the violent tremors, and I learned that none of those things matter when your number is up. I learned it happens to the very best guys, in the very worst ways, and there’s nothing



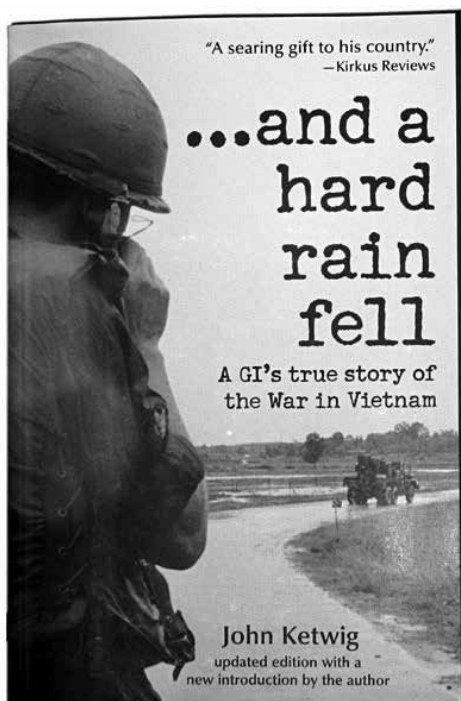
John Ketwig.

right or righteous about it; they were just wasted.

Please, oh please, don’t thank me. If you want to express something, promise me you will get involved in the struggle to abolish wars. Nothing else will say that you understand.

Then I will thank you.

John Ketwig is a Bedford, N.J., resident and a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Veterans For Peace, and Vietnam Veterans of America. He is the author of ... and a hard rain fell: A G.I.’s True Story of the War in Vietnam.



Green Light Project

Walmart's campaign is no substitute for addressing what ails returning veterans

By Denny Riley

I was watching the World Series on television when a commercial came on that told everyone to screw a green light bulb into the socket by their front door so military veterans will feel better about themselves. Let me tell you right here that I am a veteran and I have plenty of room for feeling better, but seeing a commercial over and over during the World Series is not going to do it. This Green Lights for Vets campaign is sponsored by Walmart, arguably the meanest employers in the world outside China, whose three sibling owners are worth a combined \$144 billion. Their wealth shouldn't have anything to do with what I'm writing about except it came to me (like a light bulb flashing on) that Walmart may control the green light bulb market. Those three siblings didn't gather together \$144 billion by suggesting we buy anything anywhere other than in their stores. But this isn't my point.

My point is everyone is already running around ex-

[A]ll anyone has to do is screw in [a green bulb] and flick the switch and that's that, veterans will know they are honored and their woes will be salved.

pressing appreciation for the young men and women in our armed forces and thanking those of us who already served. "Thank you for your service," they say, without ever asking what we did or how we feel about it. Everyone is already claiming they support the troops so why is this green light thing being promoted?

Gratitude for our young men and women in the service is always a secondary theme of major televised sporting events. You've seen it—the opening ceremony with an array of America's uniformed youth holding an enormous flag stretched across the field while a decorated hero sings the national anthem whose final "Braaaaaaave!" is overwhelmed by the boom and roar of four supersonic aircraft coming in low over the stadium, then soaring up and away, leaving contrails of red, white, and blue. I watch television three times a year; the Super Bowl, the NBA championship, and the World Series. Throughout these broadcasts, well-honed advertisements are run for the armed forces who need our youth, need the kid sitting beside you watching the game, have an insatiable need for the half-baked kids leaving our public schools without an education. There is no other reason for the ads, other than also feeding us an image of the decency and humanity of our military.

Then in the morning paper I read that millions of Pentagon dollars have been paid to National Football League teams "for so-called patriotism services like on-field swearing-in ceremonies and honoring officers." The investigating politicians referred to "the pallor of marketing gimmicks paid for by American taxpayers."

In a town north of here the city hall sits in the middle

of a parking lot. Tall light poles stand in rows across the lot. Banners hang from the poles with photos of kids in uniform. Below the photos are the kids' names. Below that is printed "Hometown Hero."

The banners helped me recall graduating from high school without a plan, and how the idea of coming home in uniform, coming home with manly experiences, maybe coming home a hero, was a part of why I signed up. You'd think at least one of the people who hung the banners would have been in the service and therefore knows what nonsense the banners are. But most of us who were in have been blasted by so much of this stuff we've forgotten the confused kids we were and believe we joined to serve our country.

This over-the-top promotion and adoration of the military is not a good thing. It has been set in motion because we've entered an Orwellian time of perpetual war, a time when some of our young men and women will continually be going into battle and some of them will be killed, and it must be firmly established that they are appreciated, that they are heroes. Like the man I met whose only child, a son, was killed in Iraq. He believed firmly with

service like it was a company regulation to do so. This thanking stuff began with the invasion of Iraq when Bush II told the U.S. people Vietnam veterans had never been properly acknowledged. He told the U.S. people to thank us for our service. I'd never been thanked before that, but suddenly strangers were thanking me in Bush's exact words. "Thank you for your service."

I don't like to be thanked for my service because everything I did was wrong. My wife and kids have coached me not to blurt that out when someone thinks they are giving me the thanks I've been waiting for, so I said to the desk clerk, "Thanks, but you want to be careful saying that to veterans. Some feel bad about what they did and what happened to them." She looked stunned. She asked, "What should I say?" I shrugged and suggested, "Ask them how they're doing."

I doubt she has begun doing that. It would require involvement with the veteran. The thanks routine is an easy and empty gesture that best serves the thankers, relieving them from considering what we as a nation are doing to our youth. It's like waving at a hitchhiker as you zoom by him, showing him you're a good guy but not



tears in his eyes that our invasion of Iraq had cause and would come to a good end. He had to believe that, or he might be forced to admit that his country had wasted his son's life.

There's more. A YouTube video shows an airport waiting area. Syrupy music plays softly. Everyone waiting for a flight is reading or on a phone or attending to children—clean decent people going somewhere—when one of them stands and begins to applaud. The others look around and see a band of soldiers walking through the lobby. Everyone stands and applauds. The music swells. As though videoed by a cell phone, the soldiers pass by smiling in embarrassed and humble appreciation, a group including every race and ethnicity in America and a good portion women, all of them attractive. But none of them are soldiers. Look at the video again. None of the soldiers have any insignia on their uniforms, a completely preposterous situation for a band of soldiers in an airport. Don't try to dream up a reason for the lack of insignia just because you want to believe in the touching video.

A month ago I checked into a hotel. When the desk clerk noticed I was a veteran, she thanked me for my

getting him further down the road.

Now, with the green light bulb, all anyone has to do is screw one in and flick the switch and that's that, veterans will know they are honored and their woes will be salved.

Americans are delusional about the decency and prowess of our military. If you read the sanctioned history of our armed adventures since WWII, at every turn it says our troops have found their hands tied by liberal politicians and peaceniks, ignoring the strategic blunders fed to our presidents by those in high command who apparently believed their own advertising.

The money we've wasted losing wars against countries that have not threatened us and the money we've spent promoting those wars could rebuild America. The lives lost are the sins of our nation, laid down with the wilting flowers before our memorials to war.

Denny Riley is an Air Force veteran of our wars in Vietnam and Laos and a member of VFP Chapter 69 in San Francisco. His writing has appeared in Counter-Punch and Z Magazine. His recently completed novel, How To Roll A Number, is looking for an agent.



Bowe Bergdahl leaves military courthouse at Ft. Bragg, N.C., Dec. 22.

Former POW: 'Free Bowe Bergdahl'

By Phillip Butler

A personal note: I was held for eight years as a POW in Vietnam, along with hundreds of other American airmen as time went along after my capture.

Robert Bowdrie "Bowe" Bergdahl was held as a POW by the Taliban for five years and now for over a year by the U.S. Army at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. He has received constant treatment from an Army psychiatrist, but he has not been returned to his family and home in Hailey, Idaho. I think his recovery and reintegration process have probably done more harm than good by continuing his isolation from the world. His treatment after repatriation is more about politics than his service or U.S. Army procedures. He should be freed with an honorable discharge and all of his pay and benefits. Anything less would be an injustice.

As a young man, Bowe studied and practiced fencing, martial arts, and ballet, but never owned a car, riding his bicycle everywhere. He also spent time in a Buddhist monastery. In 2006, he entered basic training in the U.S. Coast Guard, but was discharged after 26 days for psychological reasons and received an "uncharacterized discharge." In 2008, he enlisted in the Army and graduated from the infantry school at Fort Benning, Ga. He was then assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, based at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

Bowe was known to be a quiet loner, but not a troublemaker. He studied maps of Afghanistan and was learning to speak Pashto according to other soldiers with him. His unit was sent to an outpost named Mest Malak in Afghanistan to conduct counterinsurgency operations. On June 30, 2009, only a year after his

enlistment, Private First Class Bergdahl went missing from his unit. The exact circumstances of his disappearance and subsequent capture are not clearly known. But what is known is that Bowe Bergdahl was a prisoner of war of the Afghanistan Taliban for the next five years.

There are subsequent claims that soldiers were killed as a result of Bowe's disappearance and capture. But a review of media reports shows that Sgt. Bergdahl's critics appear to be blaming him for every U.S. soldier killed in Paktika Province in the four-month period that followed his

He was locked in a metal cage in total darkness for weeks at a time by his Taliban captors in Afghanistan after an escape attempt.

disappearance. Thus began the politicization of Bowe's life, during the five years of his captivity, during the prisoner exchange that freed Bowe under President Obama, and now with decisions relating to punishment by the Army.

Bowe has related that he was tortured, beaten, and held in a cage by his Taliban captors in Afghanistan after an escape attempt. He also told medical officials that he was locked in a metal cage in total darkness for weeks at a time as punishment for trying to escape. He was a POW for five years by himself with no other Americans and no prior training on how

to conduct himself or to resist as a POW.

As mentioned above, I was held for eight years as a POW in Vietnam, along with hundreds of other American airmen. I was trained in a Navy survival school. And I was a Navy Lieutenant, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. So unlike Bowe, not only did I have training for the possible eventuality of being captured, but I was also with fellow Americans. We were able to support each other and resist as an organized, military team. What a difference from the circumstances of PFC Bowe Bergdahl. What a difference we experienced upon repatriation, welcomed as returning heroes. Bowe is being court-martialed.

So here we are, and here Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is. A soldier with one year's experience as a private first class, now facing a possible life in prison in an Army court martial. But this is what always happens when very junior military people are made to suffer for the much greater transgressions of others. The larger questions are being ignored: Why and how did our military come to be so politicized? Why are we fighting in Afghanistan in the first place? What president and administration got us in illegally and immorally, from the very beginning? Why aren't they being punished?

We need to examine what is really going on here. The upcoming court martial of Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is just a signpost of a much deeper, cancerous infection. And punishing this low-ranking man who never should have been in the Army in the first place is anathema to any kind of justice. Free Bowe Bergdahl!

Phillip Butler, PhD, CDR, USN (ret.), is president of Veterans For Peace, Chapter 46, Monterey, Calif.

Unhinged

... continued from page 3

many to an unconditional surrender, in part to keep Stalin in the Allies.

Soon after, Allen Dulles met in Switzerland with an agent for Himmler to tell him the agreement could "be scrapped without further ado" if Germany sued for a peace that would eliminate Hitler but leave the Reich intact.

Ignoring Casablanca and against FDR's orders, Allen's "Operation Sunrise" arranged for the surrender of German forces in Italy just before Germany's surrender, infuriating Stalin.

Dulles' German counterpart was General Karl Wolff, to whom Dulles gave a promise of immunity for war crimes, even though Wolf had arranged slave labor for Nazi industrialists, was the banker for Himmler's Circle of Friends, shuttled Jews to Treblinka, administered medical experiments in Dachau, and commanded Nazi security forces in Italy, and as a result was high on the prosecution list.

Dulles kept his promise. He submitted an affidavit on Wolff's behalf which got him out of prison for time served in 1949. In 1953, Wolff organized a German neo-fascist party and in '56, an association of former SS officers.

Even after Hitler took power in 1933, Foster Dulles continued to represent IG Farben and refused to shut down S&C's Berlin office until partners, tired of having to sign letters, "Heil Hitler," rebelled in '35. Throughout the war, Foster protected the U.S. assets of Farben and also Merck from confiscation as alien property.

Arthur Goldberg, who served with Allen in the OSS, the CIA's forerunner, and later on the Supreme Court, claimed both Dulles brothers were guilty of treason.

In 1945, Lt. Richard Nixon, wrapping up Navy east coast war accounts, discovered Nazi documents explaining how Foster and Allen Dulles laundered payments from their German clients. It was easy to buy Nixon's silence by agreeing to finance his 1946 congressional campaign against incumbent Jerry Voorhis, launching Nixon's red-baiting career against a New Dealer whose "communist" activities consisted of supporting a government takeover of the Federal Reserve, creating a national credit union, expanding Social Security, and opposing the oil depletion allowance and offshore drilling.

Nixon, of course, went on to become President.

As C. Wright Mills said, "In so far as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them." As the saying goes, "It's good to be king" ... or at least in the Power Elite.

Mike Ferner served as a Navy corpsman during the Vietnam War and was discharged as a conscientious objector. He is a former president of Veterans For Peace and author of Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports from Iraq.

Bowe Bergdahl, PTSD, and Moral Injury

By Arnold 'Skip' Oliver

More than five years ago Bowe Bergdahl left his U.S. Army unit in Afghanistan. He was captured, imprisoned in brutal conditions for five years, and finally released in a prisoner exchange in 2014. The Army is court-martialing him for desertion and other crimes.

Bergdahl's case needs to be understood, not only in terms of his actions, but also what is known about the psychology of war. What we have learned ought to give pause to those eager to send young people off to fight and die.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Many soldiers exposed to the trauma of war develop debilitating symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These include depression, feelings of despair or shame, chronic pain, flashbacks, nightmares, and hyperarousal, which can and do lead to serious problems with drugs and alcohol, relationships, and employment. Sufferers have elevated rates of suicide, homelessness, and violent outbursts, as well as military desertion and going AWOL.

PTSD among soldiers is quite common, and has been present since the dawn of the republic. Although the condition was not well understood at the time, there were very large numbers of psychological casualties during the American Civil War. More recently, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, PTSD has affected close to 30 percent of Vietnam veterans at some point in their lives, and 15 percent at any given time. For Iraq and Afghanistan vets, 11 to 20 percent experience PTSD in any given year. What this means is that, at a minimum, 250,000

and it is quite possible that Bowe Bergdahl is one of them.

Some soldiers are at higher risk of developing PTSD than others. Younger troops are more vulnerable. We know now that parts of the human brain continue to develop and mature until around the age of 25. Neuroscientist James Fallon argues, "Sending kids to war at 18 is ridiculous, as they're still in an active state of frontal lobe development."



Bowe Bergdahl during captivity.

Moral Injury

Moral injury is the term used to describe the psychological damage done by engaging in or witnessing behavior that offends one's sense of ethics or morality, and it is recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. While PTSD is generally caused by injury or intense fear, moral injury is typically not. According to the Veterans Administration, emo-

need help, yet what they get is the most conceited country in the world telling them that they are nothing and that they are stupid." This sounds very much like a person whose sense of morality was offended by what he had witnessed.

Among veterans, rates of psychological distress due to moral injury increase for those who have been in combat, and rates increase further for those who have killed, and further still for those who have

Conclusion

Americans need to grasp that U.S. soldiers who hurt civilians or prisoners frequently suffer grave psychological injuries themselves. When the U.S. people endorse torture (and polls show that half of us do) or indiscriminate use of violence against civilians, they are implicitly consenting to large numbers of psychological casualties among soldiers from their own side of the conflict.

In terms of raw numbers, 350,000 U.S. Vietnam vets admit to having harmed prisoners or civilians during the conflict and 220,000 of those still suffer from symptoms of moral injury.

'I am sorry for everything here. These people need help, yet what they get is the most conceited country in the world telling them that they are nothing and that they are stupid.'

Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from the condition. Most of the nearly 50,000 homeless veterans are affected by PTSD, which is also associated with acts of violence and a suicide rate double that of civilians, about 22 per day—every day.

According to the National Council for Behavioral Health, nearly one-third of the 2.4 million men and women deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, around 730,000 soldiers, had returned home with a mental health condition by 2012.

Since then, those numbers have grown,

tional responses to moral injury include shame, guilt, anxiety, and anger at the betrayal of basic values.

According to a VA paper, behavioral consequences of moral injury may include anomie, self-condemnation, thoughts and attempts at suicide, self-damaging behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, and problems with employment and relationships.

In an email to his family from a military outpost in Afghanistan before his capture, Bergdahl put it like this, "I am sorry for everything here. These people

killed non-combatants. For Vietnam veterans, about 13 percent reported personally inflicting harm to prisoners or civilians. Their rates of symptoms of moral injury were quadruple those of non-harming vets according to a study by the National Institutes of Health. Even decades after the Vietnam War ended, 40 percent of those that had done such harm still had symptoms.

In terms of raw numbers, 350,000 U.S. Vietnam vets admit to having harmed prisoners or civilians during the conflict and 220,000 of those still suffer from symptoms of moral injury.

The story is similar for U.S. veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. A study published in the Journal of Affective Disorders, revealed that 39 percent killed or believed that they did, and of that group, 48 percent reported that they had killed both enemy combatants and civilians, detainees or U.S. military personnel. Those who killed had twice the rate of high psychological distress as those who had not; and similarly to Vietnam, those who killed civilians or killed out of anger or revenge had rates of distress that were more than quadruple the rates of those who had not.

If these self-reported figures do not alarm the reader, they should. Among other things, they may well indicate that over 400,000 U.S. soldiers committed war crimes in either Iraq or Afghanistan or both.

And it should be noted that many of those on the receiving end of U.S. military force also become psychological casualties. In 2009, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health reported that fully two-thirds of Afghans suffer from mental health problems. In Iraq, U.S. military tactics of "shock and awe," not to mention "shake and bake" (artillery plus white phosphorus bombing) in Fallujah, have been explicitly aimed at producing mass trauma, both mental and physical.

Bowe Bergdahl may well be just one among hundreds of thousands of American veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars who are psychologically injured, and yet it appears that he is being singled out for exemplary punishment.

PTSD and moral injury can be understood as the response of a sane mind to an insane situation. They are inevitable by-products of war. Americans need to understand that when they send their young people off to do battle, many of them will return home with grave psychological injuries.

Veterans For Peace supports soldiers who decide that they can no longer participate in the insanity of war, including Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl.

Arnold "Skip" Oliver is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, and a member of Veterans For Peace.

What Happens to a Dream Deferred? Ask Martin Luther King Jr.



By John Whitehead

*What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?*

—Langston Hughes, “Harlem”

Martin Luther King Jr. could tell you what happens to dreams deferred. They explode.

As I point out in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, more than 50 years after King was assassinated, his dream of a world without racism, militarism, and materialism remains distant.

Indeed, the reality we must contend with is far different from King’s dream for the future: America has become a ticking time bomb of racial unrest and injustice, police militarization, surveillance, government corruption and ineptitude, the blowback from a battlefield mindset and endless wars abroad, and a growing economic inequality between the haves and have nots.

King’s own legacy has suffered in the process.

The image of the hard-talking, charismatic leader, voice of authority, and militant, nonviolent activist minister/peace warrior who staged sit-ins, boycotts and marches and lived through police attack dogs, water cannons and jail cells has been so watered down that younger generations recognize his face but know very little about his message.

Rubbing salt in the wound, while those claiming to honor King’s legacy pay lip service to his life and the causes for which he died, they have done little to combat

the evils about which King spoke and opposed so passionately: injustice, war, racism and economic inequality.

For instance, President Obama speaks frequently of King, but what has he done to bring about peace or combat the racial injustices that continue to be meted out to young black Americans by the police state?

On Martin Luther King Day this year, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump “honored” Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy by speaking at a convocation at Liberty University, but what has he done to combat economic injustice?

Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton paid tribute to King’s legacy by taking part in a Columbia, S.C., King Day at the Dome event, but has she done anything to dispel her track record’s impression that “machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are still considered more important than people”?

Unlike the politicians of our present day, King was a clear moral voice that cut through the fog of distortion. He spoke like a prophet and commanded that you listen. King dared to speak truth to the establishment and called for an end to oppression and racism. He raised his voice against the Vietnam War and challenged the military-industrial complex. And King didn’t just threaten boycotts and sit-ins for the sake of photo ops and media headlines. Rather, he carefully planned and staged them to great effect.

The following key principles formed the backbone of Rev. King’s life and work. King spoke of them incessantly, in every sermon he preached, every speech he delivered and every article he wrote. They are the lessons we failed to learn and, in failing to do so, we have set ourselves up for a future in which a militarized surveillance state is poised to eradicate freedom.

Practice militant nonviolence, resist militarism and put an end to war.

“I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without hav-

ing first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government.”—Martin Luther King Jr., Sermon at New York’s Riverside Church (April 4, 1967)

On April 4, 1967, exactly one year before his murder, King used the power of his pulpit to condemn the United States for “using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted.” King called on the United States to end all bombing in Vietnam, declare a unilateral cease-fire, curtail its military

‘One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.’ ... As King warned, ‘Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal.’

buildup, and set a date for troop withdrawals. In that same sermon, King warned that “a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

Fifty-some years later, America’s military empire has been expanded at great cost to the nation, with the White House leading the charge. Indeed, in his recent State of the Union address, President Obama bragged that the U.S. spends more on its military than the next eight nations combined. Mind you, the money spent on wars abroad, weapons and military personnel is money that is not being spent on education, poverty and disease.

Stand against injustice.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere ... there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”—Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (April 16, 1963)

Arrested and jailed for taking part in a nonviolent protest against racial segregation in Birmingham, Ala., King used his time behind bars to respond to Alabama clergymen who criticized his methods of civil disobedience and suggested that the courts were the only legitimate means for enacting change. His “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” makes the case for disobeying unjust laws when they are “out of harmony with the moral law.”

Fifty-some years later, we are being bombarded with unjust laws at both the national and state levels, from laws authorizing the military to indefinitely detain American citizens and allowing the NSA to spy on U.S. citizens to laws making it illegal to protest near an elected official or in front of the Supreme Court. As King warned, “Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal.”

Work to end poverty. Prioritize people over corporations.

“When machines and computers, profit motives
continued on next page ...

She Inspired a Generation

Denise Levertov was a poet-activist who inspired a generation of young writers to include the political in their art. An esteemed poet, a survivor of Nazi bombing in London as a child, a nurse, a cherished teacher, and a deeply committed antiwar activist, she is one person I can credit with changing my life. After I got out of the army in August 1970, my wife Judy and I headed up to Boston—what a great place to be at this time, a city exploding with antiwar activism. Judy got a job at the Children's Lying In Hospital, and I got a job at the U.S. Coast Guard Hospital. She was a dietician, and I was a pill counter. We just wanted to absorb the culture, a culture that included bookstores open all night long. It is in one of those that I first encountered the poetry of Denise Levertov. She had a collection of poems under the New Directions press that spoke directly to the horrors of the war I just returned from. I was stunned. I had not found much of anything that resonated with me like her words did. It was then I began trying to convert some of my own experiences into poetry. Below are excerpts from her 1966 essay "Writers Take Sides on Vietnam."—Doug Rawlings, VFP Poet Laureate, editor of Peace in Our Times, author of Orion Rising and A G.I. in America and one of the founders of Veterans For Peace.

By Denise Levertov

I am absolutely opposed to the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam. Not only is it an unjustifiable interference hypocritically carried on in the name of "freedom" while in fact its purpose is to further the strategic ends of a

government whose enormous power has destroyed the morality of its members; but it is being waged by means of atrocities. This is a war in which more children are being killed and maimed than fighting men. Napalm, white phosphorous, fragmentation bombs, all used deliberately on a civilian population; poisoning of crops, defoliation of forests; not to speak of the horrendous blight of disease and famine that follows, the corruption, prostitution, and every kind of physical and moral suffering—nothing whatsoever could possibly justify these crimes.

Violence always breeds more violence and is never a solution even when it temporarily seems to be. Violence of this magnitude, even if the ultimate holocaust it is swiftly leading to is averted—i.e., if we at least stop in time to avoid a still larger war—promises a dreadful future for America, full of people tortured and distorted with the knowledge (conscious or unconscious) of what we have done. One does not need to be a bomber pilot to feel this; one need only be an American who did nothing to stop the war, or not enough; one has only to be a human being. It is hard to be an artist in this time because it is hard to be human: in the dull ever-accumulating horror of the war news, it is more difficult each day to keep remembering the creative and joyful potential of human beings, and to fulfill that potential in one's own life, as testimony. Shame, despair, disgust, these are reverberations that threaten to silence poets thousands of miles away from where the bombs are falling. The struggle of all artists and all pacifists is to overcome their nausea and actively hold to what their work has caused them to know—the possibility of beautiful life.



I believe that cessation of all violence and withdrawal of all troops from Vietnam is the only right action for the United States I would like to see this withdrawal followed by the penitent presentation to the people of Vietnam by the United States of huge quantities of food and supplies—such quantities that people here would feel the pinch, actually sacrifice something, not merely donate a surplus. I would like to see this given absolutely outright, and unaccompanied by U.S. "advisors," though large numbers of doctors, nurses, and other people who might really be of use in reconstructing the ravaged country might humbly offer their services to work under Vietnamese supervision. Such acts of penitence, distinct from the guilt that stews in its own juice, would do something to make the future more livable for our children.

Fragrance of Life, Odor of Death

*All the while among
the rubble even, and in
the hospitals, among the wounded,
not only beneath
lofty clouds
in temples
by the shores of lotus-dreaming
lakes
a fragrance:
flowers, incense, the earth-mist rising
of mild daybreak in the delta—good smell
of life.*

*It's in America
where no bombs ever
have screamed down smashing
the buildings, shredding the people's bodies,
tossing the fields of Kansas or Vermont or Maryland into
the air
to land wrong way up, a gash of earth-guts ...
it's in America, everywhere, a faint seepage,
I smell death.*

Hanoi-Boston-Maine, November 1972

—Denise Levertov, from her collection
The Freeing of the Dust

A Dream Deferred

... continued from previous page

and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."—Martin Luther King Jr., Sermon at New York's Riverside Church (April 4, 1967)

Especially in the latter part of his life, King was unflinching in his determination to hold Americans accountable to alleviating the suffering of the poor, going

*King didn't just threaten
boycotts and sit-ins for the
sake of photo ops and media
headlines ... he carefully
planned and staged them to
great effect.*

so far as to call for a march on Washington, D.C., to pressure Congress to pass an Economic Bill of Rights.

Fifty-some years later, a monied, oligarchic elite calls the shots in Washington, while militarized police and the surveillance sector keep the masses under control. With roughly 23 lobbyists per congressman, corporate greed largely dictates what happens in the nation's capital, enabling our so-called elected representatives to grow richer and the people poorer. One can only imagine what King would have said about a nation whose political

processes, everything from elections to legislation, are driven by war chests and corporate benefactors rather than the needs and desires of the citizenry.

Stand up for what is right, rather than what is politically expedient.

"On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? Conscience asks the question, is it right? There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right."—Martin Luther King Jr., Sermon at National Cathedral (March 31, 1968)

Five days before his assassination, King delivered a sermon at National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., in which he noted that "one of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution."

Freedom, human dignity, brotherhood, spirituality, peace, justice, equality, putting an end to war and poverty: these are just a few of the big themes that shaped King's life and his activism. As King recognized, there is much to be done if we are to make this world a better place, and we cannot afford to play politics when so much hangs in the balance.

It's time to wake up, America.

John W. Whitehead is an attorney and author who has written, debated, and practiced widely in the area of constitutional law and human rights. In 1982 he established The Rutherford Institute, an international nonprofit civil liberties and human rights organization headquartered in Charlottesville, Va.

Marchers Speak Truth to Power

Report from the School of the Americas Watch—frontline of resistance in America

Photos by John Grant

I was at the gate this year for the umpteenth time. Although I'm an atheist, for me the Sunday Presente! procession is one of the most spiritually moving political events I know of. At its height, there were 20,000 people from all over the world speaking truth to power. The numbers have dwindled, but the power and the quality of the event has not diminished one iota. Stocker calls the area just outside the gate a "de-facto classroom," and over the years it has been that for many thousands of young and old Americans—also for some locals: I dare say a cop or two learned something about nonviolence; many, of course, remained hard-hearted and close-minded. One reason for the dwindling numbers—besides abandonment of the movement by elements of the Roman Catholic Church and mainstream liberal politics—is the fact the demonstration has been a failure, a wonderful, morally profound failure, since the school, name change and all, has remained open and our military has many other similar training bases around the world. As we all know, in these dangerous times many dream of revitalizing militarism and America's im-

perial power. Civil disobedience, which the annual demonstration essentially is, is always about speaking truth to superior power. It's through the persistence of such events that truth wins over power in the end. That's why I've been committed to SOA Watch, which has decided to take its movement to the Mexican border in 2016. Stay tuned for details.—John Grant, Veterans For Peace, Philadelphia

By David Stocker

I went to Columbus to attend the annual School of the Americas (SOA) protest and to meet the remarkable and controversial Roy Bourgeois, former Catholic priest and founder of the SOA Watch. As a Maryknoll Catholic priest, Bourgeois had long been an outspoken critic of U.S. policy in Latin America. Subsequent to the murder of four American church women by SOA-trained assassins, Bourgeois founded SOA Watch and has maintained a 26-year tradition of civil disobedience and protest, including documentation of atrocities in Latin America linked to SOA training programs. Later he took a controversial stand on ordination of women in the Catholic Church and



Oppressor Monkey Man with his vulture friends.

was canonically dismissed.

The School of the Americas was started in Panama in the 1950s and became the CIA training ground for "counterinsurgency," moving to Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga. The CIA manual for counterinsurgency developed and taught at Fort Benning serves totalitarian regimes and military dictators that want to silence opposition to corporate and military takeover of public land and natural resources. Assassination and disappearance of labor

leaders, teachers, journalists, community activists, and human rights defenders is strategically outlined and often followed up with CIA support and tactical weapons sales to SOA graduate countries. Find a massacre in Latin America, look behind the overthrow of a populist president, and one is likely to find an SOA graduate's involvement.

I also went to Georgia to be witness to the arrest of 11 courageous trespassers in Lumpkin, at the gate of Stewart Detention Center, one of America's worst privately operated for-profit prisons in which over 38,000 men, women, and children are held as criminals. There Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Salvadorian, Nicaraguan, and other Latin American refugees are subject to rape, assault, and torture and are fed maggot-ridden food as a cost-saving measure. Denied due process, they have committed no crime other than to seek a better life away from the havoc created by multinational corporations and military dictators using their SOA assassin tools. They are not migrants, they are refugees.

Dragons Chased, Helicopters Dissolved

And I went to join the Puppetistas, a temporal and largely anonymous commune of artist activists who come together at this event and elsewhere to shove art in the face of empire. Year after year Puppetistas provide an uplifting even comic culmination to the almost unbearably somber vigil. The sad and beautiful face of Blue Madre cries tears for many thousands as she bears mute witness to the mock sacrifice of face-painted nuns. Dragons are chased away, the helicopter of death dissolves. Puppetista skits include giant heads atop stilts who are often caricatures of evildoers and the faces of power that elicit boos and hisses from the crowd. In the cardboard chaos that en-



Veterans For Peace was always there marching and at the fence.

sues, evil collapses under its own weight, the proud are downtrodden, and the people are free to dance and sing. Even the hulking King Kong that is the might of the SOA is sucked dry by his own blood-sucking mosquitos and forced to an epiphany. Lady Liberty dancing on stilts with a gigantic Mexican *calavera* is transformed into the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Now 26 years into the annual SOA Watch, protest there has been a decline in attendance, but not in intensity. Many I interviewed believe that mainstream Catholic supporters abandoned Bourgeois, who provided an easy target for a church hierarchy eager for a distraction. Some suggested the falloff is a result of button pushing baby boomer members of Move On and 350.org activists who can make their progressive stand from their laptop and need not march two miles or sleep on the floor of a church to attend a protest in a faraway state. Partly, the decline may be attributed to what can be perceived as a narrow issue focused solely on the woes of Latin America, although the counterinsurgency manual has been applied in Africa and East Timor and throughout the Middle East.

Fake Left, Go Right

When SOA was nearly defunded under pressure from the Left, Congress rechristened it the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation, WHINSEC. Fake left, go right. Today the manual is taught in dozens of locations, not just at Fort Benning, and is applied worldwide from nearly 1,000 U.S. military bases. Media use of the words “surge,” “insurgent,” and “counterinsurgency” have played a role in the shaping of public perception of U.S. wars of aggression in the Middle East.

Sadly, the continuing story of assassinations in Latin America at the hands of SOA-trained thugs is mistakenly treated as old news and perhaps a smaller story than illegal U.S. wars in seven countries. We are now living through decades



Towering over Lady Liberty on stilts, the giant Mexican skeleton called in the spirit of the ancestors. This year, the impromptu dancing was particularly spirited. Father Roy Bourgeois, Vietnam veteran, former priest, and SOA Watch founder, leads the procession.

of U.S. history that have seen the worst military aggression, the worst imaginable corporate greed, the worst degradation of human rights, the most desperate flight of refugees from wars and climate change.

SOA Watch is neither a trendy nor a branded demonstration as some climate marches have been labeled. It does not

edge on violence and draws little media attention. It is not a riot, though histories of murder, violence and mayhem remembered are close at hand. The people within Fort Benning and their masters know that SOA Watch represents one of the few remaining peaceful expressions of an increasingly distraught and radicalized underclass broiling in Ferguson, Detroit, and Chicago, in Guatemala City, Nogales, and San Salvador, in Paris, Ankara, and Athens and maybe everywhere. They would prefer that the SOA Watch vigil die a slow and unremarkable death.

Next Year: The Border

Today, the stronger-than-ever message from the SOA Watch vigil is that the issues of the disenfranchised are profoundly interconnected, that we are all accountable for the condition of humanity and the condition of the earth on which we depend. With SOA Watch's long tradition of nonviolence, civil disobedience and arrest, an alternative classroom, open to all, exists just outside the gates of Fort Benning. This de facto classroom from primary to graduate level has become the training ground for new generations in exercising another kind of power where

the students in Peace Studies at Manchester University join Veterans For Peace and Christian Peacemakers join those facing the compounding tragedies of La Migra at the border. Buddhists chant mantras for our inner peace and Rebel Diaz raps the way it has been going down for Latinos.

This year the big news is that SOA Watch is moving from Fort Benning to the Mexican border. A call is issued across the land for people to join a massive convergence in October in the Southwest. Protesters will come together to draw connections between Stewart and other atrocious private detention centers, the deplorable legacy of SOA/WHINSEC, and the plight of all who seek refuge at our borders to escape from deep misery too often caused by U.S. foreign policies. As Roy Bourgeois stated in his address to thousands at Fort Benning, “Their struggle must become our struggle.” La lucha continua. Todos somos Americanos.

Reprinted from Counterpunch.org

David Stocker (MFA Yale University) is part of the Northern Illinois Justice League. He is an artist and teacher presently working on his Puppetista merit badge.



Marchers intone 'Presente!' as the names of the dead are spoken.

Dispatches from Jeju Island and Okinawa

By **Dud Hendrick**
Photos by **Ellen Davidson**

The following are highlights from dispatches sent by Dud Hendrick to his friends during a December 2015 VFP delegation of peacemakers to Okinawa and Jeju Island, South Korea. We think his words capture both the spirit and the details of their epic journey. The full dispatches can be found at peaceinourtimes.org.

Friends:

Once again, I embark on a journey halfway around the world to stand with others in objection to the U.S. military empire and the mindset that spawned it and threatens our planet.

I am with a delegation of Veterans For Peace. We are on Jeju Island, South Korea, and will be here for about a week, and then we'll travel to Okinawa for another week. Our purpose is to stand in solidarity with the people of these places who are protesting the militarization of their beloved islands by the U.S. military.

Five days on Jeju provided a crash course on the crime being perpetrated on this coastal community. The Korean government is projecting that construction on the enormous navy base under way will be completed in the coming year.

The resilience of this people's protest, which has continued virtually nonstop for over eight years, testifies to the depth of the passions the base has ignited.

During our visit we received briefings from some of the leaders who have provided the inspiration behind this enduring resistance:

- Father Jeong-Hyeon Mun, the iconic leader of the protest, was awarded the 2012 Gwangju Prize for Human Rights. He conducts the daily Mass at the naval base gate and is generally the point person at the protest from dawn 'til dusk.

- Jeju Diocese Bishop Peter Kang U-II, former chair of the Catholic Bishops Conference, has been at the forefront of the church's strong support of the campaign.

- Professor Yoon-Mo Yang, a prominent Korean movie critic, has, literally, nearly given his life to the cause. He has been arrested several times and endured

lengthy imprisonment four times, as well as fasts of 74 and 41 days.

- Sung-Hee Choi has been at the center of the antibase movement for many years. On this visit, she has been our planner, coordinator, and doer. She orchestrated nearly every event, including a well-covered press conference at the base gate during our final day.

- Koh Gilchun is a renowned sculptor whose work is prominent at the April 3rd Peace museum, which commemorates the massacre of 40,000 to 80,000 Jeju islanders at the hands of South Korean soldiers and police in 1948 under the direction of U.S. armed forces. In recognition of that massacre, the South Korean government officially designated Jeju an "Island of World Peace." The designation exposes the supreme irony of the new base at Gangjeong, which will bring 7,000 military personnel to this village of 2,000.

Other reasons for outrage include the destruction of a unique and treasured soft coral reef nearby. Unique bottle-nosed dolphins are among the threatened creatures there, along with the legendary Haenyo, the women free divers who have plied these waters for centuries. Then there is the drilling and blowing up of a sacred place of reflection and meditation, an immense flat rock with natural freshwater springs called Gureombi.

Okinawa

Our visit to Okinawa exceeded expectations in every way. To take full measure of the burden borne by Okinawa as host of our bases, it is essential to have some sense of the geography and the history of the island.

Situated in the East China Sea, Okinawa is the largest island in the Ryukyu archipelago, sitting roughly 400 miles south of mainland Japan. Nearly equidistant from Japan and the Chinese mainland, Okinawa managed to remain free of outright subjugation to either empire until 1879, when Japan annexed the entire archipelago. Okinawans were required to speak Japanese and were punished for speaking Okinawan. Their history was erased from school textbooks and they were required to swear fealty to the Japanese emperor.



The consequences for being Okinawan turned catastrophic during WWII, when the Battle of Okinawa swept the island in the spring and summer of 1945. Japan had determined they would make their stand against Allied forces on Okinawa—to minimize the toll exacted on mainland Japan. Perhaps the bloodiest in the Pacific theater, the battle was described as a "typhoon of steel." Okinawans paid a terrible price, caught between the two adversary armies and in the middle of an aerial and naval bombardment. The southern part of the island was essentially flattened and over 120,000 civilians of a population of 460,000 were killed. Among the victims, according to one report, were an estimated 11,483 children under the age of 14, including more than 5,000 under the age of 5. As the war raged, many Okinawans, their homes destroyed or confiscated, found refuge in caves that dot the southern island. Subsequently, Japanese soldiers fleeing Allied forces ousted civilians from the underground sanctuaries, often murdering them in cold blood or, even more tragically, forcing them to commit mass suicides.

With this brief history as a backdrop, one can appreciate the deep-seated distaste for war and militarism that persists in Okinawa. Their perception is that the island was, in essence, made a sacrificial stone for the defense of Japan. After the war, in the early '50s, the U.S. Civil Administration imposed an order on Okinawa by which it expropriated privately owned lands to enable the construction of mili-





Opposite, top to bottom: Trucks go through gates at Jeju Island naval base after protesters have been carried to the side by police; Jeju protester and child carried away from gate by police; VFP delegation members; antibase activist Father Jeong-Hyeon Mun. This page, clockwise from left: Okinawan protester faces down U.S. military truck; protest leader at Camp Schwab gate; former Okinawan Governor Masahide Ota; activist carried by Japanese police, demonstrator pleads with police to stop illegal construction at Henoko.



tary bases. “Bayonets and Bulldozers,” became the term used to describe the forced evictions as Okinawans were removed at bayonet point from their homes, which were subsequently bulldozed. Many of the military bases built in their stead remain today, a very real symbol of the virtual colonization of Okinawa by the United States and the absence of a truly independent and democratic Japanese government. Resentment persists, perhaps even grows.

We met one of the very few survivors of 222 girls who, as high school students in the spring of 1945, were pressed into service as nurses by the Japanese army. Those who survived endured a Dante’s Inferno-like experience. Forced into service in the dank, fetid caves that served as infirmary and last way-station for Japanese soldiers, these young “nurses” endured the unimaginable. Words from one of the survivors offers a hint of their nightmare:

“Every square yard of floor space was packed with grievously wounded soldiers. The only air came from the caves’ narrow mouths; it penetrated no more than a few yards. Sour smells of mildew and wet earth were joined by a stench from combat-broken bodies. Inexplicably, heavy amputated limbs had to be carried outside to holes or bomb craters.”

In telling her story today, one of the few remaining survivors says, “Distrust remains, largely because of the continued U.S. military presence in Okinawa They say they are here to protect Okinawa, to protect Japan. But we should instead be working together to create a world in which they aren’t needed.”

Camp Schwab/Henoko

We visited Oura Bay at Cape Henoko, the site of the hotly contested relocation of the “world’s most dangerous airbase,” Futenma Air Station. Thirty miles north of Futenma, Henoko

is adjacent to Camp Schwab, a sprawling Marine Corps base.

We had been told that though Okinawan activists are dedicated to nonviolence, there have been occasional ugly incidents, some arrests made, and the heat of exchanges has ebbed and flowed. Though our delegation members are all well-seasoned, confident veterans of political protest, we didn’t quite know what to expect in this new “landscape.”

On our arrival, in the predawn hour, scores of protesters were visible in the street, milling about the two Camp Schwab base gates within a few hundred feet of one another. Visible also were an equal, if not greater, number of uniformed Japanese police.

Clambering out of our minibus our group of 11 was immediately recognized. It soon became clear by the warmth of our reception that many of the regulars knew we were a delegation of Veterans For Peace from the States. We were embraced, figuratively and literally, from then throughout our stay.

We joined the other activists amassing on the pavement, blocking one of the gates through which all construction vehicles would have to pass. After warning us several times to disperse and our refusal to do so, the police began physically removing us, one by one. Protesters resisted as aggressively as practitioners of nonviolence could, locking arms and wrapping themselves tightly around one another, while

the police, with expressionless faces, dealt with the vexing entanglements with nonviolent, professional patience.

One by one we were pried apart from our colleagues and carried off to the holding pens created by barricades and vehicles. Once the roadway was cleared, the gates opened and vehicles critical to the construction project passed in or out of the base. Only after the traffic had passed were we released and able to once again impede progress.

Organizers seized the intervals between the periods of relative drama associated with our removal as opportunities to communicate, strategize, and connect. Announcements relative to upcoming antibase events were shared, songs sung, poems read, dances danced, and, luminaries introduced. Any activist was welcomed and urged to take the mic and eventually, as visitors-in-solidarity and VFP activists, we all took full advantage of the opportunity. These occasions constituted seminars serving the cause of antibase awareness.

Especially impressive were the words of our two younger veterans. VFP member Mike Hanes is a Force Recon Marine combat veteran who served during the Iraq invasion. His first overseas duty station had been at Camp Hansen on Okinawa barely 20 years ago. His good friend and San Diego VFP chaptermate Will Griffin served in the Army as a paratrooper and as an engineer in

both Afghanistan and Iraq. Mike and Will spoke with such heartfelt passion and wisdom, the rest of us older vets were in delighted awe. The Okinawan activists were equally enthralled.

Both Mike and Will identify themselves as global citizens. If we, as a group, were admired and appreciated and warmly received, Mike and Will were adored—they shared an undeniable charisma. We older VFP members found hope for the future of VFP in Mike and Will, as did the Okinawans, who, in hearing their words, found hope for the planet.

We returned for several hours on two other mornings to stand, sing, dance, speak, and block the gates in solidarity with scores, at times hundreds, of “regulars.” Together we were again hauled away from the gates by Japanese police to the holding pens to allow construction to proceed. These were to be, for all of our VFP delegation, the most enriching, emotionally fulfilling times we experienced.

As was the case on Jeju, this was why we had come—to share the struggle and pain Okinawans and villagers of Gangjeong endure, inflicted by our government. By welcoming us, the Okinawans, as the Jeju Islanders before them, gifted us with the opportunity to demonstrate our common humanity.

Dud Hendrick is a member of VFP Chapter 001 in Maine and lives on Deer Isle, Maine.



Volleyball Diplomacy

The article below originally appeared in the book Boundaries on the Land, Boundaries in the Mind by Douglas Lummis, president of the new VFP chapter on Okinawa. In a preceding chapter he described “Pidgin Culture,” as follows: “There was a kind of stereotyped friendliness between the officers and maids. We called each other by our first names or nicknames, and teased each other in the odd pidgin dialect that has grown up in Okinawa since the war, which combined English, Japanese, and Okinawan dialect. I only learned later that it was not just language; we were also relating to one another through pidgin personalities.”

By Douglas Lummis

One of the few times I saw a real collapse of this pidgin culture was during a volleyball game. One thing that the officers and their maids shared was a liking for volleyball. There was a group of officers that played every day during the noon break and sometimes after work. When they heard that the maids also liked volleyball they decided to challenge them to a game. The idea seemed to be the best sort of American liberalism, and the men were quite proud of themselves for having thought of it. “What a democratic people we are,” their attitude seemed to say, “that lieutenants and captains and even majors can play volleyball on equal terms with their maids.” The game drew a small audience, and began in a friendly atmosphere, with the Marines making the usual teasing, patronizing remarks to the maids. However it soon became apparent that something had changed. The maids were not responding to the teasing; they had shed their “maid” personalities and had become a women’s volleyball team. Moreover it was clear from the beginning that they had in their minds the incredible idea that they were going to play the game to win. They had brought players

uniforms and athletic shoes, and some had on knee and elbow braces, and one could see that their spirit was up for the game. Of course the men did not take this seriously, and saw it as an opportunity for more teasing. Everybody knows that volleyball is a game decided by height and strength, and besides, there is a standard script to games between men and women: The men give the women a handicap, the women fall all over each other and laugh charmingly at their incompetence, the men win, and after the game the women say, “My, how strong you men are.”

In this game, the men did not give the women a handicap, but they did give them the first serve, a decision which they quickly regretted. The server tossed the ball high in the air, gave it a terrific overhand blow on the way down, and sent it streaking across the court, already curving downward by the time it grazed over the net. The men, who had been expecting a high lobbing serve coming down at them from the sky, did not even move. They were silent for a moment, and then began their teasing again, offering mock praise on the assumption that the serve had been a lucky shot. But it was not, and as the game continued the women demonstrated a kind of volleyball that I had never seen before—leaping, falling, returning shots that seemed unreturnable, all with magnificent teamwork. At first the men couldn’t believe what was happening and assumed that they would quickly catch up. They kept on shouting jokes across the net, but gradually their voices became tense and their faces reddened. Soon the jokes stopped and were replaced by muttered curses every time another point was lost.

And then they began trying to cheat.

In their noontime games, some of the taller men had developed the skill of reaching clear across the net and shoving the ball straight down on the other side—a tactic which was permitted by their loose rules. Finally one of them managed to make this shot, and a



Ken Mayers and Fumiko Shimabukuro at the Camp Schwab gate.

great cheer went up on the men’s side: For the first time they would get the serve. But the women retrieved the ball and threw it to their server. The men roared in protest, but the server stubbornly placed the ball on her hip and explained that the rules of volleyball don’t permit you to put your arm on the other side of the net. There was no referee in the game, and so it was a battle of will. For a long time the men protested and pleaded, but the women were adamant. Finally the men had no choice but to give in, and the game resumed. But by now they were in a state of blind rage, and their teamwork had utterly collapsed. They served into the net, bumped into each other, fell down, and let shots drop between them as they stood frozen. The women pressed their advantage without mercy and won by a wide margin. When the match point was made and the women’s team leaped with joy, the men simply turned around and walked away without saying a word. Their humiliation was complete. They had been defeated by women. Okinawan women. Their own maids.

I remember hearing one of the players muttering as he walked away, Well, how the hell could we expect to win with stupid rules like that?”

I did not play in the game, but I watched it. It taught me a great deal. Okinawa base culture, and the culture that surrounds U.S. bases in other parts of the world, reveals a fearful aspect of power. While perhaps all peoples have stereotyped images of other cultures, not every country has the power to force members of those other cultures to act out the stereotypes in practice. According to the American military view, the Okinawans were supposed to be a simple, childlike people, without complex thoughts or high ambition, grateful for the American presence and loving nothing better than to make the Americans happy. This image was of course deduced from the American ideology rather than learned

from observation of Okinawans. But the United States, with its complete military, political, and economic control of the island, was able to force a certain number of people, consciously or unconsciously, to actually act out that role. The base culture pidgin English, and the “pidgin personalities” which it expressed, were everything the GIs expected. What is frightening is that the GIs themselves did not know that the base culture was a false world and a projection of American, not Okinawan, culture. Within the context of that world, it was possible to imagine that genuine intercultural relations were taking place. So long as everyone played their roles, everything was easy and friendly. But the volleyball game brought about a shift of context. The rules of volleyball—more just, it turns out, than the rules of international politics—had permitted the women, so long as the game lasted, to fight unreservedly for their own interest. As soon as they began to do this, the paternal “friendliness” of the Marines disappeared and was replaced by burning anger. And that was only a volleyball game.

Editors’ note: The *Peace in Our Times* editorial team learned of this article in early December 2015 when three members were part of a VFP delegation to Jeju Island, Korea, and Okinawa (see pages 12–13). On our 6 a.m. arrival at the Camp Schwab protest site, we were introduced to a woman described as “the spirit of the protest,” 87-year-old Fumiko Shimabukuro. When Ken Mayers explained that he had been stationed at Camp Schwab in 1960, Fumiko responded, “I worked in the officers quarters at Camp Schwab in 1960!” Ken then asked if she had been one of the maids who that spring had challenged the officers to a game of volleyball “and beat the crap out of us.” Fumiko’s eyes lit up with pride: “Indeed I was!” There followed the first of many embraces between Ken and Fumiko.



Japanese policeman tries to drag Doug Lummis away from the Camp Schwab gate.

Okinawa and the Toxic Legacy of the Vietnam War

By Jon Mitchell

Last month, Urasoe City in Okinawa pledged to conduct Japan's first large-scale survey of former U.S. base employees to ascertain the extent of contamination at Camp Kinser, a 1.07-square-mile U.S. Marine Corps supply base located in the city.

Triggering Urasoe's decision were Pentagon documents, obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), that revealed serious contamination at Camp Kinser. According to the reports, military supplies returned during the Vietnam War leaked substances including dioxin, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and insecticides within the base, killing marine life. Subsequent clean-up attempts were so ineffective that U.S. authorities worried civilian workers may have been poisoned in the 1980s and, as late as 1990, they were concerned that toxic hot spots remained within the installation.

Following the FOIA release, United States Forces Japan (USFJ) attempted to allay worries about ongoing contamination at Camp Kinser. Spokesperson Tiffany Carter stated, "Levels of contamination pose no immediate health hazard," but she refused to provide up-to-date

Despite [all the] evidence, the Department of Defense denies Agent Orange was ever on the island.

environmental data to support her assurances.

Asked whether USFJ would cooperate with Urasoe's survey, Carter replied that they had not been contacted by city authorities. She also ruled out health checks for past and present Camp Kinser military personnel.

Last year, suspicions that Camp Kinser remains contaminated were heightened when wildlife captured by Japanese scientists near the base was found to contain high levels of PCBs and the banned insecticide DDT.

Japanese officials are blocked from directly investigating pollution within U.S. bases because the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement does not allow them access. Consequently, until now, research has been limited to land already returned to civilian usage. These checks suggest that the problem of U.S. military contamination on Okinawa is widespread. In recent years, a range of toxins exceeding safe levels have been found on the island, including mercury, lead, and cadmium.

But what worries experts most are increasingly common discoveries of dioxin.

In November, the Okinawa Defense Bureau revealed a housing area in Kamisedo, Chatan Town, was contaminated with dioxin at levels 1.8 times environmental standards. The problem came to light after residents complained of offensive smells emanating from the land, which was used as a U.S. military garbage dump prior to return in 1996.

Meanwhile, last month, Japanese officials released test results on three more barrels unearthed from the Pentagon's defoliant dumpsite in Okinawa City. The barrels, the latest of more than 100 found beneath a children's soccer field, measured dioxin levels between 83 and 630 times environmental standards.

The World Health Organization categorizes dioxin as "highly toxic" and links it to cancer, damage to the immune

system, and reproductive and developmental problems.

On Okinawa, awareness of the dangers of dioxin is low. Last year in Okinawa City, for example, laborers at the former soccer pitch were photographed working without safety equipment and storm water was pumped into a local conduit without any tests for contamination.

During the 1960s and early '70s, Okinawa was the U.S. military's main staging post for the conflict in Vietnam with roughly 75 percent of war supplies passing through the island—including, say U.S. veterans, Agent Orange.

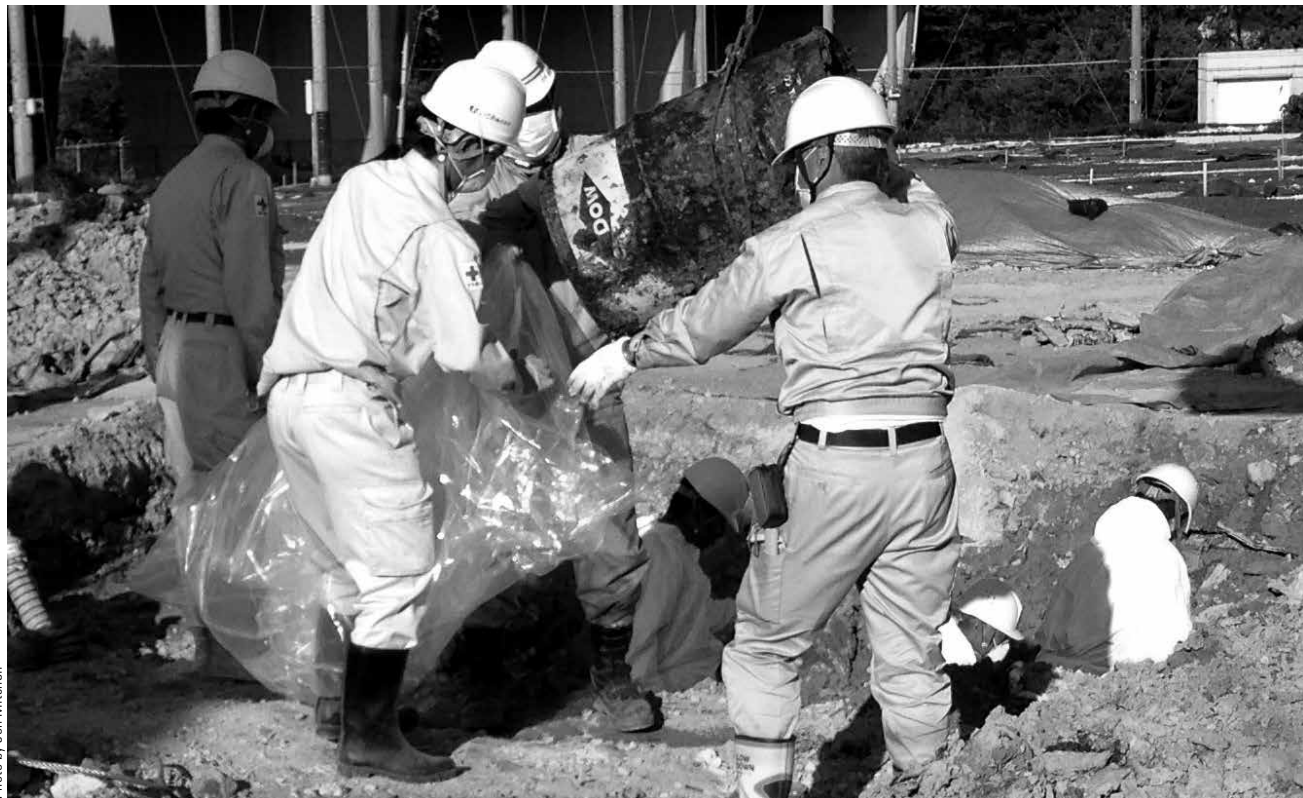
Former service members contend that defoliants were stockpiled at numerous bases—including Camp Kinser, then known as Machinato Service Area—and sprayed to keep runways and perimeter fences clear. Veterans also claim that surplus and damaged barrels of defoliants

cal expertise, Phan was surprised by the low safety standards at the site, such as the lack of warning signs and tarpaulins to prevent the spread of contaminated dust.

Now Phan worries what Urasoe's survey of base workers might uncover.

"When Da Nang Airport was enlarged before 2007, the workers didn't wear protective gear, so they were exposed to dioxin. Prior to working at the site, these men had children born in perfect health. But afterwards, a number of them had children born with cerebral palsy and mental deficiencies," he said.

In December, U.S. Marine Corps veteran Daniel Shea visited the Okinawa City dumpsite with Col. Ann Wright during a Veterans For Peace delegation to Okinawa and Jeju Island, South Korea.



Civilian workers in totally inadequate protective gear remove one of more than 100 barrels from the U.S. military's dioxin dumpsite in Okinawa City.

were buried within Okinawa's bases.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs records show more than 200 retired service members are sick with illnesses they believe are caused by exposure to Agent Orange on Okinawa. A number of military documents corroborate their claims—including the recent Camp Kinser FOIA release which cites the discovery of "dioxin (agent orange component)."

Despite this evidence, the Department of Defense denies Agent Orange was ever on the island. In 2013, it published a report concluding that there were no "records to validate that Herbicide Orange was shipped to or through, unloaded, used or buried on Okinawa." The same Pentagon-funded scientist who wrote the report later attributed the dioxin discovered beneath Okinawa City's soccer field to the disposal of kitchen or medical waste.

Although the U.S. is helping to clean up the dioxin hot spot left by its Agent Orange storage at Da Nang Airport, Vietnam, it is doing nothing to help remediate the dioxin left on Okinawa.

In November 2014, Phan Thanh Tien, vice president of the Da Nang Association for Victims of Agent Orange/ Dioxin (DAVA), visited Okinawa to attend the island's first international symposium on military contamination. When he inspected the dioxin dumpsite in Okinawa City, he noted that it carried the same distinct odor as Da Nang Airport's hot spot. Given Japan's reputation for technologi-

"I was beside myself with anger and disbelief at what I was seeing. There were no public 'Keep Out' warning signs as to the danger of toxic chemicals present, and we saw people working within the fenced area with no protective gear," said Shea.

Shea was exposed to defoliants during his service in Vietnam in 1968. His first son was born with a number of serious illnesses including a cleft palate and a congenital heart disease. He died at the age of 3 in 1981.

Like DAVA expert Phan, Shea urged the governments of Japan and the United States to take action to address dioxin pollution on the island.

"The governor of Okinawa ought to do a televised public service announcement to the dangers of the dioxin dumpsite. Those living close by or working there must be tested for toxins, warning signs need to go up immediately and negotiations with the United States should begin with a resolution to admit the dangers and take responsibility to help clean up the site."

Jon Mitchell is a Welsh-born journalist based in Japan. In 2015, he was awarded the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan's inaugural Freedom of the Press Lifetime Achievement Award for his reporting on Okinawa. Former U.S. service members with information about military contamination—or other human rights abuses—are encouraged to contact him at jonmitchellin japan.com.

Why I Went to Guantánamo, Again

By Frida Berrigan

I have the world's worst haircut. It is uneven, hacked and does nothing to flatter my features. For the first few days after I cut it, my hair was also super dirty, sticking straight up with a Pomade of bug spray, sunscreen, and Cuban dirt.

While so many in the United States were being driven to distraction by the biggest deals of a lifetime on Black Friday, I was in Cuba, taking a pair of scissors to my head as I looked down a mountainside at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay. I could see the base, which straddles the sparkling bay, cutting the Cuban people off from rich fishing waters and full access to their land. A representative of the Cuban government told us that the Department of Guantánamo lags behind the rest of the nation in economic development because they have expected an invasion to come from the base since 1903, when the United States seized the land. "Why invest in an area that is just going to be destroyed by bombs?" she asked.

Standing at this spot, I could see the sacred—mountains, valleys, rainbows, water, skies that almost sing with gorgeousness—and the profane—occupation, militarization, torture, abuse, indefinite detention. I was there with 13 other friends from Witness Against Torture. We were spending our Thanksgiving week far from our families, camping out at the Mirador overlooking the U.S. Naval Base. We were being hosted by the staff of La Gobernadora restaurant and lounge. From the lookout, we could see the U.S. base that has occupied 40 square miles of Cuban land for over a century and imprisons 107 men in torturous conditions.

We camped. We prayed. We worked to transform a random international tourist spot—not to mention local make-out spot, where the night staff drink rum from the bottle and blast reggaeton music *toda la noche*—into a place to honor. We wanted to connect and extend ourselves toward the men our nation has demonized and forgotten—hoping our songs, chants, and prayers were carried by the wind, refracted by the sun, swept along by the rain, and carried along by every bird that flew overhead.

After a while, though, I needed to do just a little more than fasting and camping. I needed just a little more suffering. I was here—close to this exact spot—10 years

ago, when Witness Against Torture was born. That time, in December 2005, 25 of us walked more than 60 miles from Santiago de Cuba to the Cuban military checkpoint that guards the entrance to a Cuban military territory that surrounds the U.S. naval base. We fasted then as well, camping out at the Cuban checkpoint and calling U.S. SOUTHCOM to request entry onto the base. That time, we hoped that the United States would press charges against us for traveling to Cuba, giving us an opportunity to put the Bush administration's torture program on trial. They declined.

What drew me back to Guantánamo? What propelled me away from my husband and three small children during Thanksgiving week? I returned 10 years after our original mission because so much has changed for me—I am now a wife and a mother—and so little has changed about the criminal injustice of indefinite detention, abuse, and torture.

Relations between the United States and Cuba have changed. Travel restrictions have loosened. Embassies have opened in both countries. We are not breaking any laws by being here, but we are doing something no one has done before, and the Cuban people were with us. They

I keep thinking about what my children and grandchildren will ask me about this time when they are older. I want to be able to tell them that I stood on the side of the outsider.

are sick of being occupied, sick of being exploited, sick of Guantánamo being synonymous with torture the world over, when it should bring up visions of gorgeous beaches, fat healthy fish, and rigorous mountain climbing.

That's why I needed a little more than fasting and camping. That's why I needed a little more suffering. And that's why I opted to give myself the world's worst haircut. As I sawed and hacked off hanks of hair, I re-



Photo by Justin Norman

Frida Berrigan in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

called all the names we had read earlier in the day. The names and stories of 107 men still held at Guantánamo, many in solitary confinement, many on hunger strike, many still subjected to forced feeding.

Mohammed Ahmad Said al Edah is a 52- or 53-year-old citizen of Yemen. As of November 16, 2015, he has been held at Guantánamo for 13 years and 10 months. As of January 2010, the Guantánamo Review Task Force had recommended him for transfer to Yemen provided that certain security conditions were met.

Abd al Malik Abd al Wahab is a 35- or 36-year-old citizen of Yemen. As of January 2010, the Guantánamo Review Task Force had recommended him for continued detention. A parole-like Periodic Review Board later recommended him for transfer. As of Nov. 16, 2015, he has been held at Guantánamo for 13 years, 10 months.

I wanted to get back to my kids, my husband, and my domestic routine. I yearned to wash dishes (and my hair) and read books. But I didn't want to forget what we were able to do on that mountaintop. I didn't want to forget what people of good will are able to accomplish. We established an outpost of prayer and intention, and showed the world that people from the United States still care about what happens here.

I wanted to leave Cuba with more than a sunburn, a stomachache, and a pile of really beautiful, moving photographs of our work here. I wanted to leave Cuba changed and doubly committed to changing the life circumstances of the men who are stuck in the worst form of hell—life in limbo. We are living in an age of borderless war, pervasive terror and prevailing fear. We can trace many of the origins of this to 2001, the launch of the U.S. war on the people of Afghanistan and the delivery of a plane full of Arab and Muslim men into U.S. custody on Cuban soil in 2002. Guantánamo—the wholesale shackling, torturing, and confining of men without charge or evidence—was the beginning of a new and grim chapter in our nation's history.

I keep thinking about what my children and grandchildren will ask me about this time when they are older. I want to be able to tell them that I stood on the side of the outsider, that I was not afraid, that I kept the flame of peace afire and held on to my humanity by never losing sight of anyone else's humanity. That's why I embarked on this journey, to be able to look my children in their big beautiful eyes and say, "I tried. I am trying." But, the first thing they said when they saw me was, in fact, "Hi Ma, what happened to your hair?"

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Frida Berrigan is a columnist for Waging Nonviolence and the author of It Runs in the Family: On Being Raised by Radicals and Growing into Rebellious Motherhood. She lives in New London, Conn., with her husband Patrick Sheehan-Gaumer and their three children.



Members of Witness Against Torture, with the dramatic backdrop of Cuban skies, hold up photos of 13 of the 107 men still in captivity at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay.

Shannon War Clouds

... continued from page 1

Iraq, and went as far as making Shannon Airport available for the transit of the invading troops.

The effective transformation of Shannon into a U.S. forward operating base in 2002–03 was, and still is, deeply offensive to the majority of Irish people. As Allen and Coulter noted in their critical 2003 appraisal of the Irish Republic, the United States, and the Iraq War, the Irish government at the time was guided more by a desire to accommodate the demands of the Bush administration than to serve the interests or wishes of its own citizens.

As popular pressure mounted, Minister for Foreign Affairs Brian Cowan resorted to a series of evasions and half-truths in order to conceal the full scale of Irish collusion in the U.S. war drive. But the manner in which he attempted to hide the truth about what was happening at Shannon only served to further expose how a shameless government held the people it was supposed to serve in utter contempt.

Over a decade later, the only things that have changed are the people and political parties in government. We've had a succession of ministers for Foreign Affairs who have used evasions and half-truths to conceal ongoing Irish collusion in U.S. military operations overseas. Allen and Coulter's conclusion in 2003 that the conduct of the political establishment in Dublin was consistently determined by the insatiable imperial demands of the fanatics running the United States still holds true. There are still major lessons to be learned, and changes that need to be brought about in terms of Irish foreign policy. As a first step, the ongoing U.S. military use of Shannon Airport needs to be ended. And equally important, Irish neutrality needs to be copper fastened in law.

Despite repeated claims of neutrality by recent Irish governments, approximately 2.5 million U.S. troops have passed through Shannon Airport since 2002. When Ireland became a member of the "coalition of the willing" assembled by the United States for its global "war on terror" in 2001, the U.S. troop carriers started to appear at the airport. They were initially taking occupation forces to and from Afghanistan, but before long the airport was also providing fully fledged support for a second U.S.-led war in Iraq.



U.S. troops at Shannon Airport in County Clare, Ireland, waiting to be ferried to a combat zone.

The American military at U.S. Europe Command Headquarters in Stuttgart even assigned a permanent staff officer to Shannon Airport in 2002, meaning it has been effectively operating as a "virtual" U.S. airbase since then.

Today, as people flee from countries ravaged by war and poverty and European governments shut doors in their faces, we have a responsibility to act. We must demand that our governments do everything they can to end the cruel deaths we see happening in the backs of lorries, in the sea, in other parts of the long tortuous journeys that the people of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, South Sudan, Eritrea, and elsewhere undertake in order to stay alive. But we also have a responsibility to end the cycles of war that have destroyed many of these countries. Halting the U.S. military use of Shannon will not achieve this on its own, nor will the removal of Irish participants from NATO forces in Afghanistan or the closure of Irish companies designing and manufacturing components for weapons systems. But all of these are important steps in the right direction. They would send a strong message to the world that Ireland will not support or accept war or the threat of war as a tool of foreign policy.

edly advised the Irish government that the only effective way of ensuring that it was not complicit in dispatching people to be tortured or ill-treated is through establishing an effective regime of monitoring and inspection. This has not been done.

We are determined to end Ireland's complicity in war. The first step is to get the U.S. military out of Shannon.

The maintenance of peace and security as enshrined in the U.N. Charter is a goal of Ireland's foreign policy. Despite this, Shannon Airport has been used as a vital cog in the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the illegal rendition circuits operated by the CIA. These contradictions between stated policy and reality are a matter of grave consequence for millions of people.

Despite the hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of lives lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, the widespread human suffering in these countries, the political instability caused, and the ongoing fighting that has spread to Syria and elsewhere, it would appear that there has been little oversight of what is taken through Shannon Airport by the U.S. military.

Ireland has obligations under international law, in particular the Geneva Conventions and the Hague Convention on Neutrality, to limit the effects of armed conflict. However the willingness of successive governments to allow U.S. forces to pass through Irish territory and airspace calls their commitment to these obligations seriously into question.

The systematic use of Shannon Airport by the U.S. military for the purpose of engaging in war needs to be ended. The government should also review, and if necessary strengthen, procedures governing the search and inspection of military and other State aircraft that may land at Irish airports, to ensure that its civil and police authorities have the necessary power to investigate and safeguard against potential breaches of international law.

The power to inspect U.S. and other military aircraft is essential if and when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the cargo, passengers, or crew members are involved in acts that may contravene international and/or national law.

The ongoing U.S. military use of Shannon and airspace must be ended. After over a decade of supporting war, it is time to start supporting peace.

John Lannon is a former executive committee member of Amnesty Ireland and one of the founding members of Shannonwatch. He is active with Campaign for Democracy in Congo and is currently chairperson of Doras Luimni, an independent nonprofit, organization working to support and promote the rights of all migrants.

All for Nothing

*Oil and blood
drip on to the sand
dried by the heat
of a blistering sun.
Where heroes and
victors
are none.*

*Flags are in tatters
medals of rust
swirling around
in a whirlwind of dust.*

*The forgotten war
a desert lies bare
the media
the public
the world
doesn't care.*

*Oil and blood
dries hard
on the sand.
No heroes
no cheers*

*and no marching band.
Flags are in tatters
medals of rust
swirling around
in a whirlwind
of dust.*

*All for nothing
the pain and the blood
all for nothing
the crying
all for nothing
the casualty list
the fighting the killing
the dying.
Flags are in tatters
medals of rust
swirling around
in a whirlwind
of dust.*

All for nothing ...

*Michael Pike is a
member of VFP-UK.*

Rendition Flights

As far back as December 2005, then Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern was asked about the use of Shannon Airport for CIA rendition planes. In response he said, "If anyone has any evidence of any of these flights, please give me a call, and I will have it immediately investigated."

He got the evidence: Amnesty International brought flight logs to the Irish government's attention showing that six planes known to have been used by the CIA for renditions had made approximately 800 flights in or out of European airspace, including 50 landings at Shannon Airport.

No investigation was undertaken by Dermot Ahern, his government, or any Irish government, then or since.

In the years that followed, there were Council of Europe and European Parliament inquiries that also identified Shannon as a stopover point in the U.S. renditions program. Furthermore, the Rendition Project, a UK-based effort to research the globalization of rendition and secret detention, has shown that since 2001 the CIA was allowed to refuel at Shannon during operations that involved some of the most notorious renditions of the post-September 11 years. Their database contains information on 371 circuits by companies and aircraft linked to renditions that included Shannon.

The former Irish Human Rights Commission repeat-

Investigating and Exposing the System

The following is from veteran and activist Rob Mulford's statement to the judge at his trial for trespassing at the Creech Air Force Base in Nevada on March 5, 2015.

I guess you could call me a Quaker. I tremble now in the presence of the law. I speak not of man-made statutory code but that eternal universal code derived from the knowledge of my connection to all living beings, be they the most generous of benefactors or the meanest on earth.

In December 2011, I attended the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement (IDGA) Special Operations Summit in Tampa, Fla., a yearly event

held for the military, private contractors, and government agencies involved in intelligence and special operations. I did this surreptitiously as a control systems engineer/systems integrator. The conference forbade members of the press from attending and we were assured that no one was recording the sessions, so the attendees were free to openly discuss their clandestine programs.

One of the presentations, covering the technology end of the summit's focus, Human Geography, included PowerPoint slides depicting automated models of human communities. These models look somewhat like organic molecules. I learned

that individual atoms in the models represent actual individual human beings, although dehumanized by reclassification as agents. Clusters of atoms represented actual groups of human beings such as villages, tribes, families, professional associations, businesses, and religious groups. Each agent and cluster had associated with it data, both historical and dynamic, of that particular object's cultural, religious, economic, political, and military characteristics. The interconnecting lines represented interrelationships between the various objects. Near real-time dynamic data driving these models was supplied by "Human Intelligence" (HUMINT) like that gathered by Human Terrain Systems field teams and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) coming from sources like the monitoring of cell phone traffic, and drone sensors.

This technology, known as Dynamic Network Analysis, is one of the instruments used to generate drone targets. The people that do this are called "Human Geographers" and "Targeters." I receive several help-wanted advertisements every week from companies looking to fill these positions.

During the session's discussion period, one of the special operators said that the term High Value Target is generally misconceived to mean a leader of a terrorist cell or someone responsible for acts of terror. He said, "If we take out a leader they just replace him in short order." He explained that they found it much more useful to use the DNA models to find intertribal and interfamilial connections, like those made by marriage. He said when we take out one of these connections it dis-

rupts their network (i.e. inter-tribal/inter-familial relations) and has more tactical value. He explained that they were using this method presently to target the Haqqani network (tribe) in Pakistan.

In the fall of 2012, I had the honor and privilege to be a member of a CODEPINK peace delegation invited to Pakistan by Pakistani human rights attorney Shahzad Akbar to witness the devastation caused by U.S. drone warfare there.

One of the highlights of our visit was an 11-hour caravan to Waziristan. En route, we stopped at many villages where we were

*He said his job was
to hunt and kill people,
adding, '... All you
need to tell me is
what a person is
wearing, and I can
find that person
and kill him.'*

greeted by crowds of Pakistanis, mostly youth, returning our peace sign salutes in kind. When we reached Dera Ismail Khan, in Pakistan's Federally Administrated Tribal Area, it was glowing in the moonlight. Once again crowds of youth lined the street. I placed my hands on the window of the bus. A Pakistani placed his opposite mine. Soon the bus was rocking from others on the bus and in the crowd sharing this loving expression. The next morning we joined thousands of Pakistanis on a farm near the village of Tank chanting, "We want peace." My tears welled.

Later, I had the pleasure of joining Kareem Khan, a tribal leader and journalist from Waziristan, on a bus ride from Narmal College to Islamabad. Malik (leader) Khan was sitting with a friend of mine, Billy Kelly. I was in the seat behind them. I heard Khan explain that a member of a family that his family was at odds with had been paid by the CIA to place a GPS locator chip on his property. He said that the drone zeroed in on the chip, killing his family members. Killed in the attack were his 14-year-old son; his brother, an English teacher; and a visiting friend, a stonemason building a new mosque in his village. Kareem went on to tell us of several other families living in villages surrounding his whose homes had also been destroyed, along with the lives of women, children, and the elderly. He said that in each case the United States declared that a

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'The Drone Papers' Revelations: A Cry for Ending the Slaughter

By Marjorie Cohn

A new whistleblower has joined the ranks of Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, John Kiriakou, and other courageous individuals. The unnamed person, who chose to remain anonymous because of the Obama administration's vigorous prosecution of whistleblowers, is a member of the intelligence community.

In the belief that the U.S. public has the right to know about the "fundamentally" and "morally" flawed U.S. drone program, this source provided The Intercept with a treasure trove of secret military documents and slides that shine a critical light on the country's killer drone program.

The documents reveal the "kill chain" that decides who will be targeted. As the source said, "This outrageous explosion of watchlisting—of monitoring people and racking and stacking them on lists, assigning them numbers, assigning them 'baseball cards,' assigning them death sentences, without notice, on a worldwide battlefield—it was, from the very first instance, wrong."

These secret documents demonstrate that the administration kills innumerable civilians due to its reliance on "signals intelligence" in undeclared war zones, following cellphones or computers that may or may not be carried by suspected terrorists.

"It isn't a surefire method," the source observed. "You're relying on the fact that you do have all these powerful machines, capable of collecting extraordinary amounts of data and intelligence," which can cause those involved to think they possess 'godlike powers.'"

The Obama administration has never provided accurate civilian casualty counts. CIA Director and former Counterterrorism Adviser John Brennan falsely claimed in 2011 that no civilians had been killed in drone strikes in nearly a year. In actuality, many people who are not the intended targets of the strikes are killed. "The Drone Papers" tell us the administration labels unidentified persons who are killed in a drone attack "enemies killed in action," unless there is evidence posthumously proving them innocent.

That "is insane," the source said. "But [the intelligence community has] made ourselves comfortable with that." The source added, "They made the numbers themselves so they can get away with writing off most of the kills as legitimate."

Since the United States is involved in armed conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, international humanitarian law—namely,

ons, as well as communications infrastructure. Legal scholars, including University of Cambridge professor Christine Gray, have concluded that "the 'war against Al-Qaeda' does not meet the threshold of intensity of a non-international armed conflict, and Al-Qaeda does not meet the threshold of an organized armed group."

The United States is not involved in "armed conflict" in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Thus, the law enforcement model must be applied to assess the legality of actions in those countries. This model limits the use of lethal force to situations where

[A] campaign dubbed Operation Haymaker was carried out in the Afghan provinces of Kunar and Nuristan. ...[D]uring a five-month period almost 90 percent of the people killed in airstrikes were not the intended targets.

the Geneva Conventions—must be applied to assess the legality of targeted killing. The Geneva Conventions provide that only combatants may be targeted.

From January 2012 to February 2013, a campaign dubbed Operation Haymaker was carried out in the Afghan provinces of Kunar and Nuristan. According to "The Drone Papers," during a five-month period almost 90 percent of the people killed in airstrikes were not the intended targets. This campaign paralleled an increase in drone attacks and civilian casualties throughout Afghanistan. What's more, the campaign did not significantly degrade al-Qaida's operations there.

The United States is violating the right to life enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Because the United States ratified this treaty, it constitutes binding domestic law under the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution, which states, "Treaties shall be the supreme law of the land."

Under international humanitarian law, an "armed conflict" requires the existence of organized armed groups engaged in fighting of a certain intensity. The groups must have a command structure, be governed by rules, provide military training and have organized acquisition of weap-

requirement in Pakistan.

Although a spokesperson for the National Security Council told The Intercept that "those guidelines remain in effect today," "The Drone Papers" state that the target need only present "a threat to U.S. interest or personnel." This is a far cry from an imminence requirement. And once the President signs off on a target, U.S. forces have 60 days to execute the strike. A 60-day period flies in the face of the imminence mandate for the use of lethal force off the battlefield.

Philip Alston, U.N. special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, affirms that a targeted killing is lawful only if required to protect life and no other means—such as capture or nonlethal incapacitation—is available to protect life.

Besides being illegal, Obama's preference for killing instead of apprehension prevents the administration from gathering crucial intelligence. Obama stated in 2013, "America does not take strikes when we have the ability to capture individual terrorists; our preference is always to detain, interrogate, and prosecute." But Michael Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told The Intercept, "We don't capture people anymore." Slides provided by "The Drone Papers" source cite a 2013 study by the Pentagon's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Task Force that said, "Kill operations significantly reduce the intelligence available from detainees and captured material." The task force recommended capture and interrogation rather than killing in drone strikes.

The U.S. public is largely unaware of the high number of civilian casualties from drone strikes. A study conducted by American University Professor Jeff Bachman concluded that both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* "substantially underrepresented the number of civilians killed in drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen, failed to correct the public record when evidence emerged

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Oscar López Rivera: Will Obama Pardon This Political Prisoner?

By Dahr Jamail

“Mr. Margolis has said that there are democratic ways to struggle and get things done. He forgets to tell you that I have a history of precisely that. That I have marched. That I have taken part in demonstrations. I have begged and pleaded. I have a history that has not been presented here. I have marched alongside black people for their rights. I have marched in support of jobs. I have a history of that. I have marched for access to decent housing. I have a history of that. I have marched against the war in Vietnam. I am a veteran of that war. And I have a history of that. ... Mr. Margolis does not know how it feels to be a Puerto Rican in this country. Mr. Margolis does not know how it feels to be black in this country. He does not know the indignation one feels when the police, who supposedly represent law and order, call us ‘spic’ or ‘nigger’ and then spit in our face. I have had people spit in my face for being Puerto Rican. And I have been arrested for participating peacefully and legally in public demonstrations. So that which Mr. Margolis alludes to does not exist. [...]”

“If I am standing here today, it is not because I lack the courage to fight, but rather because I have the courage to fight. I am certain, and will reaffirm, that Puerto Rico will be a free and sovereign nation.”

—Oscar López Rivera, at his trial for seditious conspiracy, 1981

Oscar López Rivera, a decorated Vietnam War veteran and respected community activist, is now one of the longest-held political prisoners in the world.

In 1981, López Rivera was convicted in the United States, in truly Orwellian fashion, of the thought crime of “seditious conspiracy,” despite never having been accused of causing harm to anyone, let alone taking a life. Having been deemed dangerous by the U.S. government, López Rivera was imprisoned. His release date, without a presidential pardon, will be 2027, when he is 84 years old. May 29, 2015, is the 34th anniversary of his arrest.

In the late 1970s, López Rivera and other young Puerto Ricans, inspired by guerrilla movements around the world, committed themselves to working toward the independence of Puerto Rico in a clandestine fashion. He was a well-respected community activist and an independence leader for many years, having helped create both the Puerto Rican High School and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. He was also involved in the struggle for bilingual education in public schools and to force universities to actively recruit Latino students, staff, and faculty. But López Rivera was eventually convicted of “seditious conspiracy” and other charges stemming from his participation in the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional

(FALN), a Marxist-Leninist organization that sought to transform Puerto Rico into a communist state during the 1970s.

Jan Susler, López Rivera’s attorney who works with the People’s Law Office in Chicago, told Truthout she believes his imprisonment based on “seditious conspiracy” is “overtly political” and is both harsh and disproportionate.

“It’s important to see Oscar not as an isolated case, but as the latest example of a long trajectory of Puerto Rican resistance to U.S. colonialism and the extent to which the United States will go to try to maintain its colonial control over Puerto Rico,” she said.



Veterans For Peace joined a march through Spanish Harlem in summer 2015 calling for Obama to release VFP member Oscar Lopez Rivera; left to right: Georgia Wever, Tracy Gross, Jules Orkin, Bill Gilson, Fran Korotzer, Carl Foster.

Twelve and a half years of López Rivera’s imprisonment have taken place in solitary confinement, including within supermax prisons. He has been routinely held in conditions not unlike those at the military prison at Guantánamo Bay—conditions that the International Red Cross has called “tantamount to torture.”

Most of the people arrested with López Rivera were granted clemency by President Bill Clinton on his last day in office and released on parole. He too was offered conditional clemency by Clinton in 1999, but rejected the offer. His sister, Zenaida López, said he refused the offer because on parole, he would be in “prison outside prison.”

The only other FALN member remaining in prison thereafter has subsequently been released.

As Barack Obama’s term as president winds down, the question of whether he will grant clemency to López Rivera is in the air. Given that the political prisoner’s release might very well increase Democratic Party support from Puerto Rican communities in the United States, a decision by President Obama to pardon him could well have implications for the 2016 presidential campaign and beyond.

To Pardon or Not to Pardon?

On the island of Puerto Rico there is unanimous support from all sectors for López Rivera’s release, from Gov. Alejandro García Padilla to the Puerto Rican Independence Party. Governor Padilla has visited López Rivera in prison and publicly called for his release.

“Oscar represents the finest tradition of Puerto Rican history, and his people—even those who don’t support independence—are very proud of his example and outraged at the injustice of his continued incarceration, which they see as an affront,” Susler said.

told Truthout of López Rivera’s case. “Oscar’s figure has become a point of unity for Puerto Ricans. Five Latin American presidents and five Nobel Peace Prize laureates have all signed on for his release.”

Molina believes it is now more important than ever for López Rivera to be released because his freedom would be a significant step toward resolving Puerto Rico’s status in relation to the United States, and it would be a move toward U.S. willingness to move forward with its stated mission of realigning its relationship with both Latin America and the Caribbean.

“In a practical manner, [freeing López Rivera] will send the right message about resolution of the history of the U.S. government’s repression of dissident movements,” Molina added.

He went on to point out a case in which FBI Director Louis Freeh admitted to Rep. José Serrano (D-NY) during a House Appropriations Committee hearing that the FBI operated Cointelpro in Puerto Rico, and also confessed that the program “did do tremendous damage to many people, to the country, and certainly to the FBI.”

Molina pointed to this as just one example of the harms done by the U.S. government to Puerto Rico.

“This, according to scholars, experts, and activists on the subject, included discrediting targets through psychological warfare,” Molina said. “They smeared individuals and groups using forged documents and by planting false reports in the media, harassment, wrongful imprisonment, and illegal violence, including assassination.”

Molina’s conclusion is clear: The time has come for López Rivera to be freed.

“There is no good reason not to release him, as there is absolutely no valid legal, ethical, political, or moral reason for the continued imprisonment,” he said. “After 34 years in prison ... with no blood on his hands and his co-defendants living successful lives, Oscar López Rivera should be released with no hesitation.”

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Dahr Jamail, a Truthout staff reporter, is the author of The Will to Resist: Soldiers Who Refuse to Fight in Iraq and Afghanistan and Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches From an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq. Jamail has reported from Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey over the last ten years, and has won the Martha Gellhorn Award for Investigative Journalism, among other awards. His third book, The Mass Destruction of Iraq: Why It Is Happening, and Who Is Responsible, co-written with William Rivers Pitt, is available now. He lives and works in Washington State.

A Pan-Latino Issue

Alejandro L. Molina is a member of the coordinating committee of the National Boricua Human Rights Network and has been active in the defense of Puerto Rican political prisoners since 1976.

“This is a pan-Latino issue,” Molina

Patriotic Genocide

By Mike Hastie

American History 101

Simply Google on your computer: “History of U.S. Military Interventions Around the World.” The machine gun belt of countries goes from Wounded Knee in 1890 to the present war in Syria. There is enough information here to choke a horse. It has never stopped.

You do not bring the enemy to the peace table by just killing military combatants. You ultimately bring the enemy to the peace table by killing innocent civilians. They are military targets. This strategy is as old as warfare itself.

During World War II, 1.1 million people were murdered at Auschwitz. During the war, the Allied Forces made no attempt to bomb the train tracks that led to these death camps. They had other priorities.

There are only so many chairs around a dinner table. On March 9-10, 1945, the United States unmercifully bombed Tokyo Japan with a new weapon called NAPALM.

According to General Curtis LeMay, who was the commander of the B29s that were responsible for the bombing, he later said, “We scorched and boiled and baked

to death more people in Tokyo on the night of March 9-10, than went up in vapor in Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined.”

There are only so many chairs around a dinner table.

After August 6 and August 9, 1945, the world changed forever. Before, on July 16, 1945, the first test of the atom bomb was carried out in New Mexico.

The very next day, 70 of the scientists who made the bomb possible sent a petition to President Truman pleading with him to not use the bomb without first warning Japan.

The letter was delivered to the military, but the letter was never delivered to Truman.

After the firebombing of Tokyo on March 9 and 10, it became obvious to many privileged elites in Washington, that the atomic bombs were not needed. The Japanese indicated that they were ready to surrender. But, that is not how the insane tower of arrogance works, when the unbelievable can catapult one nation to the pinnacle of world power.

On the morning of August 6, 1945, at 8:10 a.m., a hallucinogenic murderous madness incinerated Hiroshima, Japan. 100,000 people (95,000 of them civilians)



died instantly. Another 100,000 died from the slow death of radiation. Absolutely no language in human history was sufficient to describe the horror of what happened. This violence came from another world.

On August 9, 1945, the U.S. government committed another act of vaporized murder from another world. As of January 2016, the American people have no idea that their government was responsible for the horrors of an Auschwitz.

The only difference was that the murders happened instantly, instead of over a

period of several years.

During World War II, the United States dropped 2,000,000 tons of bombs. In Indochina at least 8,000,000 tons were dropped. This was equivalent to 640 Hiroshimas.

According to Howard Zinn, the United States was responsible for 20 million bomb craters during the Vietnam War. I can't imagine how many thousands of atrocities went into making 20 million bomb craters. They were My Lais from the skies.

The U.S. government has justified every bomb, and every boot in every country in the Middle East. It absolutely has to. The suffering is beyond comprehension. It is worse than a firing squad ending the life of a small child because he was defending his country.

The U.S. economy is a life force that cannot survive without war, and searching for enemies is the oil that lubricates the illusion.

The American people are existing in a poverty of lies that is as frightening as the unstoppable release of methane gas. Three hundred Lakota Sioux were murdered at Wounded Knee on December 29, 1890, because there just weren't enough chairs around the Thanksgiving dinner table.

That has not changed.

Photojournalist Mike Hastie served as an Army medic in Vietnam.

Investigating

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top leader of the Taliban had been killed, only to hear later that the same leader had been killed once more in another drone attack. He said, “One, two, three, how many times can you kill the same person?”

I don't know how he learned about the chip. He may have been right. After all, this area still sees its share of blood feuds. But I don't know if he found the chip either.

Could this have been a botched assassination, killing the “wrong guy”? Or could Malik Khan and his neighbors have fallen victim to some bizarre automated Dynamic Network Analysis algorithm?

Back to the IDGA and its April 2012 Non-Traditional Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Conference in Alexandria, Va. There I got to listen, sitting in about the sixth row, to Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold, Vice Commander U.S. Special Operations Command. Gen. Heithold opened his talk thanking all the weapons technology manufacturers and systems integrators in the au-

dience for the fine high-definition sensors that they were providing.

He said that his job was to hunt and to kill people, adding, “When you hunt and kill people, you have to put high definition sensors on the aircraft to help you. I can find any one of you by the things you carry that emit. All you need to tell me is what a person is wearing, and I can find that person and kill him.”

Later in his presentation, during the question-and-answer period, someone asked, “General, what keeps you up at night?” Gen. Heithold replied that his concerns were terrorism and narco-terrorism, adding, “I can do a real good job hunting outside the continental United States but right now the law ties my hands, Congress ties my hands. I can't do as good a job hunting here.”

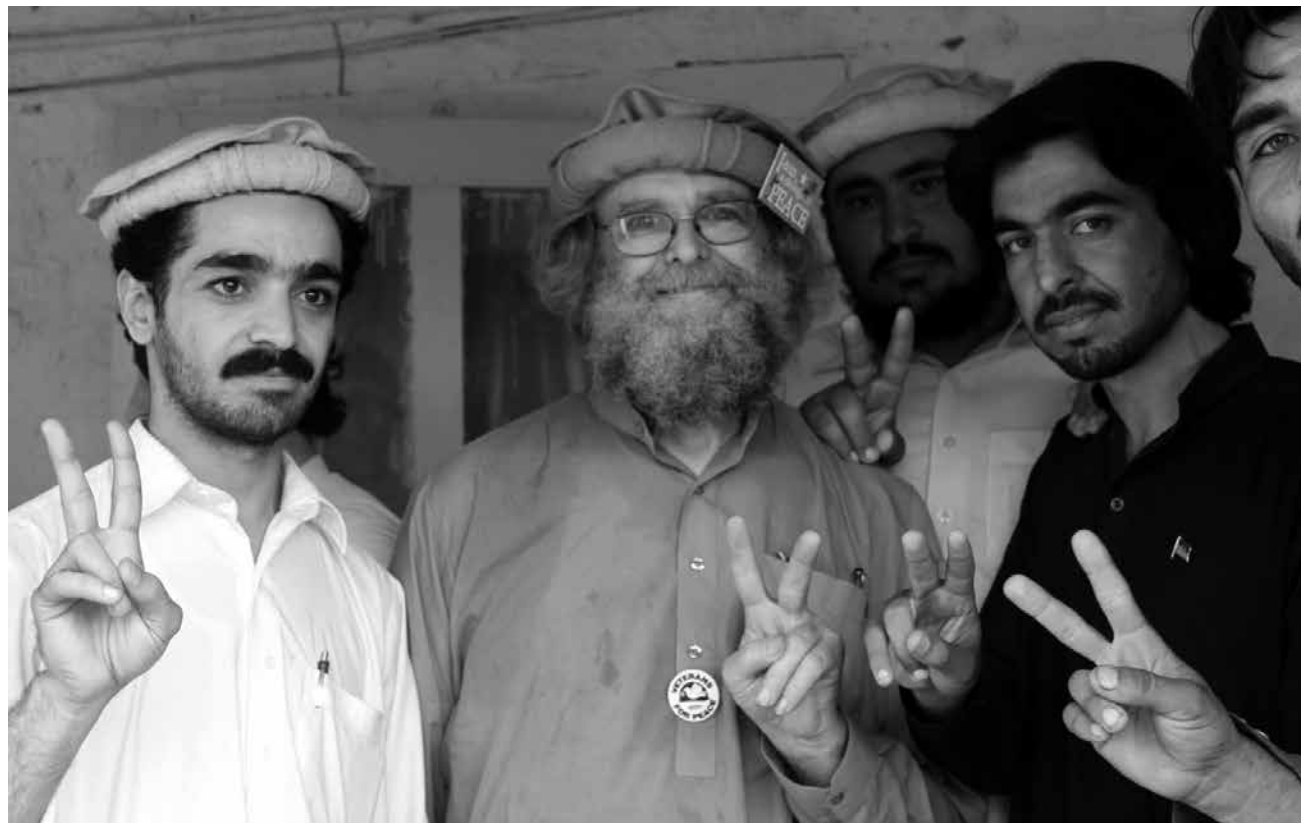
Gen. Heithold misses the obvious: The Constitution is the rope that binds his hands; and hunting and killing human beings meet the criterion for the definition of terror.

Weimer Germany 1933? We are not immune.

But, I love my country. When I took the oath to defend the Constitution I meant it! My intent on March 6 was to shut down a blotch on her soul, if only symbolically for a few minutes, that remote assassination ground control station at Creech Air Force Base. That is why I'm here today, standing before you. This blotch is cancerous. Having metastasized, it threatens her very heart.

My appeal to you, Your Honor, that I share with our brothers and sisters in the military service is: “It is within our power. Let's render those robot assassins harmless. It's not only the most moral, but also the most patriotic thing that we can do.”

Rob Mulford is a lifetime member of Veterans For Peace (Air Force/Army National Guard) and past chair and current board member of the Alaska Peace Center. He worked 35 years in the energy industry, starting as an underground coal miner. A self-educated control systems engineer, he has used his experience and credentials to investigate inside the military-industrial complex.



The author (middle with glasses) in Pakistan.

Doubling Down on a Failed Strategy

The Pentagon's Dangerous 'New' Base Plan

By David Vine

Amid the distractions of the holiday season, *The New York Times* revealed that the Obama administration is considering a Pentagon proposal to create a “new” and “enduring” system of military bases around the Middle East. Though this is being presented as a response to the rise of the Islamic State and other militant groups, there’s remarkably little that’s new about the Pentagon plan. For more than 36 years, the U.S. military has been building an unprecedented constellation of bases that stretches from Southern Europe and the Middle East to Africa and Southwest Asia.

The record of these bases is disastrous. They have cost tens of billions of dollars and provided support for a long list of undemocratic host regimes, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Djibouti. They have enabled a series of U.S. wars and military interventions, including the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which have helped make the Greater Middle East a cauldron of sectarian-tinged power struggles, failed states, and humanitarian catastrophe. And the bases have fueled radicalism, anti-Americanism, and the growth of the very terrorist organizations now targeted by the supposedly new strategy.

If there is much of anything new about the plan, it’s the public acknowledgement of what some (including TomDispatch) have long suspected: despite years of denials about the existence of any “permanent bases” in the Greater Middle East or desire for the same, the military intends to maintain a collection of bases in the region for decades, if not generations, to come.

Thirty-Six Years of Base Building

According to the *Times*, the Pentagon wants to build up a string of bases, the largest of which would permanently host 500 to 5,000 U.S. personnel. The system would include four “hubs”—existing bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, and Spain—and smaller “spokes” in locations like Niger and Cameroon. These bases would, in turn, feature Special Operations forces ready to move into action quickly for what Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter has called “unilateral crisis response” anywhere in the Greater Middle East or Africa. According to unnamed Pentagon officials quoted by the *Times*, this proposed expansion would cost a mere pittance, just “several million dollars a year.”

Far from new, however, this strategy predates both the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. In fact, it goes back to 1980 and the Carter Doctrine. That was the mo-

ment when President Jimmy Carter first asserted that the United States would secure Middle Eastern oil and natural gas by “any means necessary, including military force.” Designed to prevent Soviet intervention in the Persian Gulf, the Pentagon build-up under Presidents Carter and Ronald Reagan included the creation of installations in Egypt, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, and on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. During the first Gulf War of 1991, the Pentagon deployed hundreds of thou-

sands of troops to Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries. After that war, despite the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the U.S. military didn’t go home. Thousands of U.S. troops and a significantly expanded base infrastructure remained in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Bahrain became home to the Navy’s Fifth Fleet. The Pentagon built large air installations in Qatar and expanded operations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.

Today, it seems beyond irony that the target of the Pentagon’s ‘new’ base strategy is the Islamic State, whose very existence and growth we owe to the Iraq War and the chaos it created.

Following the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Pentagon spent tens of billions of dollars building and expanding yet more bases. At the height of those U.S.-led wars, there were more than 1,000 installations, large and small, in Afghanistan and Iraq alone. Despite the closing of most U.S. bases in the two countries, the Pentagon still has access to at least nine major bases in Afghanistan through 2024. After leaving Iraq in 2011, the military returned in 2014 to reoccupy at least six installations. Across the Persian Gulf today, there are still U.S. bases in every country save Iran and Yemen. Even in Saudi Arabia, where widespread anger at the U.S. presence led to an official withdrawal in 2003, there are still small U.S. military contingents and a secret drone base. There are secret bases in Israel, four installations in Egypt, and at least one in Jordan near the Iraqi border. Turkey hosts 17 bases, according to the Pentagon. In the wider region, the military has operated drones from at least five bases in Pakistan in recent years and there are nine new installations in Bulgaria and Romania, along with a Clinton administration-era base still operating in Kosovo.

In Africa, Djibouti’s Camp Lemonnier, just miles across the Red Sea from

Laden’s professed motivation for the 9/11 attacks.

Across the Middle East, there’s a correlation between a U.S. basing presence and al-Qaeda’s recruitment success. According to former West Point professor Bradley Bowman, U.S. bases and troops in the Middle East have been a “major catalyst for anti-Americanism and radicalization” since a suicide bomber killed 241 Marines in Lebanon in 1983. In Africa, a growing U.S. base and troop presence has “backfired,” serving as a boon for insurgents, according to research published by the Army’s Military Review and the Oxford Research Group. A recent U.N. report suggests that the U.S. air campaign against IS has led foreign militants to join the movement on “an unprecedented scale.”

Part of the anti-American anger that such bases stoke comes from the support they offer to repressive, undemocratic hosts. For example, the Obama administration offered only tepid criticism of the Bahraini government, crucial for U.S. naval basing, in 2011 when its leaders violently cracked down on pro-democracy protesters with the help of troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Elsewhere, U.S. bases offer legitimacy to hosts the Economist Democracy Index considers “authoritarian regimes,” effectively helping to block the spread of democracy in countries including Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

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A Disastrous Record

After 36 years, the results of this vast base build-up have been, to put it mildly, counterproductive. As Saudi Arabia illustrates, U.S. bases have often helped generate the radical militancy that they are now being designed to defeat. The presence of U.S. bases and troops in Muslim holy lands was, in fact, a major recruiting tool for al-Qaeda and part of Osama bin



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Low-Balling

The Pentagon's basing strategy has not only been counterproductive in encouraging people to take up arms against the United States and its allies, it has also been extraordinarily expensive. Military bases across the Greater Middle East cost the United States tens of billions of dollars every year, as part of an estimated \$150 billion in annual spending to maintain bases and troops abroad. Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti alone has an annual rent of \$70 million and at least \$1.4 billion in ongoing expansion costs. With the Pentagon now proposing an enlarged basing structure of hubs and spokes from Burkina Faso to Afghanistan, cost estimates reported in *The New York Times* in the "low millions" are laughable, if not intentionally misleading. (One hopes the Government Accountability Office is already investigating the true costs.)

The only plausible explanation for such low-ball figures is that officials are taking for granted—and thus excluding from their estimates—the continuation of present wartime funding levels for those bases. In reality, further entrenching the Pentagon's base infrastructure in the region will commit U.S. taxpayers to billions more in annual construction, maintenance, and personnel costs (while civilian infrastructure in the U.S. continues to be underfunded and neglected).

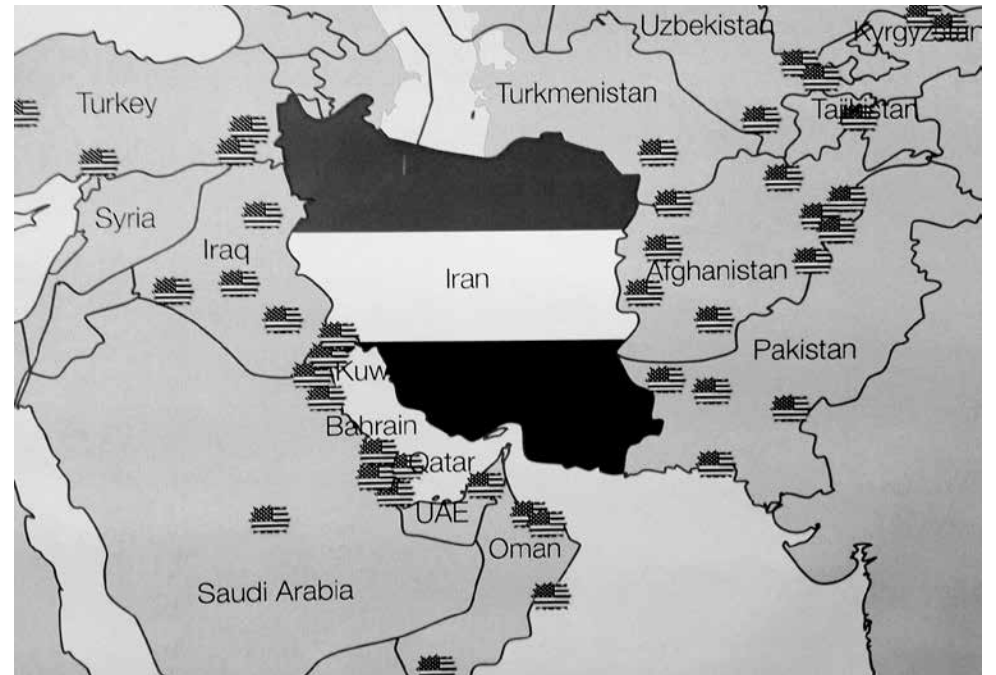
The idea that the military needs any additional money to bring, as the *Times* put it, "an ad hoc series of existing bases

into one coherent system" should shock American taxpayers. After all, the Pentagon has already spent so many billions on them. If military planners haven't linked these bases into a coherent system by now, what exactly have they been doing?

In fact, the Pentagon is undoubtedly resorting to an all-too-familiar funding strategy—using low-ball cost estimates to secure more cash from Congress on a commit-now, pay-the-true-costs-later basis. Experience shows that once the military gets such new budget lines, costs and bases tend to expand, often quite dramatically. Especially in places like Africa that have had a relatively small U.S. presence until now, the Pentagon plan is a template for unchecked growth. As Nick Turse has shown at TomDispatch, the military has already built up "more than 60 outposts and access points . . . in at least 34 countries" across the continent while insisting for years that it had only one base in Africa, Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. With Congress finally passing the 2016 federal budget, including billions in increased military spending, the Pentagon's base plan looks like an opening gambit in a bid to get even more money in fiscal year 2017.

Perpetuating Failure

Above all, the base structure the Pentagon has built since 1980 has enabled military interventions and wars of choice in 13 countries in the Greater Middle East. In the absence of a superpower competitor, these bases made each military action—worst of all the disastrous invasion of Iraq—all too easy to contemplate,



Expanding the base infrastructure in the Greater Middle East will only perpetuate a militarized foreign policy premised on assumptions about the efficacy of war that should have been discredited long ago.

launch, and carry out. Today, it seems beyond irony that the target of the Pentagon's "new" base strategy is the Islamic State, whose very existence and growth we owe to the Iraq War and the chaos it created. If the White House and Congress approve the Pentagon's plan and the military succeeds in further entrenching and

expanding its bases in the region, we need only ask: What violence will this next round of base expansion bring?

Thirty-six years into the U.S. base build-up in the Greater Middle East, military force has failed as a strategy for controlling the region, no less defeating terrorist organizations. Sadly, this infrastructure of war has been in place for so long and is now so taken for granted that most Americans seldom think about it. Members of Congress rarely question the usefulness of the bases or the billions they have appropriated to build and maintain them. Journalists, too, almost never report on the subject—except when news outlets publish material strategically leaked by the Pentagon, as appears to be the case with the "new" base plan highlighted by *The New York Times*.

Expanding the base infrastructure in the Greater Middle East will only perpetuate a militarized foreign policy premised on assumptions about the efficacy of war that should have been discredited long ago. Investing in "enduring" bases rather than diplomatic, political, and humanitarian efforts to reduce conflict across the region is likely to do little more than ensure enduring war.

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Drone Papers

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that their reporting was wrong and ignored the importance of international law."

Gregory McNeal, an expert on national security and drones at Pepperdine School of Law, wrote that in Afghanistan and Iraq, "when collateral damage [civilian casualties] did occur, 70 percent of the time it was attributable to failed—that is, mistaken—identification."

"Anyone caught in the vicinity is guilty by association," "The Drone Papers" source notes. If "a drone attack kills more than one person, there is no guarantee that those persons deserved their fate. . . . So it's a phenomenal gamble."

Drones are Obama's weapon of choice because they don't result in U.S. casualties. "It is the politically advantageous thing to do—low cost, no U.S. casualties, gives the appearance of toughness," according to former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair. "It plays well domestically, and it is unpopular only in other countries. Any damage it does to the national interest only shows up over the long term." Part of the damage, as Flynn pointed out, is that drones make the fallen into martyrs. They create "a new reason to fight us even harder," he said.

In describing how the special operations community views the prospective targets for assassination by drone, "The Drone Papers" source said, "They have no rights. They have no dignity. They have no humanity to themselves. They're just a 'selector' to an analyst. You eventually get to a point in the target's life cycle that you are following them, you don't even refer to them by their actual name." This results in "dehumanizing the people before you've even encountered the moral question of 'is

this a legitimate kill or not?'"

Drone pilots operate thousands of miles from their targets, but many of them suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Some are refusing to fly the drones. In September, the Air Force Times ran a historic ad—paid for by 54 U.S. veterans and vets' organizations—urging Air Force drone operators and other military personnel to refuse orders to fly drone surveillance and attack missions.

"The Drone Papers" source implores us to take action to stop this travesty. "We're allowing this to happen," the source said. "And by 'we,' I mean every American citizen who has access to this information now, but continues to do nothing about it."

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Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, a former president of the National Lawyers Guild, and a legal scholar, political analyst, and social critic. Her books include *Drones and Targeted Killing*, *The United States of Torture*, and *Rules of Disengagement*. Her blogs appear on *Huffington Post*, and she has provided commentary for CBS, BBC, MSNBC, and Pacifica Radio.



Walking For Whales, Dolphins, and Peace

By Russell Wray

It was with a great deal of excitement that I read Bruce Gagnon's email inviting people to a meeting to discuss this year's upcoming Maine Peace Walk. The simple act of walking for peace, or any good cause, feels like putting one's hopes, dreams, or prayers into quiet action ... action seen by all who pass along the way and which, hopefully, sparks some reflection on the issue in the minds and hearts of those who witness or hear about the walk.

I had participated in several Maine Peace Walks in prior years, but the theme of this year's walk was " Militarization of the Seas: the Pentagon's Impact on the Oceans." That really hit home for me, having had since a very young age a particular passion for the porpoises, dolphins, and whales and the oceans that are their homes.

I'm not really sure where that passion came from, but some of my very early artworks as a boy were of whales. The thought of these huge, mysterious animals living their lives in the depths of the oceans stirred my imagination.

But it wasn't until much later, in my art school days, that I experienced whales and dolphins firsthand, on whale watches out of Cape Cod. On one trip, we were surrounded by a large pod of dolphins and a number of finback whales, the second largest animal ever, at up to 80 feet long. Everywhere you looked, dolphins were jumping, frolicking, and swimming just below the surface next to the boat, while finbacks were spouting rainbows (literally) as their long, black backs glistened in the sun, rolling until they disappeared below. The sheer beauty was overwhelming ... it was pure magic. To this day, it remains one of my highest-ever moments.

I started dreaming whales. Joyous, playful dreams of swimming with them, and very unhappy dreams of whales com-

ing ashore en masse, and despite all efforts, being unable to help them. These dreams continued for years.

While at art school, I did a series of sculptures on whaling, which was continuing to take a heavy toll, with many species facing extinction. It was in those days that I heard about Greenpeace's first attempts to save whales by driving their small inflatable boats between the whales and the killer harpoon ships chasing them. I knew then that's where I wanted to be.



Photo by Russell Wray

After art school, I found myself volunteering with Greenpeace. I helped organize and took part in the 1979 Greenpeace Walk of Life, a 1500-mile cross-country journey (my love of the long walk had begun!). And I spent several wonderful years as crew member aboard Greenpeace ships.

Sonar's Deadly Effects

Years later, in 2000, I heard of yet another threat to the survival of the whales. Only months earlier, U.S. Navy sonar

exercises had caused at least 17 whales and dolphins from four species to mass-strand in the Bahamas. I was determined to learn more.

While some of the information around sonar is quite technical, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand this simple fact: When very loud noise is blasted into the oceans, it's going to impact the animals who live there.

Many of these creatures, from marine invertebrates to whales, use sound to

communicate, navigate, find food, and avoid predators. Sonar noise interferes with their ability to detect that sound, and can disrupt important behaviors, such as feeding, breeding, and migration. Even exposing animals to lower levels of noise over time can result in increased stress levels, lowering their ability to successfully reproduce, and making them more susceptible to disease. Because the sonar is so loud, noise can occur hundreds of miles from the source, affecting animals across broad swaths of ocean.

Animals exposed to higher received levels of sonar suffer temporary or permanent hearing loss, a serious condition for animals as dependent on hearing as whales. And, as was demonstrated so clearly in the Bahamas and numerous times before and after that event, exposure sometimes leads to mass-stranding events. Those strandings are likely the very tip of the carnage iceberg. In all likelihood, the great majority of injuries and deaths occur at sea, unwitnessed and unrecorded by humans.

When one considers the global U.S. Navy presence and the fact that many other navies also use sonar, it's clear that a tremendous amount of unnecessary harm is being done to life in our oceans. Unnecessary, because there are many measures navies could take to drastically reduce harm even while continuing testing, training with, and deploying sonar (and

some other navies are), but the United States simply refuses, claiming "national security" in an attempt to justify all the harm being done.

Add to this all the havoc being wreaked by the Navy's use of explosives, its policy of "expending" toxic materials and materials that entangle marine life, its habit of constructing bases around the globe putting endangered species at risk and/or destroying sensitive habitat (e.g. Gangjeong Village on Jeju Island in South Korea, see pages 12-13), and its vast climate-changing carbon emissions with the resulting acidification of the oceans, and what we have is a veritable war on marine life.

This makes me angry. I have always hated seeing lives destroyed by war-makers, especially when they are the lives of the innocent. When I turned 18 in the last months of the conscription lottery, I applied for conscientious objector status and was rejected. But I knew enough to know what I was, and that I wouldn't be going to Vietnam or participating in any other war of aggression.

Business as Usual for the Navy

The use of military sonar brought together two issues very important to me: the need to work for peace and for the protection of our Mother Earth, so I co-founded Citizens Opposing Active Sonar Threats (COAST). COAST has worked in many ways over the years, but one I'm most proud of was in joining a lawsuit against the Navy and Fisheries Service (the federal permitting agency) to stop construction of a 500-square-mile instrumented Underwater Warfare Training Range. There, the Navy intends to carry out 470 annual sonar exercises just offshore, in, of all places, the only known calving grounds of the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale! The Navy once again resorted to claims of "national security," and we lost the case, and the appeal, though the law was clearly on our side.

So, it's business as usual for the Navy. That range is now under construction. Despite all the efforts of the concerned public, COAST, and many other organizations, precious little has changed in the way the Navy operates. Where to go from here? What to do?

This year's Maine Peace Walk was a good place to start. I got busy painting a banner, and resurrecting Maka, the seven-foot-long dolphin on wheels I had created back in 1979 that we pulled along with us on the Greenpeace Walk of Life. And, with some really fantastic people, including Niponzan Myohoji Buddhist nun Jun-san and a number of VFP members, we walked together ... in solidarity, joy, and prayer ... and it was good!

Russell Wray is a sculptor, print-maker, and activist living in Maine. He co-founded and volunteers with Citizens Opposing Active Sonar Threats and is an associate member of Veterans For Peace.



The author on this year's Maine Peace Walk.