Permanent war has cannibalized the country. It has created a social, political, and economic morass. Each new military debacle is another nail in the coffin of Pax Americana.

The United States, as the vote to provide nearly $40 billion in aid to Ukraine illustrated, is trapped in the death spiral of unchecked militarism. No high speed trains. No universal health care. No visible COVID relief program. No respite from 8.3% inflation. No infrastructure programs to repair decaying roads and bridges, which require $41.8 billion to fix the 45,586 structurally deficient bridges, on average 68 years old. No forgiveness of $1.7 trillion in student debt. No addressing income inequality. No program to feed the 17 million children who go to bed hungry. No rational gun control or curbing of the epidemic of nihilistic violence and mass shootings. No help for the 100,000 Americans who die each year of continued on page 8 …
By Mike Ferner

I

In his 1833 State of the Union address to Congress, President Andrew Jackson, arguably the worst U.S. President from the perspective of Native Americans, said, “That those tribes cannot exist surrounded by our settlements and in continual contact with our citizens is certain. Established in the midst of another and a superior race, and without appreciating the causes of their inferiority or seeking to control them, they must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.”

Given how Jackson and North American culture treated the first people to occupy their continent, one could imagine that some native people took comfort in the planet’s history caused by the greed and a superior race, and without appreciating the causes of their inferiority or considering the causes of their inferiority or seeking to control them, they must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.

Prophetic words, indeed. But the climate crisis was unknown in 1908 and Jackson and North American culture treated the first people to occupy their continent, one could imagine that some native people took comfort with the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.

Think about what it will take to save our Mother Earth and just do it. Do it with abandon. … Do it simply out of love and because it’s the right thing to do. … Do it because this is not a drill.

As military veterans, we are very familiar with drills. And we are very familiar with how it feels when your blood runs cold at the words, “This is not a drill!” That’s why you’ll often find Veterans For Peace members in the streets, on picket lines, calling out elected officials and getting arrested for civil disobedience.

In fact, we particularly relish what a beloved VFP member, historian Howard Zinn, once wrote:

“Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of leaders … and millions have been killed because of this obedience. … Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jads are full of petty thieves … (and) the grand thieves are running the country. That’s our problem.”

That’s the sense of urgency we continue-
The Greatest Threat to Western Press Freedoms in Years

The decision to extradite Julian Assange is a monument to the fraud of U.S. and British self-depictions.

By Glenn Greenwald

The eleven-year persecution of Julian Assange was extended and escalated on Friday morning, June 17. British Home Secretary Priti Patel approved the U.S. extradition request to send Julian Assange to Virginia to stand trial on 18 felony charges under the 1917 Espionage Act and other statutes in connection with the 2010 publication by WikiLeaks of thousands of documents showing widespread corruption, deceit, and war crimes by U.S. and British authorities, along with their close dictatorial allies in the Middle East.

This decision is unsurprising—it has been obvious for years that the United States and UK are determined to destroy Assange as punishment for his journalism exposing their crimes—yet it nonetheless further highlights the utter sham of American and British sermons about freedom, democracy, and a free press. Those performative self-glorifying spectacles are constantly deployed to justify these two countries’ interference in and attacks on other nations, and to allow their citizens to feel a sense of superiority about the nature of their governments. After all, if the United States and UK stand for freedom and against tyranny, who could possibly oppose their wars and interventions in the name of advancing such lofty goals and noble values?

Having reported on the Assange case for years, on countless occasions I’ve laid out the tainted background that led Assange and the United States to this point. There is thus no need to recount all of that again; Those interested can read the granular trajectory of this persecution here or here. Suffice to say, Assange—without having been convicted of any crime other than bail jumping, for which he long ago served out his 50-week sentence—has been in effective imprisonment for more than a decade.

In 2012, Ecuador granted Assange legal asylum from political persecution. It did so after the Swedish government refused to pledge that it would not exploit the WikiLeaks founder’s travel to Sweden to answer sex assault accusations as a pretext to turn him over to the United States. Fearing what of course ended up happening—that the United States was determined to do everything possible to drag Assange back to U.S. soil despite his not being a U.S. citizen and never having spent more than a few days on U.S. soil, and intending to pressure their long-time-submissive Swedish allies to turn him over once he was on Swedish soil—the government of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa concluded Assange’s core civic rights were being denied and thus gave him refuge in the tiny Ecuadorian Embassy in London: the classic reason political asylum exists.

When Trump officials led by CIA Director Mike Pompeo bullied Correa’s meek successor, ex-President Lenin Moreno, to withdraw that asylum in 2019, the London Police entered the embassy, arrested Assange, and intending to pressure their long-time-submissive Swedish allies to turn him over once he was on Swedish soil—the government of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa concluded Assange’s core civic rights were being denied and thus gave him refuge in the tiny Ecuadorian Embassy in London: the classic reason political asylum exists.

When Trump officials led by CIA Director Mike Pompeo bullied Correa’s meek successor, ex-President Lenin Moreno, to withdraw that asylum in 2019, the London Police entered the embassy, arrested

Roe: A Radicalizing Turning Point?

By Crystal Zevon

The Supreme Court’s horrific decision to cancel Roe v. Wade may just turn out to be their worst nightmare. And, their worst nightmare may just turn out to be the friend those of us who have been struggling to radicalize the sleeping masses for years have been waiting for. As the Democrats, who have been dragging their feet on women’s rights for years, instantly turn abortion rights into a campaign issue and a fundraising opportunity, this time people of all gender identities and expressions are seeing through the hypocrisy. The streets in cities across the country are filled with outrage. We are not going to take it anymore.

What may come as a surprise not only to the right-wing zealots who seek to impose their will and their rule over reproductive rights, but also to the lackluster liberals who continue to look within party politics for change, are the calls for real revolution. Beyond reproductive rights, the shouts are echoing loud and clear for people-power, the right to housing, to medical care, to child care, to food, education and freedom from police brutality. And, it’s not just the “usual suspects” anymore. People across the country are tired and tired of being played for fools, told about the importance of voting. It hasn’t changed anything yet, and it won’t. So get your pleas for funds out of our inboxes, because we won’t be reading them. We’ll be in the streets.

One protester’s sign in Tucson puts it right: Public Cervix Announcement: Fuck You. Crystal Zevon is a longtime activist, writer, and videographer.

Join Veterans For Peace!

Veterans For Peace is an international organization made up of military veterans, military family members, and allies. We accept veteran members from all branches of service. We are dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true causes and costs of war, and healing the wounds of war.

For more information or to join or donate, go to veteransforpeace.org.
Violence and Memorial Day

By Michael McPhearson

I'm a veteran. On Memorial Day 2022, I am weighed down by death. Death and violence are at the core of the holiday. It is the day to honor military service members who died in our nation's wars and veterans who died after returning home. But this Memorial Day, with so many violent deaths and death reminders around me, the holiday is complex. Two years ago, George Floyd was murdered on May 25. I will probably forget the exact date, but I will never forget it happened on Memorial Day. The last three weeks have seen mass shootings in Buffalo, N.Y., with 10 dead and three injured; Laguna Woods, Calif., with one dead and five wounded; Chicago, with two dead and eight wounded; and the horror of Uvalde, Texas, with 19 children and three adults murdered. I can no longer compartmentalize one type of violence from another. The pain from war violence is the same as the agony caused by gun violence and police brutality. I know because I've seen the pain.

Once Memorial Day was simple. Unofficially marking the first day of summer, I celebrated like most people, having fun at BBQs and taking advantage of sales while also giving obligatory “Thank you for your service” to those in the nation's Armed Forces and veterans. I knew in theory that the purpose of the holiday was to honor service members who died in the nation's wars, but I did not understand what that meant.

My close contact with families who lost loved ones to gun violence and police aggression opened my eyes to the pain caused by violence. Lives turned upside down, the grief over killed loved ones and the pain of surviving. Years passed, and we have not learned. Our cultural change needs to be more accommodating of the pain we feel as a result of gun violence and police aggression.

Last week marked 20 years since I traveled to Iraq in 2003 for the first time, the invasion that led to the deaths of so many American service members. I met service members who returned home, but their buddies died in Iraq and Afghanistan. I watched tough Marines kneeling at the foot of memorials, sobbing with inconsolable grief as they mourned their lost comrades. My son's deployment to Iraq was an extremely emotional time. I lived in perpetual fear that I would personally know the grief I witnessed others endure. Sometimes, I would break out in tears when I thought of him.

Meeting Palestinians and Jews who lost loved ones in the Israel/Palestine conflict cemented my certainty about the senselessness of killing. The depth and intensity of their pain were no different. The deaths as unnecessary as all I had already seen.

When most people think of gun violence in the United States, we think of mass shootings, drive-bys, police killings, and murder. However, the deaths caused by the afore mentioned are dwarfed by the number of suicides. In 2020, according to Pew Research, 45,222 people died from gun-related injuries; 54% were suicide (24,292).

This information is essential to know as it relates to Memorial Day. The 2021 Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) stated that in 2019, 17.2 Veterans died by suicide a day and that the adjusted suicide rate for veterans was 52.3% greater than for nonveterans.

How did my comrades die? The report went on to say, “Firearms accounted for 70.2% of male veteran suicides in 2019 (up from 69.6% in 2018) and 49.8% of female veteran suicides in 2019 (up from 41.1% in 2018).”

As a veteran, I am heartbroken that so many of my comrades in arms feel such deep pain that life is not worth living. I am outraged that after we veterans sacrifice our mental health for this nation, our country’s gun obsession and selfish disregard for the harm they cause stand in the way of cultural change to protect veterans and, most notably, our children.

This Memorial Day, our nation is overwhelmed by death. It looms as a monstrous shadow cast by over a million lives lost to COVID. It seeks to smother us with death. It looms as a monstrous shadow cast by over a million lives lost to COVID. It seeks to smother us with death. It is a reminder of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, militarism and economic exploitation are incapable of being conquered.

Do not take his words as a simple call to defeat the giant triplets as he names them. They are a prescription to save us from our worst demons. They appeal to us to step into the role of our higher selves.

New York City Veterans For Peace commemorated Memorial Day with a solemn procession remembering all those killed in war; the dove of the VFP flag was in marked contrast to the diving eagle at the center of the East Coast Memorial honoring American servicemembers killed in the Atlantic in World War II. Photo: Ellen Davidson

My son's deployment to Iraq was an extremely emotional time.

I lived in perpetual fear that I would personally know the grief I witnessed others endure. Sometimes, I would break out in tears when I thought of him.

We must stand against violence by standing up for life. We must change our culture from one that celebrates violence to one that loathes using it. We must confront the suicide epidemic with acceptance and love. We must break the deep isolation felt by millions. We must see and accept each other.

Look around us and witness the carnage. It will not stop unless we stop it.

Michael T. McPhearson is a U.S. Army Gulf War veteran and human rights, antiracist, and peace activist. He is the executive director for the South Seattle Emerald, an independent online newspaper that amplifies the authentic narratives of South Seattle. He is on the American Friends Service Committee Nobel Peace Prize Nominating Task Group and a board member of the ACLU of Washington. He is a founding co-chair of the Don’t Shoot Coalition in Saint Louis, organized in the aftermath of the 2014 police killing of Michael Brown, Jr. He has served as national coordinator of United For Peace and Justice, Veterans For Peace (VFP) executive director and a VFP national board member. Michael worked closely with the Newark-based People’s Organization for Black Struggle. He publishes MTMDaily.com expressing his views on war and peace, politics, human rights, race, and other things.
Working to Change the Culture of Militarism

A different kind of commemoration by Boston Veterans For Peace

By Nate Goldshlag

This past Memorial Day Veterans For Peace gathered at the Boston Common in a different way from the other veterans’ groups. There were tens of thousands of U.S. flags, each representing someone from Massachusetts killed in a war. Remembering them is appropriate, but we have a different message. We mourn and remember all victims of war, from the World Wars to Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Ukraine, and many more. In the carnage, I am reminded of the words of Martin Luther King Jr.: “The greatest purveyor of violence in the world—my own government.” Yes, the awful invasion of Ukraine is a crime, but so are all the others. And by far most deaths in war are not soldiers but civilians. Estimates of those deaths are almost 2 million in Korea, 2–3 million in Vietnam, over a million in Iraq, hundreds of thousands in Afghanistan and Yemen. And it is my own government responsible for those. The U.S. government talks about war crimes in Ukraine committed by Russia and undoubtedly there are war crimes—war itself is a crime. But the United States does not even recognize the International Criminal Court which investigates war crimes, and has never been held to account for its own war crimes, which are on an exponentially larger scale.

This country is built on war, militarism, and violence. We see it in the massive number of individually owned guns and the huge number of mass shootings, including the latest of little girls and boys in Uvalde, Texas. We see it in the military parades, the cheering, USA USA, USA, police violence mainly against black and brown people. We see it in the militarized police using weapons normally only used in war. We see it in the massive amount of money going to companies that produce weapons of death—used without causing a worldwide holocaust and the end of civilization, if indeed we really are a civilized people.

And those flags—people say they honor the people represented by those flags, their sacrifice. But in the wars of the last 70 years, who did they sacrifice their lives for? It was for U.S. imperialism, big corporations, the arms merchants of death. What Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex is now called the MICIMATT by Ray McGovern—the Military Industrial Congressional Intelligence Media Academic Think Tank Complex. The United States has been spectacularly unsuccessful in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and yet we continue down this road of militarism and war. And on this day, we must remember all victims of war, and shout out that the main victims of war are civilians—men, women, and children. War is never the answer. In Ukraine there must be serious negotiations and an end to the war. Sanctions are another form of warfare. They almost never work for their intended purpose, and they harm many other people other than those they are directed toward. As we remember the victims of war, we must work to change the culture of militarism and war to one of nonviolence and peace.

Nate Goldshlag is a U.S. Army veteran. He is the coordinator of the Smedley Butler Brigade of Boston Veterans For Peace and a past National Veterans For Peace national board member and treasurer. His activism dates back to 1969, when he participated in the occupation of University Hall at Harvard.

A Female Combat Veteran with PTSD

By Jennifer Pacanowski

I have blue hair
I wear dresses
People ask me if I am a veteran’s girlfriend or wife because I advocate
And care so much about veterans’ issues and rights
I am a female combat veteran with PTSD.
But now, in an interesting twist of events
I am a stepmom
Of a nine-year-old girl named Juliana
And a seven-year-old boy name Jaxon
I have a service dog named Boo
And a rescue dog named Moxie, also with a touch of the PTSD

I have days when my pain overflows onto the kitchen floor while
I’m making lunch for the kids
The dogs gather at my feet to comfort me, to brace my fall
We tell the children I cry because
“My heart hurts from the war.”
Sometimes I sit alone and rock softly in the yellow chair
My stomach aches
My back screams
Boo lays his head in my lap
Moxie wiggles her tail, unsure

Juliana walks up the stairs
She recognizes the look
She walks over to me and brushes my bangs away from my face
And says, “Everything is going to be okay.”
And I believe her
Jaxon says I am 65% man
Because of the way I drive like his Dad

Jennifer Pacanowski
Photo: Ellen Davidson

Jennifer Pacanowski, a female combat veteran with PTSD, shares her experiences with PTSD and the support she receives from her dogs.

Because of the way I talk (curse) like his Dad
However, I am not
One night I woke from a nightmare
Especially horrible since I had not had one in so long
As if time had added to the potency of the flashback
Jaxon was sleeping with us
I got up with a jolt and went into the living room
To breathe, to write, to calm
I could hear Jaxon whisper to his daddy,
“Doesn’t Jenny know dreams aren’t real.”
I cried harder
Unfortunately, my nightmares are real

Juliana says,
“Jenny acts like a big kid.”

I laugh a lot since I met the kids
And swim in the pool watching over them
And some moments,
I’m just me
Not my PTSD
I’m just me that loves my dogs unconditionally
I’m just Jenny
The stepmom with the blue hair and tattoos that laughs a lot

Peace and Planet News • This Is Not a Drill • Summer 2022
How Veterans Return From America’s Wars

A trail of tears
By Ann Jones

This piece is an excerpt, adapted from Ann Jones’s book They Were Soldiers: How the Wounded Return from America’s Wars—The Untold Story, published by Dispatch Books/Haymarket Books.

In 2010, I began to follow U.S. soldiers down a long trail of waste and sorrow that led from the battle spaces of Afghanistan to the emergency room of the trauma hospital at Bagram Air Base, where their catastrophic wounds were surgically treated and their condition stabilized. Then I accompanied some of them by cargo plane to Ramstein Air Base in Germany for more surgeries at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, or LRMC (pronounced Larm-See), the largest American hospital outside the United States.

Once stabilized again, those critical patients who survived would be taken by ambulance a short distance back to Ramstein, where a C-17 waited to fly them across the Atlantic to Dover Air Base in Delaware. There, tall, multilayered ambulances awaited the wounded for the last leg of their many-thousand-mile journey to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. or the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, Maryland, where, depending upon their injuries, they might remain for a year or two, or more.

Now, we are in Germany, halfway home. This evening, the ambulance from LRMC heading for the flight line at Ramstein will be full of critical-care patients, so I leave the hospital early and board the plane to watch the medical teams bring them aboard. They’ve done this drill many times a week since the start of the Afghan War. They are practiced, efficient, and fast, and so we are soon in the air again. This time, with a full load.

Two rows of double bunks flank an aisle down the center of the C-17, all occupied by men tucked under homemade patchwork quilts emblazoned with flags and eagles, the handiwork of patriotic American women. Along the walls of the fuselage, on straight-backed seats of nylon mesh, sit the ambulatory casualties from the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility (CASF), the holding ward for noncritical patients just off the flight line at Ramstein.

At the back of the plane, slung between stanchions, are four litters with critical-care patients, and there among them is the same three-man CCAT (Critical Care Air Transport) team I accompanied on the flight from Afghanistan. They’ve been back and forth to Bagram again since then, but here they are in fresh brown insulated coveralls, clean shaven, calm, cordial, the doctor busy making notes on a clipboard, the nurse and the respiratory therapist checking the monitors and machines on the SMEEDs. (A SMEED, or Special Medical Emergency Evacuation Device, is a raised aluminum table affixed to a patient’s gurney.) Designed to bridge the patient’s lower legs, a SMEED is now often used in the evacuation of soldiers who don’t have any.

Here again is Marine Sergeant Wilkins, just as he was on the flight from Afghanistan: unconscious, sedated, intubated, and encased in a vacuum spine board. The doctor tells me that the staff at LRMC removed Wilkins’s breathing tube, but they had to put it back. He remains in cold storage, like some pod-person in a sci-fi film. You can hardly see him in there, inside the black plastic pod. 

You can’t determine if he is alive or dead without looking at the little needles on the monitor, you can hardly see his chest heaving, trying to find the exit wound and keep from being hit and how he wanted to tell you it was all right, it was fine, and Price, arms so long he could fold a sheet by himself, whom you crawled down into the stream bed to drag out by the heels, who lived to go home to be killed in a dope deal two years later.

All of us are here, he says, sit down, we’ll get you some clothes, you’re home now, easy, remember what you used to say? You’re going to be fine, my man, you’re going home, just don’t fade out on me, hey, what’s your mother’s maiden name?

* Erebus was one of the primordial deities in Greek mythology, born out of the primordial void, Chaos. It was the personification of the deep darkness and shadows.

Erebus*

By Doug Anderson

You have the dream again: monsoon season, jungle, a muddy village road; you are naked, stumbling along a paddy dike across an open field toward the village where C.W. killed all the pigs but once into the trees there is only thickening jungle, canopy hung with smoldering flares. You stumble into an open field, cupping your balls, and from the next treeline you hear music, Motown, Aretha who used to thrash from the mortar pits where the brothers slung round after round down the tubes, a little respect, and when you enter the village, ashamed, you see men you tagged dead and choppered out like sides of beef, grinning at you from around a fire, and the old women, the children who didn’t move quick enough, all the Cong, they are there too, and the ones from the day so many died you tore up your own clothes for bandages, all there and singing, it amber by the fire. What took you so long, Doc, they say. They ask you where you’ve been and you can’t tell them. Over twenty years since you got lost coming home, and now you’re back here in the stinking silt and hedgerows, shin deep in pigs, but this time naked and without a weapon. And so you sit down with the dead. Reese with the white eyebrows wraps a poncho around your shoulders, tells you what it was like when he was dying, treeline cracking with machinegun fire you pounding on his chest to start his heart and him thinking, Easy, it’s so quiet where I am, quiet and fine, and Ballard, blue black and thick-shouldered, telling you

he watched you working on his body from above, how you were white and sweat-soaked, your chest heaving, trying to find the exit wound and keep from being hit and how he wanted to tell you it was all right, it was fine, and Price, arms so long he could fold a sheet by himself, whom you crawled down into the stream bed to drag out by the heels, who lived to go home to be killed in a dope deal two years later.

All of us are here, he says, sit down, we’ll get you some clothes, you’re home now, easy, remember what you used to say? You’re going to be fine, my man, you’re going home, just don’t fade out on me, hey, what’s your mother’s maiden name?

* Erebus was one of the primordial deities in Greek mythology, born out of the primordial void, Chaos. It was the personification of the deep darkness and shadows.
Veterans Return

…continued from previous page

he chest. He must have been doubled over, crouching, when he walked onto the bomb. The impact damaged his lungs in ways not yet fully understood, so that now when he breathes on his own, every breath brings him toward the inevitable.

The CCAT team confesses. To stop the convulsive effort to breathe, the doctor can paralyze him and let the ventilator do the work of respiration, but that means removing from his intestine the feeding tube pumping in the calories he needs to heal these catastrophic wounds. It’s a fine line, and the team walks it for the next hour until it’s clear the man needs rest more than nourishment. Then the doctor administers a drug, the body grows still as stone, and the soldier inside sleeps softly while the ventilator steadily breathes in and breathes out.

Patient number three is breathing on his own and fast asleep, a saline drip feeding into his arm. He looks okay, but for the flattening of the blanket under the SMEED. He’s lost both legs, but both below the knee. He has his hands. He has his junk. Of these four patients, he’s the one who comes “in a wheel chair,” she will call “lucky.” But the doctor doesn’t call him that. He says, “You can’t assess his injuries in comparison to those of other soldiers who happen to be on the same plane. You have to assess them in comparison to who he was before.” He is a boy who used to have legs and now he doesn’t.

The fourth CCAT patient is a darkly handsome kid who lost both legs to an IED. His right arm ends in a bulbous bandage, but something about its shape suggests the hand might still be all there. It’s a weekend and I can hear them hammering as we talk on the phone. “They say he’ll always be in a wheelchair,” she says, her voice shaking. “I was in our pool this morning, and I realized that he’ll never be able to get into it by himself. He loves the pool.” I stay on the line listening to her cry. She says, “He’s a beautiful swimmer.”

On the plane I talk to some of the ambulatory patients sitting along the walls, wrapped in blankets like so many Pashuns. Most are hurt just enough to have a weekend and I can hear them hammering as we talk on the phone. “They say he’ll always be in a wheelchair,” she says, her voice shaking. “I was in our pool this morning, and I realized that he’ll never be able to get into it by himself. He loves the pool.” I stay on the line listening to her cry. She says, “He’s a beautiful swimmer.”

He sits ramrod straight, wrapped in his blanket, and speaks through tight lips as if he fears what might come out of his mouth: ‘I’ve been in the Army 26 years, and I can tell you it’s a con.’

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Roger Waters

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eral in the town where he died and laying a wreath to honor him, and all the other fallen. Losing my father before I ever knew him and being brought up by a single, working mother who fought tirelessly for equality and justice colored my life in far-reaching ways and has driven all my work. And, at this point in my journey, I like to think that I pay tribute to both my parents each time I speak out in support of any beleaguered people denied the freedom and justice that I believe all of us deserve.

After visiting Israel in 2005 and the West Bank the following year, I was deeply moved and concerned by what I saw, and determined to add my voice to those searching for an equitable and lawful solution to the problem—for both Palestinians and Jews.

Given my upbringing, I really had no choice. In 2005, Palestinian civil society appealed to people of conscience all over the world to act where governments had failed. They asked us to join their nonviolent movement—for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)—which aims to end Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories, to secure equal rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and to uphold the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the cities and villages they were violently forced out of in 1948 and 1967.

After more than two decades of negotiations, the vulnerable Palestinian population still lives under occupation, while more land is taken, more illegal settlements built, more settlers and refugees are killed or injured, targets of violence, from all sides in that bloody conflict, subject to unimaginable hardship and deprivation and, in many cases, particularly for the vulnerable young, to starvation.

What can we all do to advance the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, Israel and the diaspora? Well, BDS is a nonviolent, citizen-led movement that is grounded in universal principles of human rights for all people. All people! In consequence, I have determined that the BDS approach is one I can fully support.

I feel honored to stand in solidarity alongside my father and my mother, and alongside my Palestinian brothers and sisters, and so many others of all colors, faiths and circumstances from all over the world—including an ever-increasing number of courageous Jewish Americans and Israelis—who have also answered the call.

In the furor that exists in the U.S. today about BDS and the right and wrong of a cultural boycott of Israel, a quote from one of my heroes, Mahatma Gandhi, has been on my mind. He prophetically said, “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.” The BDS movement is fulfilling its promise and fits Gandhi’s description. Once dismissed by many as a futile strategy that would “never work,” BDS has gained much ground, bringing with it the expected backlash.

The BDS movement recognizes universal human rights under the law as a whole. Nothing could be further from the truth. The movement’s critics, with Netanyahu and the global anti-poverty group Oxfam are symptoms of a growing resistance to the Israeli subjugation of the indigenous people of Palestine, and also, to the decades of occupation of land designated by the U.N. as a future state for the Palestinian people.

And with each new BDS headline, the fierce reaction from the movement’s critics, with Netanyahu and his AIPAC fulminations in the vanguard, has risen exponentially. I think it’s safe to say BDS is in the “then they fight you” stage.

Some wrongly portray the boycott movement, which is modeled on the boycotts employed against Apartheid South Africa and used in the U.S. civil rights movement, to be an attack on the Israeli people or even on the Jewish people, as a whole. Nothing could be further from the truth. The movement recognizes universal human rights under the law for all people, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or color.

I do not claim to speak on behalf of the BDS movement, yet, as a vocal supporter, and because of my visibility in the music industry, I have become a natural target for those who wish to attack BDS, not by addressing the merits of its claims but, instead, by assigning hateful and racist motivations to BDS supporters like me. It has even been said, cruelly and wrongly, that I am a Nazi and an anti-Semite.

I believe that the root of all injustice and oppression has always been the same—the dehumanization of the other. It is the obsession with Us and Them that can lead us, regardless of racial or religious identity, into the abyss.

When I remarked in a recent interview on historical parallels, stating that I would not have played Vichy France or Berlin in World War II, it was not my intention to compare the Israelis to Nazis or the Holocaust to the decades-long oppression of the Palestinians. There is no comparison to the Holocaust. Nor did I intend or ever wish to compare the suffering of Jews then with the suffering of Palestinians now. Comparing suffering is a painful, grotesque and diminishing exercise that dishonors the specific memory of all our fallen loved ones.

I believe that the root of all injustice and oppression has always been the same—the dehumanization of the other. It is the obsession with Us and Them that can lead us, regardless of racial or religious identity, into the abyss.

Let us never forget that oppression begets more oppression, and the tree of fear and bigotry bears only bitter fruit. The end of the occupation of Palestine, should we all manage to secure it, will mean freedom for the occupied and the occupiers and freedom from the bitter taste of all those wasted years and lives. And that will be a great gift to the world.

“As ashes and diamonds
Foe and friend
We were all equal
In the end.”

Roger Waters is an internationally recognized and respected musician and social justice activist. He is embarking on a North American concert tour called This Is Not A Drill. More information at rogerwaters.com.

The Gunners Dream

By Roger Waters

Floating down, through the clouds
Memories come rushing up to meet me now
But in the space between the heavens
And the corner of some foreign field
I had a dream
I had a dream
Goodbye Max, goodbye Ma
After the service, when you’re walking slowly to the car
And the silver in her hair shines in the cold November air
You hear the tolling bell and touch the silk in your lapel
And as the teardrops rise to meet the comfort of the band
You take her frail hand
And hold on to the dream
A place to stay, enough to eat

Somewhere, old heroes shuffle safely down the street
Where you can speak out loud about your doubts and fears
And what’s more, no one ever disappears
You never hear their standard issue kicking in your door
You can relax on both sides of the tracks
And mariachis don’t blow holes in bandsman by remote control
And everyone has recourse to the law
And no one kills the children anymore
No one kills the children anymore
Night after night, going round and round my brain
His dream is driving me insane
In the corner of some foreign field
The gunner sleeps tonight
What’s done is done
We cannot just write off his final scene
Take heed of the dream
Take heed
I

By Denny Riley

In early February Catherine and I drove from San Francisco Bay to the Finger Lakes of upstate New York. It was winter, not the best time to make the trip, but we’d bought a house in Canandaigua and we had an appointment to meet the moving van at our new home eight days down the road. Because every weather report promised a difficult winter, we decided against driving over the mountains and across the heartland on Interstate 80. Instead, we headed south through the San Joaquin Valley to Barstow, taking the southern route through Albuquerque, Amarillo, Oklahoma City, swinging north through St. Louis, and Cleveland, and on to Rochester and Canandaigua. Roughly 2,900 miles of good highway.

We still left with some trepidation. Every forecast predicted a bigger storm than the last forecast, but that wasn’t the worst of it. I’d driven across five times and thumbed across six. This was Catherine’s third road trip across. All of that, though, happened before thuggery was trending as an ideological position. Californian liberals, mostly owners, the hardworking European American Christians who’ve earned everything they possess. The same people who kid- ded us about California license plates in years past might now approach our vehicle at a rest stop and want to know where we stand on the Great Replacement or Critical Race Theory.

To expect the usurpers of our anonymity to explain what they’re talking about wouldn’t work because not only are they not really asking us, they don’t know what they’re asking about. I mean, if they got their analyses of the two theories from rightwing television’s most popular talking head, or if they got it secondhand from someone who watches him, they are confused individuals as well. Those two men should be lauded seemed the mean. That those two men’s analyses of the establishment’s monstrous machinations. No one could believe it. He had been so quick with his analyses of the establishment’s monstrous machinations. After eight years of Reagan’s supply-side economics and dog-whistle administration of the 20th century. After eight years of the apparatus of happiness. Such an excess of wealth that possessions are acquired for the sake of doing so.

Bush was rich every day of his life. Reagan, the son of an alcoholic shoe salesman, managed to get himself into and out of a military job and to lead- ing roles in Hollywood movies and marriages to two attractive actresses. He was the governor of California before being elected to the highest office in the world. Along the way he forgot other people also struggled, for- got about helping those for whom life has been diffi- cult, forgot the Black people who despite their personal wealth felt they should take advantage of the elected offices they held to grab more. Jane Austen in her novel Emma, calls the material comfort gained by taking advantage of your situation “the apparatus of happiness.”

I saw. To me it seems like an iceberg has been spotted but most of us keep dancing to the ship’s orchestra. I see what I saw as a serious problem that is organized yet out of view. Here’s what happened.

Near Amarillo we pulled into a Pilot truck stop to fill the tank and use the facilities. Catherine went into the store while I pumped gas. A pickup pulled up to the pump behind me. A young guy hopped out and headed toward the store. He was about six feet tall, nice looking, muscular, with fair hair sheared short on the sides and clean-shaved cheeks. He wore work boots and jeans and a dark-blue t-shirt. On his head was a ball cap, off white with brown stitching across the front. The stitching spelled out “Reagan Bush ’84.”

Maybe everybody knows about this but me, I flashed, or maybe only people in the Texas Panhandle know about it and keep it to themselves. The guy looked healthy and clear eyed and way too young to have any recollection of Reagan and Bush, which means some older folks have spun a tale of those two men that has motivated at least one person to wear a ball cap emblazoned with their names, yet it’s not likely only one cap was made. It’s possible a thousand or many more people are wearing “Reagan Bush ’84” ball caps, so it’s probably a movement.

Not much shifts me up but I didn’t even have to try keeping the sighting of the cap to myself. A storm so fierce it was officially called Winter Storm Landon soon engulfed, taking all my attention, but I also was afraid to say anything about the cap because giving it voice would help feed the madness. In my reticence I chowed on why people would wear “Reagan Bush ’84” caps. Even with no explanation I was angry about what the cap might mean. That those two men should be lauded seemed the end of reason.

One hundred and thirty-eight members of Reagan’s administration were investigated or indicted, and 21 one were convicted, placing it as the most corrupt administration of the 20th century. After eight years of Reagan’s supply-side economics and dog-whistle racism, Bush ran for president and somehow won, and then pardoned the members of Reagan’s entourage who’d been convicted. By doing so Bush set a fine example for all the citizens who believed laws should be obeyed and had voted for Bush because he said he did too, and he set an example for those who think obeying laws is for suckers, and an example for those who hadn’t made up their minds on the issue but did welcome Bush’s gesture, giving all of us a spike in criminal activity.

The young man wearing the cap looked like he worked for a living. Maybe he worked on his father’s thousand-acre spread or maybe he was the young father of three trying to make it in a hard country. Whatever his situation he was proud of his admiration for two white men who despite their personal wealth felt they should take advantage of the elected offices they held to grab more. Jane Austen in her novel Emma, calls the material comfort gained by taking advantage of your situation “the apparatus of happiness.”

Such an excess of wealth that possessions are acquired for the sake of doing so.

I8 - 9
I t is incomprehensible that Washington politicians could sit through the hours of gut-wrenching testimony from the loved ones of victims of recent gun violence in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, and not move. Yet this seems to be the case.

Speakers included Uvalde teacher Arnulfo Reyes, who survived his own gun wounds. He tearfully described witnessing the shooter massacre 11 of his students. Pediatrician Dr. Roy Guerrero, who helped identify slain children including some who were decapitated, described one child identified only by her distinctive green sneakers. One 11-year-old student, Miah Cerrillo, tearfully described covering herself in another child’s blood just to survive.

Garnell Whitfield Jr., whose 86-year-old mother Ruth Whitfield was a victim of the Buffalo massacre, pleaded with the politicians to do something: “You’re elected to protect us, to protect our way of life. I ask every one of you to imagine the faces of your mothers, as you look at mine, and ask yourself, is there nothing that we can do?”

So many witnesses asked the House representatives: “Why aren’t you protecting the people you were elected to serve?”

Yet in truth they are. Regardless of who voted for them, these politicians see their primary role as protectors of the profits of the capitalist class, in particular the interests of corporations and lobbyists, like those of the National Rifle Association, who fund their campaigns. They are servants of the capital class, and as such their job was to ensure that guns would always be plentiful, even at the expense of their constituents. They are services of the people, not the people.

What is needed is a ban on the sales of assault weapons, like the AR-15 used by the Texas shooter. Developed as weapons of war, they were never intended for domestic and civilian use, yet millions flood the market in the United States today. So why is a ban not likely to happen in the U.S. under its current capitalist economic system?

Children as Collateral Damage

Even as mass shootings were increasing, President Joe Biden and Congress hypocritically voted seven different times to spend hundreds of millions on weapons to be sent to Ukraine. U.S. weapons expenditures amount to $135 million a day. U.S. corporations have grown rich and powerful from imperialist wars. During the war in Vietnam, the image of a young Vietnamese girl badly burned by napalm helped fuel broader opposition to the war. Since then the imperialists have tried to desensitize the population at home to the violence it carries out around the world.

The United States stopped allowing reporters to cover combat zones during the first Iraq war, unless they were embedded in U.S. battalions. They brushed aside the slaughter of children in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere as “collateral damage”—what happens in wars.

This policy now extends to schools in this country. Schools and neighborhoods are being turned into war zones, with children as collateral damage. This is the cost of allowing unfiltered access to gun-sale markets for companies that produce weapons intended for war but increasingly sold to the public.

And the surplus of equipment produced for military conflicts abroad is increasingly made available for domestic use. Witness the police forces that used tanks and other combat equipment to attack activists protesting the police murders of George Floyd in 2020 and Michael Brown in 2014.

Biden and Congress want us to believe that state violence is disconnected from the violence carried out by individuals. In truth, foreign policy is the extension of domestic—and it’s a two-way street.

Mass Outpouring in Protests

On June 11, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators turned out in Washington, D.C., and in over 400 other U.S. cities for protests against gun violence. The rallies were organized by March for Our Lives, first created by students who survived the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting in 2018 in Parkland, Florida.

It is clear that people want to be safe while buying groceries or attending places of worship. Students want to be safe at school. At the same time, workers and oppressed people have the right to self-defense against white-supremacist forces, such as the 31 masked Patriot Front extremists who planned to attack an Idaho Pride event June 11.

In an effort to undermine this movement, on June 12 news surfaced that a group of 20 senators may have struck a bipartisan agreement on gun-safety measures. Their emerging package could require extra scrutiny for gun buyers under 21, grants to states to implement so-called red flag laws and new spending on mental health treatment and school safety.

Even if this measure managed to pass a Senate vote, it would do little to address the fundamental problem. Jacqueline Lugman with Black Agenda Report said it well:

“When the U.S. stops enabling the carnage all over the world as a business model, maybe then we’ll stop seeing the blowback on our streets.”

Originally published by Workers World
Betsy Piette writes for Workers World.

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**The Eagle**

*By Joy Harjo*

When all is said and done and we must confront the pain and joy we have brought into this world, we would be well advised to take the path of the indigenous people who, in their wisdom, know that the deepest inner truths lie outside of us. The eagle, rather than being an impious symbol of American exceptionalism, is actually a cleansing force that can lead us into peace and beauty.

To pray you open your whole self To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon To one whole voice that is you And know there is more Than you can’t see, can’t hear; Can’t know except in moments Steadily growing, and in languages That aren’t always sound but other Circles of motion.

Like eagle that Sunday morning Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky In wind, swept our hearts clean With sacred wings.

We see you, see ourselves and know That we must take the utmost care And kindness in all things. Breathe in, knowing we are made of All this, and breathe, knowing We are truly blessed because we Were born, and die soon within a true circle of motion. 

Eagles reporting the morning inside u.

We pray that it will be done In beauty. In beauty.

Photo: Red-winged blackbird riding a bald eagle by Jason McCarty
Post-Cold War NATO: From Europe’s Guard Dog into America's Attack Dog

From an ostensible defensive alliance, NATO has grown into an aggressor designed to promote ‘rules’ dictated by the United States

By Scott Ritter

In late June, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, wrapped up its annual summit in Madrid. The once-time trans-Atlantic defensive alliance has, over the past three decades, transformed itself from the guardian of Western Europe into global cop, seeking to project militarily a so-called values- and rules-based posture.

NATO’s first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, famously noted that the mission of the bloc was “to keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in.” In short, NATO served as a wall against the physical expansion of the Soviet Union from the perch it had established in eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War. Likewise, the creation of NATO prevented a treaty of friendship, instead undertaking a 30-year program of expansion that violated verbal promises made to Soviet leaders, leaving Russia weakened and not to be taken seriously by the self-proclaimed “victors” of the Cold War. When Russia pushed back, a process marked by Putin’s iconic speech to the 2007 Munich Security Conference, NATO undertook a more aggressive stance, promising Georgia and Ukraine eventual membership in the Alliance and, in 2014, supporting a violent coup against a government in Ukraine that kicked off a series of events that culminated in the ongoing military operation being conducted by Russia in Ukraine.

Speaking at this week’s NATO Summit, the secretary general of the organization, Jen Stoltenberg, ended all pretense that the bloc was an innocent bystander in the events leading up to Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine, noting with pride that NATO had been preparing to fight Russia since 2014—that is, since the U.S.-led coup.

Indeed, NATO has, since 2015, been training the Ukrainian military to NATO standards, not to bolster the self-defense of Ukraine, but rather for the purpose of fighting ethnic Russians in the Donbass. NATO, it seems, was never interested in a peaceful resolution to the crisis, which flared up when Ukrainian nationalists began brutalizing the region’s Moscow-leaning majority. Two NATO members, France and Germany, helped perpetuate a fraudulent peace process, the Minsk Accords, which former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko recently admitted was nothing more than a sham perpetrated for the purpose of buying time so NATO could train and equip the Ukrainian military for the purpose of forcibly seizing control of both Donbass and Crimea.

What It Means for China

All the 2007 Munich Summit really did was strip away any pretense that NATO was serious about peacefully coexisting with a powerful, sovereign Russian nation. A truly defensive alliance would have readily embraced such an outcome. NATO, it is now clear, is anything but.

NATO has been exposed as little more than a component of U.S. global power projection, providing supplemental military and political backing for an American empire defined by the “rules-based international order” premised on sustained U.S. military and economic supremacy. Keeping America on top, however, is proving to be a bridge too far, largely because the U.S. empire itself is crumbling at its foundations, struggling economically to sustain the so-called “American Dream” and politically to keep alive the flawed promise of democracy that underpins the very image the United States seeks to promote abroad. The extent that the United States can function with a modicum of credibility in the international arena today is determined purely by the level of “buy-in” by the rest of the world to the golden idol that is the “rules-based international order.”

While the United States has been able to strong-arm both NATO and its economic doppleganger, the G7, into actively promoting the “rules-based international order,” continued on page 14…

Veterans take part in the protest at NATO’s 2012 summit in Chicago. Photo: Ellen Davidson
Day, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Berrigans, plus groups tiwar movement, led by religious leaders such as Dorothy man, author of Neil Sheehan along with scholars such as Seymour Mel progress, from Barbara Lee—the single congressional vote self-identified progressives, a pitiful minority in Con who wrote emergency—afterthoughts. War is all that matters. This is a -talking about $4 or $5 billion in military aid a month. strategists, who say the war will be long and protracted, are billion allocated for Ukraine, most of it going into the hands of the state. Extravagant military expenditures are next nine countries combined, including China and Russia. spent more on the military, $813 billion next year, than the US GDP. Servicing this debt costs $300 billion a year. We prices that are projected to hit $6 a gallon. counter 44 years of wage stagnation. No respite from gas drug overdoses. No minimum wage of $15 an hour to… continued from page 1

Hedges

Peace and Planet News • This Is Not a Drill • Summer 2022

Dear America

Remember me? I was the girl next door. Remember when I was 13, America, and rode on top of the fire engine in the Memorial Day parade? I’d won an essay contest on what it meant to be a proud American. And it was always me, America, the cheerleader, the Girl Scout, who marched in front of the high school band, carrying our flag ... the tallest ... the proudest ... And remember, America, you gave me the Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award for patriotism, and I was only sixteen. And then you sent me to war, America, along with thousands of other men and women who loved you. It’s Memorial Day, America. Do you hear the flags snapping in the wind? There’s a big sale at Macy’s, and there’s a big parade in Washington for the veterans.

But it’s not the American flag or the sound of drums I hear—I hear a helicopter coming in—I smell the burning of human flesh. It’s Thomas, America, the young Black kid from Atlanta, my patient, burned by an exploding gas tank. I remember how his courage burned of human flesh. It’s Thomas, America, the burning of human flesh. It’s Thomas, America, the young Black kid from Atlanta, my patient, burned by an exploding gas tank. I remember how his courage...
We Cannot Allow the Ukraine Crisis to Lead to Nuclear War!

By Gerry Condon

The war in Ukraine is extremely dangerous. It is killing and maiming thousands of innocent civilians. There can be no excuse for that. War is never the answer. Wall-to-wall media coverage is creating a war fever in the United States and Europe. What is absolutely needed is a ceasefire and negotiations to end the war as soon as possible. One key to resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is sending advanced weapons of war, and talking openly about breaking Russia’s back. Military budgets are being increased in the United States and Europe. Weapons manufacturers are making huge profits as people and animals are being killed and injured.

Most disturbing is the real possibility of nuclear war. Russian president Putin has hinted that he would resort to using tactical nuclear weapons if he determines that Russia’s existence is imperiled by the United States and NATO. Putin’s statements are consistent with Russia’s nuclear posture, which considers nuclear weapons to be a last resort defense against the superior conventional forces of NATO.

Leaders on all sides of this conflict are recklessly gambling with the fate of human civilization. This is unacceptable and must be reversed. We call on the Biden Administration to support diplomacy that respects the legitimate security concerns of both Ukraine and Russia. Short of a global nuclear catastrophe, this war will eventually end with a negotiated settlement, the contours of which are already widely known. So why not sooner rather than later?

On the positive side, if there is one, more people are aware of the danger of nuclear war than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. People are more open than ever to listen to what anti-nuclear activists have to say. We can build support for the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and for other measures to stop back from the brink of nuclear war. We can call on all nine nuclear powers to pledge never to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and to take nuclear missiles off of hair-trigger alert.

Since all we do is war, all proposed solutions are military. … War … will cripple Russia, will curb the growing economic and military clout of China. These are demented and dangerous fantasies.

Golden Rule—Hope through Action

It is at this tenuous moment in human history and in this political climate that the Golden Rule peace boat will be sailing around the “Great Loop,” visiting scores of towns and cities throughout the Midwestern, Southern and Northeastern states.

From September 2022 through December 2023 the Golden Rule will sail around the eastern United States, called the “Great Loop,” on a mission to educate people about how they can help stop the possibility of nuclear war. The Golden Rule will bring a strong message that people are ready to hear: Nuclear weapons are immoral and illegal, and they have to be abolished.

Through education and actions, Veterans For Peace and the Golden Rule Project are trying to prevent nuclear war. This voyage could not be more timely.

A nuclear war could end life on Earth as we know it. As was stated in January by China, France, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States, “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” U.S. citizens of all political persuasions agree that nuclear war must be avoided at all costs. We must press our government to end its military adventures around the globe and to seek peace with Russia and China, as well as with all of the nations of the world. The people must demand that our government pursue good-faith negotiations—not only to end the war in Ukraine, but to abolish nuclear weapons.

Gerry Condon is a former president of Veterans For Peace and is the president of the Golden Rule Project. The trailer is out for the new documentary Golden Rule: The Journey for Peace; view the trailer at redford-center.org/films/the-golden-rule.
Independent American and Russian Women Call for Peace

This letter came about in February through the work of American and Russian women participating in a dialogue and peacebuilding initiative founded in 2021 by Women Transforming Our Nuclear Legacy and the American Committee for U.S.-Russia Accord.

We are women from the United States and Russia who are deeply concerned about the risk of possible war between our two countries, who together possess over 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons.

We are mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and we are sisters, one to another. Today we stand with our sisters in Ukraine, East and West, whose families and country have been torn apart, have already suffered more than 14,000 deaths. We stand together and we call for peace and diplomacy, with respect for all.

We are united in the belief that diplomacy, dialog, engagement, and exchange are urgently needed to end the current crisis and avert a catastrophic military conflict that could spiral out of control—even push the world to the precipice of nuclear war. For the United States and Russia, the only sane and humane course of action now is a principled commitment to clear, creative and persistent diplomacy—not military action. … to redefine security so that women, families, and our children can live in peace.

For the United States and Russia, the only sane and humane course of action now is a principled commitment to clear, creative and persistent diplomacy—not military action. … to redefine security so that women, families, and our children can live in peace.

We stand together and we call for peace. Stand with us.

WomenCall4PeaceUkraine
Signed,
Jackie Abramian, Writer
Dr. Susan H. Allen, Director, Center for Peacemaking Practice at George Mason University
Dulcie Kugelman, Center for Citizen Peacebuilding
Cynthia Lazaroff, Founder, Women Transforming Our Nuclear Legacy and NuclearWakeUpCall.Earth, Board Member, American Committee for US-Russia Accord
Sarah Lindemann-Komarova, Writer, Researcher and Activist
Olga Malutina, Artist
Eva Merkacheva, Investigative Journalist, Member of Human Rights Council of Russia
Galina Michaleva, Chairwoman of the Gender Faction, Yabloko Party, Russia
Larisa Mikhailova, PhD, Senior Researcher at Journalism Department, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russian Society of American Culture Studies Academic Secretary
Marina Pisakova-Parker, Ph.D Sociology, Founder and Chair of the Board, ANNA—Center for the Prevention of Violence, Author, Researcher
Joan Porter, Community Activist
Lubov Shtylyeva, Long-term President, Women’s Congress of Kola Peninsula and Board Member, Vy i Myi Magazine
Karen Sperling, Author and Publisher
Svetlana Sviustova, Journalist and Filmmaker
Katrina vanden Heuvel, Editorial Director and Publisher, The Nation magazine, Board Member, American Committee for US-Russia Accord
Elizabeth Vedina, Artist, Illustrator
Ann Wright, Colonel, US Army (ret.) and former US Diplomat, Veterans For Peace Advisory Board Member
Natalia Zhurina, Research and Education Officer, Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

NATO

… continued from page 11

Russia and China have come together to create an alternative worldview: international law, premised on the concepts enshrined in the U.N. Charter.

The G7 declared that the BRICS economic forum, composed of nations who are more aligned with a “law-based” world order, and not a U.S.-dominated “rules-based” one, represents the greatest threat to its relevance on the world stage. NATO, likewise, has declared that the Russian and Chinese challenge to the “rules-based international order” represents a major threat to NATO’s core values, prompting an expansion of NATO’s reach into the Pacific as a countermove.

In short, NATO (together with the G7 group) is declaring war on the principles of international law that are encapsulated in the U.N. Charter. At its Madrid Summit, NATO has made it clear that it’s ready to shed blood to defend a legacy whose legitimacy exists only among the collective imaginations of its members. And not all of them, either.

The goal of the rest of the world now needs to be to seek to minimize the damage done by this beast and find a way to dispose of it before it can do any more harm to the global community.

Scott Ritter is a former U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer and author of Disarmament in the Time of Perestroika: Arms Control and the End of the Soviet Union. He served in the Soviet Union as an inspector implementing the INF Treaty, in General Schwarzkopf’s staff during the Gulf War, and from 1991 to 1998 as a U.N. weapons inspector.
By Victor Grossman

The tide of public opinion in Germany is as overpowering—and changeable—as elsewhere: “Stop the Russian invasion!” “Defend Ukraine!” “Send money!” “More, bigger, farther-reaching weapons!” “Defeat Russia!” Sustaining this tide is an all-encompassing media campaign. The term “peace” is now a scowling Putin. And with him Russia, Labor, Gaddafi been eliminated—is now a gargoyle staring at us from magazine covers. With that frightening term eroding, it is time to make a deal with Germany.

Forces of Evil. Once it was Anarchism, then Bolshevism, Communism. After that, Fascism. Today, for some, it is “regime change.” In any case, it is not about European borders any more, but about control of the world's resources and energy. The answer must be negotiations and peace.

The answer must be negotiations and peace. Stalin saw the pact with Hitler as necessitated by an existential threat. The attacks against Guatemala, Grenada, Panama, Dominican Republic, not to mention Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, all of them far distant from Washington or New York. Luckily, the toll in lives and damage in Ukraine has not approached that in some of those invasions. Of burning necessity today; those numbers must never be approached! But even the most valid comparisons with past or present dangers cannot minimize the Putin government’s share in the guilt for present horror. Nor can they overcome worries that Putin may indeed be dreaming of Czar Peter, of a Greater Russia, denying Ukrainian rights to independence and sovereignty. Nor can accusations of Nazism rule out the violation of international law, the wrecking of so many towns, cities and families, despite a very real Bandera cult and the strength of Asov thugs. (Stepan Bandera was a Ukrainian nationalist, politician and head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which was responsible for massacres and ethnic cleansing, and collaborated with Nazi Germany. The Asov Regiment began as a volunteer nationalistic militia and is now part of the Ukrainian National Guard. They are known for using symbols associated with Nazism. The editor) It is more than likely that a massive attack against the Russian-speaking Donbas republics was planned and Putin moved to prevent it. But was invasion the only method of prevention?

Berlin Munich Kyiv

Stalin saw the pact with Hitler as necessitated by an existential threat.
Israel Systematically Targeting Journalists Before Abu Akleh Killing

Complaint filed with International Criminal Court two weeks earlier

By Marjorie Cohn

Just two weeks before Israeli forces assassinated beloved Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, the International Federation of Journalists, the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate and the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians had submitted a formal complaint to the International Criminal Court accusing Israel of systematically targeting Palestinian journalists.

“The targeting of journalists and media organisations in Palestine violates the right to life and freedom of expression,” said Anthony Bellanger, the general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists.

In a moment when the Israeli government’s propaganda machine is working hard to keep mainstream news organizations mired in reporting on Israeli efforts to raise questions about who shot the bullet that killed Abu Akleh, we must insist on understanding her killing within the broader and ongoing context of Israeli violence against Palestinian journalists.

“It was revealing that the Israeli military spokesperson described Shireen and her colleague, Ali al-Samudi, as ‘armed with cameras, if you will permit me to say that,’” writes James Zogby in The Nation. “That is what good journalists do—they arm themselves with cameras and laptops. They witness events as they happen and tell stories so that readers and viewers can understand the human drama that is unfolding. It appears that Israel finds this profoundly—even existentially—threatening. Why else would they have killed dozens of Palestinian journalists in the past two decades?”

It was perhaps no accident that Israel targeted Abu Akleh on May 11, four days before Palestinians commemorated the 74-year anniversary of the Nakba (the Arabic word for “catastrophe”). On May 15, Palestinians mourn the violent founding of Israel on Palestinian land.

For 25 years, Abu Akleh had documented Israeli war crimes in the occupied Palestinian territory for Al Jazeera. “Abu Akleh herself embodied Palestinian humanity by speaking truth to power,” Al Jazeera reported. She was covering an arrest operation by Israeli forces near the entrance to the Jenin refugee camp when she was assassinated. Although she was wearing a flak vest marked “PRESS” and a helmet labeled as press, she was shot below the ear — the only part of her head not covered by her protective helmet — clearly evidencing an intent to kill.

Al Jazeera journalist Shatha Hanaysha, also wearing a helmet and vest labeled as press, tried to reach Abu Akleh, but soldiers “did not stop firing even after she collapsed,” Hanaysha said. “I couldn’t even extend my arm to pull her because of the shots. The army was adamant on shooting to kill.”

Ali al-Samudi, another journalist with Al Jazeera who was also wearing a press vest, was shot in the back while covering the same event as Abu Akleh. He survived and is being treated for his wounds.

Thousands of mourners came out to honor Abu Akleh. To add insult to injury, as her casket was being carried through the streets, Israeli occupation forces attacked them, “beating and kicking the mourners,” then “forcing pallbearers to nearly drop the coffin.”

“Now, the occupying power has spoken back by shooting her in the head and attacking her mourners — a response that can only be classified as acute and multilayered savagery, in keeping with Israel’s modulus operandi (BDS) movement.

The BDS movement was launched by 170 Palestinian civil society organizations in 2005. It called for boycott, divestment and sanctions, described as “nonviolent punitive measures” that will last until Israel complies fully with international law by 1) ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling its barrier wall (85 percent of which is on Palestinian land); 2) recognizing the fundamental rights of Arab Palestinian citizens in Israel to full equality; and 3) respecting, promoting and protecting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their land as mandated by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194.

The killing of Abu Akleh has led to calls for an independent, impartial investigation and galvanized opposition to Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

On May 13, UN human rights experts condemned Abu Akleh’s killing, saying it “is part of a continuation of the high rate of attacks against media workers, particularly Palestinian journalists. More than 40 Palestinian journalists have reportedly been killed since 2000, with hundreds injured or targeted for violence.”

Noting that 2021 marked the highest number of Palestinian deaths from Israeli violence since Operation Protective Edge, the experts declared, “The unsustainable situation is inherent to the context of protracted military occupation, in which violence and repression are used to perpetuate a system of Palestinian subjugation.” They called for “the dismantlement of the occupation, including the Gaza blockade and the illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.”

More than 6,000 people have signed a statement initiated by the antiwar and anti-imperialist group CODEPINK, calling for a thorough and impartial investigation of Abu Akleh’s killing and the immediate suspension of United States military aid to Israel. The U.S. enables Israeli war crimes and its illegal occupation by providing it with $3.8 billion in unconditional military assistance as well as the classification of Israel as an apartheid state by leading human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Israeli group B’Tselem.

The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) said Abu Akleh’s killing amounts to the war crime of willful killing under the ICC’s Rome Statute. BNC called for accountability for the perpetrators, those who gave the orders, and the entire political leadership of apartheid Israel.

“Though Israel killed Shireen Abu Akleh, her blood is also on the hands of the enablers, funders and defend- ers of apartheid, primarily the US, EU, UK, Canada and Australia,” BNC noted in a statement. “We call for public BDS pressure to end the West’s colonial hypocrisy and shameless complicity in Israeli crimes and ongoing Na-kba against Indigenous Palestinians.”

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Marjorie Cohn is professor emerita at Thomas Jefferson School of Law; former president of the National Lawyers Guild, and a member of the national advisory boards of Assange Defense and Veterans For Peace, and the bureau of the International Association of Demo- cratic Lawyers. Her books include Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral and Geopolitical Issues. She is co-host of Law and Disorder radio.
Dialogue, Displacement, and Despair

Why Palestine is burning like never before

By Miko Peled

OCCUPIED PALESTINE—When no one is steering the ship, the wind, the currents, and the waves lead it into the depths. This is what is happening in Palestine. The Naqab is burning, Sheikh Jarrah is burning, young and old Palestinians are being killed everywhere, Gaza is practically under water with flooding, and Palestinian refugees are barely alive in camps throughout the region. Furthermore, in the U.S. capital there isn’t a single entity that represents Palestine; and, in those rare capitals where some representation does exist, it is quite useless.

Palestinian refugees, both in Palestine and in the neighboring countries, not only are forgotten but are also being allowed to perish slowly as the world denies them meaningful relief. Living in camps built 75 years ago that were only supposed to house them temporarily. They are subjected to hunger, poverty, and constant bombardment and terrorizing by Israel. In addition to all of that, wars and massacres by various groups—usually working in collusion with Israel—have made their lives a living hell.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was created to care for the Palestinian refugees, but it is not really able to care for all of them. The legal case for reparations and return is strong. However, the same study that made that legal case also revealed that there are legal distinctions between refugees, and, while these distinctions are unseen, they exist and make a great deal of difference in what little relief refugees are able to receive.

The dismal funding UNRWA has received over the years was barely enough to allow the Palestinian refugees to survive. Then, in 2018, under Zionist influence, Donald Trump proudly announced that his administration was going to end all funding to UNRWA. If that was not enough, according to a 2021 Al-Jazeera report, “The United Kingdom cut more than half its funding to UNRWA. It went from $56.5 million in 2020 to $27.6 [million in 2021].” The report also states that wealthy Gulf states that once contributed $200 million provided only $20 million in 2021.

According to a report by the Brookings Institution: “Nowhere are the UNRWA cuts more acute than in the Gaza Strip, where about two million souls inhabit a tiny area twice the size of Washington, D.C., that few can gain permission to leave. There, UNRWA provides services to 1.3 million people, spending about 40% of its overall budget. Roughly 262,000 boys and girls are enrolled in 267 UNRWA schools.”

In an interview I had recently published with Dr. Ghada Karmi, Dr. Karmi said, “I don’t want to hear about how nice things are. Why don’t you tell me why I can’t go home?” The dialog industry promotes fake, feel-good exchanges between Israelis and Palestinians, which in turn are designed to create the illusion that there is hope. As though all that is needed is for us to sit together and get to know one another because deep down inside we are all well-meaning people.

As the end of all the meetings, camps, and weekend retreats, Israelis return to their privileged lives and the Palestinians to their reality of constant oppression. Israelis continue to serve in the military in all of its ugly forms, as reservists or professionals, and Palestinians return to the camps and villages where they live with targets marked on their backs.

The dialogue phenomenon tries to cover up the fact that millions of Palestinians are displaced and that despair is all that life has to offer them. But it provides no hope, no solution, only a guarantee that things will continue to get worse for Palestinians.

As the saying goes, if you’re not mad—infuriated, actually—then you’re not paying attention.

A Tale of Two Summits

By Rick Sterling

There were two summits in Los Angeles June 8–10: the Summit of the Americas hosted by the U.S. State Department and the People’s Summit hosted by U.S. and international activist organizations. The two summits were held in the same city at the same time but could not be otherwise more different.

Begun in 1994, in the heyday of U.S. international dominance, the Summit of the Americas is officially a function of the Organization of American States. It is meant to coordinate and consolidate U.S. economic, political, and cultural interests. The first summit, held in Miami, served this goal well. The Soviet Union had broken up, severely hurting allies like Cuba. Neoliberalism was on the march, had broken up, severely hurting allies like Cuba. Neoliberalism was on the march, hadbroken up, severely hurting allies like Cuba. Neoliberalism was on the march, had broken up, severely hurting allies like Cuba. Neoliberalism was on the march, had broken up, severely hurting allies like Cuba. Neoliberalism was on the march. The policy of exclusion continues under the Biden administration and this became a major feature of the just concluded Summit of the Americas. Despite threats to boycott the gathering by many Latin American and Caribbean presidents, the United States chose to exclude Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. This resulted in the presidents of seven countries choosing not to attend: Mexico, Bolivia, Honduras, St. Vincent, Antigua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) said simply, “There cannot be a summit of the Americas if all the countries of the American continent do not participate. Or there can be, but … it is just a continuation of the old policy of interventionism, or disrespect of nations and their peoples.”

As it turned out, the absence of three excluded and seven allied leaders became a predominant feature of the summit. The ghost of the 10 hung over all events. The summit accomplished little, with the lack of preparation being compared to a “privileged but lazy student” who does not prepare for a test. The Atlantic analyzed “segregation: “The Summit of the Americas, hosted this year by Joe Biden, offers a measure of how far the U.S. has fallen.” Attendance was low and resolutions were filled with platitudes with little substance. Criticisms of the U.S. exclusion of countries were openly aired.

The New York Times described the summit by quoting a former Mexican ambassador, who said many countries are “challenging U.S. influence, because U.S. influence has been diminishing in the continent.”

At the Summit of the Americas, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and OAS leader Luis Almagro spoke at a panel on Journalistic freedom.” Journalist Walter Smolarek exposed the farce as he boldly confronted Almagro about his complicity in the 2019 Bolivian coup and more.

There was a plea from many countries to get beyond conflict and cold war, to genuinely work together to address the looming and already dangerous results of climate change.

The Summit of the Americas was expensive. Just the LA police security cost over $15 million.

Two miles away from the Summit of the Americas, the People’s Summit was continued on page 20…

Leftist Gustavo Petro Wins Colombian Presidency

By Jake Johnson

Former guerrilla fighter and long-time lawmaker Gustavo Petro defeated a millionaire businessman viewed as Colombia’s Donald Trump June 19 to become the South American nation’s first leftist president-elect, riding a wave of mass anger over inequality, poverty, and the corruption of the right-wing political establishment.

“The government of hope has arrived.”

Petro’s running mate, environmental activist Francia Márquez, will become the first Black woman to serve as Colombia’s vice president, spurring expectations that the new government will move to tackle surging deforestation in the Colombian Amazon and curb the nation’s reliance on planet-warming fossil fuels. Petro, who will take office in August, campaigned on banning all new oil projects.

“Today all women win,” Márquez said June 19. “We are facing the greatest possibility of change in recent times.”

The leftist ticket’s historic victory in a nation long dominated by conservative elites—including current President Iván Duque—was met with enthusiastic applause throughout the region and across the globe.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the former Brazilian president who is favored to take the post in October, said Petro’s win “strengthens democracy and progressive forces in Latin America.”

Petro’s leftist President Pedro Castillo hailed the election results as a “historic democratic victory” for Colombia and said that “we are united by a common feeling that seeks collective, social, and regional integration improvements for our peoples.”

Brother Gustavo,” he added, “always count on the support of Peru.”

Former UK Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn joined the chorus of applause. “Incredible news from Colombia,” he wrote on Twitter, “with the election of a socialist president who has shown the power of community organizing to build a popular policy platform to heal the divisions of the past and bring about social justice.”

Petro’s victory comes on the heels of widespread protests across Colombia in 2021, demonstrations sparked by a tax proposal from the Duque government that would have disproportionately hit the poor. An estimated 39% of Colombians lived on less than $89 a month last year.

Protests over the tax plan, which Duque ultimately withdrew, quickly ballooned into broader uprisings over the country’s widespread poverty, systematic inequities, and austerity. The Colombian police—often armed with U.S.-made equipment—responded viciously to the demonstrations, and activists were arrested en masse.

“I ask the attorney general to release our young people,” Petro said during his victory speech on Sunday, prompting a jubilant response from the crowd of supporters.

In addition to vowing to democratize land ownership and combat poverty that has plagued Colombia for decades, the president-elect has pledged to end the nation’s war on drugs, which it has waged alongside the U.S. for years to disastrous effect. Petro also campaigned on making Colombia’s public universities free and accessible to all.

Henry Perdomo, a 60-year-old manufacturing worker, told The Washington Post shortly after he cast his vote for Petro that “we’ve been subjected to the right and the extreme right for more than 200 years … and things here are bad, bad. … We need a change.”

“We need a change,” he added. Reprinted with permission from Common Dreams.

Jake Johnson is a staff writer for Common Dreams.

Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez: A new era for Colombia - BBC News

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Peace and Planet News • This Is Not a Drill • Summer 2022
Washington’s Lethal Global Monroe Doctrine

The ultimate aim of this U.S. policy is to acquire ‘first strike’ capacity against Russia and China—the ability to inflict damage with a first use of nuclear weapons against Russia or China to the extent that it effectively prevents retaliation.

Using Military Force to Compensate for Economic Decline

The answer to “why” is clear: the United States has lost in peaceful economic competition to developing countries in general and China in particular. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2016 China overtook the United States to become the world’s largest economy. As of 2021, China accounted for 19% of the global economy, compared to the United States at 16%. This gap is only growing wider, and, by 2027, the IMF projects that China’s economy will outsize the United States by nearly 30%. However, the United States has maintained unrivalled global military supremacy—its military expenditure is larger than the next nine countries combined. Seeking to maintain unipolar global dominance, the United States is increasingly substituting peaceful economic competition with military force.

A good starting point to understand this strategic shift in U.S. policy is the speech given by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on May 26. In it, Blinken openly admitted that the United States does not seek military equality with other states, but military supremacy, particularly with respect to China: “President Biden has instructed the Department of Defense to hold China as its pacing challenge, to ensure that China—again—stays ahead.” However, with nuclear-armed states such as China or Russia, military supremacy necessitates achieving nuclear supremacy—an escalation above and beyond the current war in Ukraine.

The Pursuit of Nuclear Primacy

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the United States has systematically withdrawn from key treaties limiting the threat of use of nuclear weapons: in 2002, the United States unilaterally exited the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; in 1993, it abandoned the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and, in 2020, withdrew from the Open Skies Treaty. Abandoning these treaties strengthened the U.S. ability to seek nuclear supremacy.

The ultimate aim of this U.S. policy is to acquire “first strike” capacity against Russia and China—which possesses the world’s most advanced non-U.S. nuclear arsenal—this would “deny Moscow a viable second-strike option, effectively eliminating its nuclear deterrent altogether, through ‘decapitation.’” In reality, the fallout and threat of nuclear winter from such a strike would threaten the entire world.

This policy of nuclear primacy has long been pursued by certain circles within Washington. In 2006, it was argued in the leading U.S. foreign policy journal Foreign Affairs that “[it] will probably soon be possible for the United States to destroy the long-range nuclear arsenals of Russia or China with a first strike.” Contrary to these hopes, the United States has not yet been able to achieve a first-strike capacity, but this is due to development of hypersonic missiles and other weapons by Russia and China—not a change in U.S. policy.

From its attacks on Global South countries to its increased willingness to go to war with a great power such as Russia to attempting to gain first-strike nuclear capacity, the logic behind the escalation of U.S. militarism is clear: the United States is increasingly employing military force to compensate for its economic decline. In this extremely dangerous period, it is vital for humanity that all progressive forces unite to meet this great threat.

In 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Global South remained gripped by a never-ending debt crisis, the United States bombed Iraq despite entreaties from the Iraqi government continued on page 23...

Diablo Canyon

Trudell recounts his experience protesting the construction of a nuclear power plant in 1981, an action that resulted in the arrest of 1,900 activists.

By John Trudell

Today I challenged the nukes

The soldiers of the state Placed me in captivity

Or so they thought

They bound my wrists in their plastic handcuffs

Surrounding me with their Plastic minds and faces

They ridiculed me

But I could see through

To the ridicule they brought

On themselves

They told me squat over there

By the trash They left a soldier to guard me

I was the Vietcong

I was Crazy Horse

Little did they understand

Squatting down in the earth

They placed me with my power

My power to laugh

Laugh at their righteous wrong
Mercy Now

By Mary Gauthier

My father could use a little mercy now. The fruits of his labor fall and rot slowly on the ground. His work is almost over, it won’t be long, he won’t be around. I love my father, he could use some mercy now.

My brother could use a little mercy now. He’s a stranger to freedom, he’s shackled to his fear and his doubt. The pain that he lives in it’s almost more than living will allow. I love my brother, he could use some mercy now.

My church and my country could use a little mercy now. As they sink into a poisoned pit it’s going to take forever to climb out. They carry the weight of the faithful who follow them down. I love my church and country, they could use some mercy now.

Every living thing could use a little mercy now. Only the hand of grace can end the race. I love life and life itself could use some mercy now.

I knew we don’t deserve it but we need it anyhow. We hang in the balance dangle ‘tween hell and hallowed ground. And every single one of us could use some mercy now. Every single one of us could use some mercy now. Every single one of us could use some mercy now.
Assange

...continued from page 3

Assange, and put him in the high-security Belmarsh prison (which the BBC in 2004 dubbed “the British Guantánamo”), where he has remained ever since.

After the lowest-level British court in early 2021 granted Assange's extradition request on the ground that Assange's physical and mental health could not endure the U.S. prison system, Assange has lost every subsequent appeal. Last year, he was permitted to marry his longtime girlfriend, the British human rights lawyer Stella Morris Assange, who is also the mother of their two young children. An extremely unusual unanimity among press freedom and civil liberties groups was formed in early 2021 to urge the Biden Administration to cease its prosecution of Assange, but Biden officials—despite spending the Trump years masquerading as press freedom advocates—ignored them.

The Home Secretary's decision this morning—with characteristic British subservience when it comes to the demands of U.S. masters, it is difficult to see how these commitments to propagandize their domestic populations and justify and ennoble the various wars and other forms of subversion they themselves wage in other countries in the name of upholding values they themselves do not support. The Julian Assange persecution is a great personal tragedy, a political travesty and a grave danger to basic civic freedoms. But it is also a bright and enduring monument to the fraud and deceit that lies at the heart of these two governments’ depictions of who and what they are.

This article was first published at greenwald.substack.com.

Glenn Greenwald is a U.A. journalist, author, and lawyer. In 2014, he cofounded The Intercept, of which he was an editor until he resigned in October 2020. Greenwald subsequently started publishing on Substack.

Unexploded Ordnance: A Ballad

By Doug Rawlings

So I was maybe all of twenty-one
When they whipped me into some kind of soul-less shape
Yet another one of America’s weeping mothers’ sons
Sent forth into this world to raze, pillage, and rape

And now it’s coming on to another Christmas Eve
And songs of joy and peace fill up our little town.
How I ask myself could I possibly believe
I could do what I did and not reap what I had sown?

In that land far away from what I call home
A grandfather leads his granddaughter by the hand
Into a field where we did what had to be done.
They trip into a searing heat brighter than a thousand suns.

Free speech and press freedoms do not exist in reality in the United States or the UK. They are merely rhetorical instruments to propagandize their domestic population and justify and ennoble the various wars and other forms of subversion they constantly wage in other countries in the name of upholding values they themselves do not support. The Julian Assange persecution is a great personal tragedy, a political travesty and a grave danger to basic civic freedoms. But it is also a bright and enduring monument to the fraud and deceit that lies at the heart of these two governments’ depictions of who and what they are.

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Military posturing in Asia-Pacific also risks nuclear war and potential extinction of the human species.

By Ann Wright

While the world’s attention is focused on the brutal Russia-Ukraine conflict, halfway around the world, in the Pacific Ocean, the competition/confrontation of the United States and NATO toward China and North Korea is taking an increasingly military turn.

Military responses to perceived national security issues by any of the countries in this region, whether it be North Korea, China, Russia, or the United States, will be disastrous for peoples over the entire planet.

The U.S. military’s Indo-Pacific command, headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, Rimp of the Pacific or RIMPAC 2022, military war games, will have 38 ships from 26 countries, four submarines, 170 aircraft and 25,000 military personnel practicing naval war maneuvers in the Hawaiian waters from June 29 to August 4. Additionally, ground units from nine countries will come ashore on the islands of Hawaii in amphibious landings.

Citizen Opposition to RIMPAC

Many citizens of the 26 RIMPAC countries do not agree with their country’s participation in the RIMPAC war games, calling them provocative and dangerous for their countries.

The Pacific Peace Network, with members from countries/islands across the Pacific including Guáilam, Jeju Island, South Korea; Okinawa, Japan; the Philippines; Northern Mariana Islands; Aotearoa (New Zealand); Australia; Hawai’i, and the United States, demands that RIMPAC be cancelled, calling the naval armada “dangerous, provocative, and destructive.”

The network’s petition for cancellation of RIMPAC states that “RIMPAC dramatically contributes to the destruction of the ecology system and aggravation of the climate crisis in the Pacific region. RIMPAC war forces will blow up decommissioned ships with missiles endangering marine mammals such as humpback whales, dolphins and Hawaiian monk seals and polluting the ocean with combustibles from the vessels. Land forces will conduct ground assaults that will tear up beaches where green sea turtles come to breed.”

The petition rejects “the massive expenditure of funds on wargaming when humanity is suffering from lack of food, water and other life-sustaining elements. Human security is not based on military war drills, but on care for the planet and its inhabitants.”

Other citizen groups in the Pacific region are adding their voices to the call to cancel RIMPAC.

In its statement about RIMPAC, the Hawaii-based Women’s Voices, Women Speak declared that “RIMPAC causes ecological devastation, colonial violence and gun worship. RIMPAC’s ship sinking, missile testing, and torpedo blasting have destroyed island ecosystems and disturbed sea creatures’ wellbeing. This convening of military personnel promotes toxic masculinity, sex trafficking and violence against local populations.”

In a June 14, 2022, opinion piece in the Honolulu Star Advertiser, the only statewide newspaper in Hawai’i, three local activists with the Hawai’i Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines wrote: “We are one with the people of Hawaii in opposing the U.S.-led wars, for which Balikatan (US-Philippine ground war maneuvers) and RIMPAC are warmups. As it is, our governments bring together the people of Hawaii and the people of the Philippines to prepare for war, death and destruction.

“Military posturing in the Asia-Pacific also risks nuclear war and the potential extinction of the human species. We must instead work toward global cooperation to address the threats of climate change and biodiversity loss; to build toward peace, life and coexistence.”

The citizen’s petition to Cancel RIMPAC has individual signatures and organizational endorsers from around the world.

2022 RIMPAC includes military forces from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Forty percent of RIMPAC participants are either in NATO or have NATO ties. Six of the 26 RIMPAC countries are members of NATO—Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, while four other participating countries are Asia-Pacific “partners” of NATO—Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand.

NATO military exercises throughout Europe, particularly on the border with Russia, and the U.S. never-ending discussion about Ukraine’s possible membership in NATO (the door is never closed) were two major red lines the Russian government used to justify its war on Ukraine.

In the Pacific, NATO forces coming into the region greatly increase the tension with China and North Korea.

Marine Mammals Endangered

Military naval events both in practice and in war are dangerous for humans and for marine mammals. The Russian-Ukrainian war is the most recent example. Scores of dolphins have turned up dead on the coasts of the Black Sea from that war.

Research scientists suggest that dolphins may be dying in Black Sea due to a large presence of Russian warships and Ukrainian responses to those ships disrupting the dolphins’ communication pattern. The “intense ship noise and low-frequency sonars” interfere with the dolphins’ main means of communication. Disruptive underwater noises may either have them end up losing their way in large fishing nets or around the Black Sea shores.”

According to a report by the UK Guardian, researchers believe that heightened noise pollution in the northern Black Sea caused by around 20 Russian navy vessels and ongoing military activities might have driven the dolphins south to the Turkish and Bulgarian coasts.

The Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TÜDAV) announced recently that more than 80 dolphins were found dead across the country’s western Black Sea coast, “an extraordinary increase” in the number of marine mammals found dead in a typical year. A recent video from the Black Sea documents some of the 80 dead dolphins.

Several studies in the past have continued on next page …
Whales

... continued from page 24

and of routine naval exercises. Needless to say, these ecocidal activities dramatically decrease the ocean’s abilities to mitigate climate catastrophe.

The most lethal component to whales is sound, used to detect submarines. Whales will go to great lengths to get away from the deadly rolls of sonar waves. They “will swim hundreds of miles ... and even beach themselves” in groups in order to escape sonar, according to an article in Scientific American. Necropsies have revealed damages from the eyes and ears, caused by too-rapid changes in depths as whales try to flee the sonar, revealed the article.

Low levels of sonar that may not directly damage whales could still harm them by triggering behavioral changes. According to an article in Nature, a 2006 UK military study used an array of hydrophones to listen for whale sounds during marine maneuvers. Over the period of the exercise, “the number of whale recordings dropped from over 200 to less than 50,” Nature reported.

“Beaked whale species ... appear to cease vocalising and forage for food in the area around active sonar transmissions,” concluded a 2007 unpublished UK report, which referred to the study.

The report further noted, “Since these animals feed at depth, this could have the effect of preventing a beaked whale from feeding over the course of the trial and could lead to second or third order effects on the animal and population as a whole.”

The report extrapolated that these second- and third-order effects could include starvation and then death.

Until now, sonar in the oceans has been exclusively used for military purposes. This is about to change. There is a “subsea data network,” being deployed that would use sonar as a component of undersea Wi-Fi for mixed civilian and military use. Scientists from member nations of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), including, but not limited to Australia, China, the UK, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, are creating what is called the “Internet of Underwater Things,” or IoUT. They are busy at the drawing board, designing data networks consisting of sonar and laser transmitters to be installed across vast undersea expanses. These transmitters would send sonar signals to a network of transponders on the ocean surface, which would then send 5G signals to satellites.

Utilized by both industry and military, the data network would saturate the ocean with sonar waves. This does not bode well for whale wellness or the climate. And yet, promoters are calling this development the “smart ocean.”

The military is orchestrating a similar overhaul on land and in space. Known as the Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2), it would interface with the subsea sonar data network. It would require a grid of satellites that could control every coordinate on the planet and in the atmosphere, rendering a real-life, 3D chessboard, ready for high-tech battle.

In service to the JADC2, thousands more satellites are being launched into space. Reefs are being dredged and forests are being razed throughout Asia and the Pacific as an ambitious system of “mini-bases” is being erected on as many islands as possible—missile deployment stations, satellite launch pads, radar tracking stations, aircraft carrier ports, live-fire training areas and other facilities—all for satellite-controlled war. The system of mini-bases, in communication with the satellites, and with aircraft, ships, and undersea submarines (via sonar), will be replacing the bulky brick-and-mortar bases of the 20th century.

Its data-storage cloud, called JEDI (Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure), will be co-developed at a cost of tens of billions of dollars. The Pentagon has requested bids on the herculean project from companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and Google.

Viewed from a climate perspective, the Department of Defense is flagrantly barreling away from its stated mission, to “ensure our nation’s security.” The ongoing atrocities of the U.S. military against whales and marine ecosystems make a mockery of any of its climate initiatives.

While the slogan “Save the Whales” has been bandied about for decades, they’re the ones actually saving us. In destroying them, we destroy ourselves.

Originally published in Local Peace Economy/Independent Media Institute at CounterPunch

Koochan Paik-Mander, who grew up in postwar Korea and in the U.S. colony of Guam, is a Hawaii-based journalist and media educator. She is the co-author of The Superferry Chronicles: Hawai’i’s Uprising Against Militarism, Commercialism and the Desecration of the Earth.

RIMPAC

... continued from previous page

firmed that military sonars are harmful to marine life and many militaries have adopted mitigating measures to protect wildlife. Whales and dolphins have been killed in U.S. military exercises by sonar and bombs.

In March 2000, the U.S. Navy admitted that its use of a high-intensity sonar system caused 16 beaked and minke whales to strand themselves on beaches in the Bahamas shortly after U.S. Navy ships using high-intensity sonar had passed by. Six of the whales died and autopsies on the mammals revealed bleeding around the brains of the whales’ inner ears and in one instance in the brain.

Ten whales were pushed back into the sea but a decline in sightings of beaked whales led researchers working in the area to believe that many more may have died.

The Navy and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) launched a series of investigations with the interim synopsis of the reports concluding that the bleeding was caused by species-specific sonar waves produced by the high-intensity sonar.

With almost twice as many military ships (38) arriving in the Hawaiian waters than the Russian navy has in the Black Sea (20), the dangerous effects of the RIMPAC war maneuvers on dolphins, whales, and fishes will be substantial.

The effect of the RIMPAC military war exercises on international relations in the Pacific region may also have dangerous intended or unintended consequences that could put the region into ever increasing military confrontation instead of dialogue.

We need only look to the horrific loss of life and destruction of cities, farms and settlements in UK-occupied Iraq and in thousands of conflicts all over the world and in the recent U.S. war in Afghanistan to realize what would happen should an incident, accidental or intentional, trigger military responses in Asia.

Major cities in Asia—Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo, Pyongyang and Moscow—could be targeted and destroyed by ballistic missiles from the United States and NATO.

In the United States, Honolulu; Hagatna, Guam; Washington, DC; New York; San Francisco; Los Angeles; San Diego; Seattle, or Houston could be targeted and destroyed by missiles from China, Russia and North Korea.


No More Wars For ‘Peace’

Military responses to perceived national security issues by any of the countries in the region whether it be North Korea, China, Russia or the United States will be disastrous for peoples over the entire planet.

We citizens must not let our governments continue confrontation instead of dialogue to resolve national security issues. The lives of people around the world are at stake. We must not let those who make money and political status out of war win … AGAIN … and start another horrific war for “peace.”

Ann Wright is a 29-year U.S. Army/Army Reserves veteran who retired as a colonel and a former U.S. diplomat who resigned in March 2003 in opposition to the war on Iraq. She served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, and Mongolia. In December 2001 she was on the small team that reopened the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. She is the co-author of the book Dissent: Voices of Conscience.

Monroe Doctrine

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for a negotiated agreement. During that bombing, Libyan writer Ahmad Ibrahim al-Fagih penned a lyrical poem, “Nafaq Tadihuhu Imra Waahala” (“A Tunnel Lit by a Woman”), in which he sang, “A time has passed, and another time has not come and will never come.” Gloom defined the moment. Today, we are in very dangerous times. And yet, the despondency of al-Fagih does not define our sensibility. The mood has altered. There is a belief in a world beyond imperialism, a mood that is not only evident in countries such as Cuba and China, but equally in India and Japan, as well as among the hard-working people who would like our collective attention to be focused on the actual dilemmas of humanity and not on the ugliness of war and domination.

Vijay Prashad is a Marxist historian and commentator. He is an executive-director of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, the chief editor of LeftWord Books and a senior nonresident fellow at Chomsky Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China.
Whales Could Save the Planet

By Koohan Paik-Mander

The U.S. military is famous for being the single largest consumer of petroleum products in the world and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Its carbon emissions exceed those released by “more than 200 countries combined.”

Now, with the Biden administration’s mandate to slash carbon emissions “at least in half by the end of the decade,” the Pentagon has committed to using all-electric vehicles and transitioning to biofuels for all its trucks, ships and aircraft. But is only addressing emissions enough to mitigate the current climate crisis?

What does not figure into the climate calculus of the new emission-halving plan is that the Pentagon can still continue to destroy Earth’s natural systems that help sequester carbon and generate oxygen.

For example, the plan ignores the Pentagon’s continuing role in the annihilation of whales, in spite of the miraculous role that large cetaceans have played in delaying climate catastrophe and “maintaining healthy marine ecosystems,” according to a report by Whale and Dolphin Conservation. This fact has most gone unnoticed until only recently.

There are countless ways in which the Pentagon hobbles Earth’s inherent abilities to regenerate itself. Yet, it has been the decimation of populations of whales and dolphins over the last decade—resulting from the year-round, full-spectrum military practices carried out in the oceans—that has fast-tracked us toward a cataclysmic environmental tipping point.

The other imminent danger that whales and dolphins face is from the installation of space-war infrastructure, which is taking place currently. This new infrastructure comprises the development of the so-called “smart ocean,” rocket launchpads, missile tracking stations and other components of satellite-based battle. If the billions of dollars being plowed into the 2022 defense budget for space-war technology are any indication of what’s in store, the destruction to marine life caused by the use of these technologies will only accelerate in the future, hurting Earth’s creatures to an even quicker demise than already forecast.

### Whale Health: The Easiest and Most Effective Way to Sequester Carbon

It’s first important to understand how whales are indispensable to mitigating climate catastrophe, and why reviving their numbers is crucial to slowing down damage and even repairing the marine ecosystem. The importance of whales in fighting the climate crisis has also been highlighted in an article that appeared in the International Monetary Fund’s Finance and Development magazine, which calls for the restoration of global whale populations. “Protecting whales could add significantly to carbon capture,” states the article, showing how the global financial institution also recognizes whale health to be one of the most economical and effective solutions to the climate crisis.

Throughout their lives, whales enable the oceans to sequester a whopping 2 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. That astonishing amount in a single year is nearly double the 1.2 billion tons that was emitted by the U.S. military in the entire 16-year span between 2001 and 2017, according to an article in Grist, which relied on a paper from the Costs of War Project at Brown University’s Watson Institute.

The profound role of whales in keeping the world alive is generally unrecognized. Much of how whales sequester carbon is due to their symbiotic relationship with phytoplankton, the organisms that are the base of all marine food chains.

The way the sequestering of carbon by whales works is through the piston-like movements of the marine mammals as they dive to the depths to feed and then come up to the surface to breathe. This “whale pump” propels their own feces in giant plumes up to the surface of the water. This helps bring essential nutrients from the ocean depths to the surface areas where sunlight enables phytoplankton to flourish and reproduce, and where photosynthesis promotes the sequestration of carbon and the generation of oxygen.

More than half the oxygen in the atmosphere comes from phytoplankton. Because of these infinitesimal marine organisms, our oceans truly are the lungs of the planet.

More whales mean more phytoplankton, which means more oxygen and more carbon capture. According to the authors of the article in the IMF’s Finance and Development magazine—Ralph Chami and Sena Oztsoum, from the IMF’s Institute for Capacity Development, and two professors, Thomas Cosimano from the University of Notre Dame and Connel Fullenkamp from Duke University—if the world could increase “phytoplankton productivity” via “whale activity” by only 1%, it “would capture hundreds of millions of tons of additional CO2 a year, equivalent to the sudden appearance of 2 billion mature trees.”

Even after death, whale carcasses function as carbon sinks. Every year, it is estimated that whale carcasses transport 190,000 tons of carbon, locked within their bodies, to the bottom of the sea. That’s the same amount of carbon produced by 80,000 cars per year, according to Sri Lankan marine biologist Asha de Vos, who appeared on TED Radio Hour on NPR. She also noted that whale carcasses support deep-sea ecosystems and are integrated into marine sediments.

There are countless ways in which the Pentagon hobbles Earth’s inherent abilities to regenerate itself. Yet, it has been the decimation of populations of whales and dolphins over the last decade… that has fast-tracked us toward a cataclysmic environmental tipping point.

### Vacuuming CO2 From the Sky: A False Solution

Meanwhile, giant concrete-and-metal “direct air carbon capture” plants are being planned by the private sector for construction in natural landscapes all over the world. The largest one began operation in 2021 in Iceland. The plant is named “Orca,” which not only happens to be a type of whale but is also derived from the Icelandic word for “energy” (órka).

Orca captures a mere 10 metric tons of CO2 per day—compared to about 5.5 million metric tons per day of that currently sequestered by our oceans, due, in large part, to whales. And yet, the mimics are being celebrated, while the effectiveness of whales goes largely unnoticed. In fact, President Joe Biden’s $1 trillion infrastructure bill contains $3.5 billion for building four gigantic direct air capture facilities around the country. Nothing was allocated to protect and regenerate the real orcas of the sea.

If ever there were “superheroes” who could save us from the climate crisis, they would be the whales and the phytoplankton, not the direct air capture plants, and certainly not the U.S. military. Clearly, a key path forward toward a livable planet is to make whale and ocean conservation a top priority.

Unfortunately, the U.S. budget priorities never fail to put the Pentagon above all else—even a breathable atmosphere. At a December 2021 hearing on “How Operational Energy Can Help Us Address Climate Change,” a British Readiness Subcommittee of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, Representative Austin Scott (R-GA) said, “I know we’re concerned about emissions and other things, and we should be. We can and should do a better job of taking care of the environment. But ultimately, when we’re in a fight, we have to win that fight.”

This logic that “we have to destroy the village in order to save it” prevails at the Pentagon. For example, hundreds of naval exercises conducted year-round in the Indo-Pacific region damage and kill tens of thousands of whales annually. And every year, we’re in a fight, we have to win that fight.

They’re called “war games,” but for creatures of the sea, it’s not a game at all. Pentagon documents estimate that 13,744 whales and dolphins are legally allowed to be killed as “incidental takes” during any given year due to military exercises in the Gulf of Alaska.

In waters surrounding the Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean alone, the violence is more dire. More than 400,000 cetaceans comprising 26 species were allowed to have been sacrificed as “takes” during military practice between 2015 and 2020.

These are only two examples of a myriad continued on page 23…

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