

Peace & Planet News

Dedicated to Abolishing War, Establishing Justice, and Fighting Climate Disaster
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An Escalatory Game for Fools and Madmen

By Matthew Hoh

On March 24, I addressed the U.N. Security Council (UNSC).
Here's what I said:

Madam President, thank you for this opportunity to speak here today.

As a way of introduction, I am a U.S. Marine Corps combat veteran of the Iraq War. In 2009, I was a political officer with the U.S. State Department in Afghanistan. I resigned my position over the escalation of that war. I have been a direct participant in the violence of war. I know its moral wickedness, I know its intellectual dishonesty, and that is why I sit here today with a white poppy on my lapel to remember and recognize all the victims of war. It is my hope that sitting here today I can represent those who do not very often have a voice at this table.

I was last in this building as a Cub Scout when I was 10 years old. That was 1983, the same year as the now well-documented near-nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. If not for the actions of one man that September, I might not have had the opportunity to grow up and live my life. None of you would have either. May God bless the

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Israel's conscientious objectors Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

By Ariel Gold

According to legend, the organization I lead, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, was founded in August 1914 when a British Quaker and a German Lutheran shook hands at a railway station in Cologne. With England on the cusp of joining World War I, they pledged, "We are one in Christ and can never be at war."

After Germany sank the *Lusitania* in May 1915, American public support for joining the war swelled. But not everyone got on board.

Political activist and theologian A.J. Muste responded to his country's gearing up for war by becoming a pacifist. His views resulted in him being forced out of

his pastoral position. Likewise, pacifist and social reformer Jane Addams (who later went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize) was viciously criticized for calling the war "an insane outburst."

Despite the pro-war hysteria that countries use to justify their military endeavors, conscientious objection remains a courageous option for those committed to peace. As the ongoing genocide of Palestinians unfolds in front of the eyes of the world, a couple of young Israelis are choosing this brave, though unpopular, path.

"Slaughter cannot solve slaughter," 18-year-old Israeli-American Tal Mitnick said in December 2023 before receiving his first 30-day prison sentence for refusing to join Israel's military.

The same week that Tal refused for the third time and received a third term in prison, he was joined by fellow teenager Sofia Orr. "I reject participating in the violent policies of oppression and apartheid that Israel has imposed on the Palestinian people, especially now during the war," she said.

It's not the sentences Tal and Sofia are enduring that make their actions exceptional. They have options. In fact, 12% of conscripted Israelis get out of service through notoriously easy-to-obtain mental health exemptions. Instead of the 10-year terms that Russian draft evaders face, even when

Israelis are sentenced for refusing, they receive consecutive sentences with breaks in between to see if they have changed their minds.

Tal and Sofia are not being held indefi-

nately in overcrowded, abusive, deadly prison facilities like incarcerated Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank. But, what Tal and Sofia are doing is heroic and places them

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Meet Israel's new 'Youth Against Dictatorship' conscientious objectors: Sofia Orr.

From the Editors



We are walking, one foot after the other for peace and planet, justice and democracy ... walking the way legions of people have before us when their government turned its back and they had to go directly to the people.

This walk is similar, but also different. We are not just protesting; we are walking to explain to millions of Americans along our route how Madmen Arsonists have come to govern us; actually run our country—and what that means for peace, for our planet, for justice and for democracy.

That same mob and their confederates dictate U.S. policy on health care, education, food, transportation and virtually every sector of our lives—to the detriment of 99% of us and the enrichment of the remaining 1%.

The Earth and we, its creatures, have no more time to simply decry injustices and protest harms, as important as it is to do that. We simply must attack the roots, not just the branches; practice fire prevention, not just firefighting.

That means we will continue to oppose the damage and injustice corporations and their madmen arsonists do, and we're also learning how to stop them from governing, stop them from incinerating what is left of our peace, our planet, our justice and our democracy. We can do that by ending corporations' ability to lobby, to buy elections, to write legislation or to participate in any way in deciding what life will be like!

These are some of what we will keep foremost in our thoughts as we walk:

- To end to war, especially the looming threat of nuclear war so that children may grow up without the worry of nuclear Armageddon.
- In solidarity with the people of Gaza who are determined to survive a brutal genocide, and for West Bank Palestinians living, resisting and dying for 75 years under Israeli apartheid and occupation.
- For the jobs, food, shelter, medical care and education every person deserves
- To provide, in person, a counterpoint to the lies, deceptions and omissions fed to the public by the corporate media
- Because we do not want or need an

economy based on making missiles, tanks, cancer-causing depleted uranium weapons, cluster bombs that continue to kill children and others for generations, and nuclear weapons, which threaten all life on earth.

- To save the oceans and the whales, dolphins and sea creatures that we are intimately connected with.

- Because the greed for profits from fossil fuels and wars is polluting and destroying the very land, water and air we need to survive

- With awareness that the land we walk upon was stolen from those who lived here for thousands of years before us

- To express solidarity with indigenous Nations and the deep respect and love they have for Mother Earth; living with Her, not in domination of Her

- Because there must be another way, because militarism and war will never be the answer.

Ultimately, we are walking for people, peace and life on this beautiful planet we all call home. It is the only one we have. There is no Planet B.

We are walking to celebrate the end of simply protesting and reacting and the beginning of governing ourselves and running the show! THAT is why we are walking 600 miles from Ogunquit, Maine, to Washington, DC!

Come join us for a mile or a hundred. Invite your friends, family and comrades to walk with us. Meet us along the way with a PB&J or an apple pie. Meet us in Washington on July 5, 6, and 7 for a massive party and rally and then as we join the No to NATO events that will be going on in DC.

The PeaceWalk 2024 for Peace and Planet, Justice and Democracy will be memorable. For more information, visit peacewalk2024.org.

—Mike Ferner

Mike Ferner was formerly the national director of Veterans For Peace and a former member of Toledo City Council. He is senior editor of *Peace & Planet News* and the author of *Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports from Iraq*.

Militarism Is a Form of Slavery

Community psychologists take notice

By Serdar M. Değirmenciöglu

Stockholm Syndrome refers to a strange response observed in some captive persons. The captive person might begin to identify closely with his/her captors, as well as with their agenda and demands. Militarism involves a very similar process but at a much larger scale: Masses identify closely with the agenda and demands of a very small but very powerful interest group (or a regime) despite the fact that this is totally against their interest to do so. Unlike Stockholm Syndrome, which emerges in the absence of deliberate external factors, militarism requires constant political promotion and marketing starting in preschool.

Millions of people around the world have suffered from militarism because it is so pervasive. Still, many are not aware of the extent of the influence of militarism on their lives, even though the consequences and the marketing are plain to see. This huge crowd includes—sadly enough—most mainstream psychologists.

One reason is the way history is taught. Wars are portrayed as short-lived and extraordinary moments in history, “necessary” and “righteous.” That is why they must be waged and waged efficiently. A modern war is very much like a Broadway performance, with a brilliant director and a cast of skillful performers. It lasts for a

short period of time and is fun to watch. What happens backstage—all the suffering—is never visible and does not matter.

Many psychologists around the world still believe that militarism works, especially in the United States, where people's mindset was shaped by propaganda during World War II or by the fierce propaganda campaigns of the Cold War. Now, 76 years after the end of WWII and some 30 years after the end of Cold War, there is little left to believe in the official “good war” narrative that whatever evil happened during the war is justified by the relentless evil that exists around the world. Evil is necessary to defeat the evil enemy, to win the war or to end the war. Evil is not part-and-parcel of the machinery that is built and maintained to engage in war.

Today it is clear that the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not necessary to end WWII. They were unjustifiable nuclear massacres. The “moral threshold” regarding such massacres had been crossed with the napalm bombing of major cities in Japan. The end of World War II was not the beginning of an era dominated by a devotion to peace. Instead, the defining mindset of the period was militarism with no moral limits. Nuclear war was now possible and more was on the way. The prevailing belief among those who ruled the United States was that a “total war” (atomic, chemical, and biological warfare combined) with the Soviet Union was in the making. There was even a projected start date: 1952. The United States had to prepare for it.

For those who produced and believed

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Photo: Ellen Davidson

Veterans For Peace is an international organization made up of military veterans, military family members, and allies. 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 support our work, scan the QR at left or visit veteransforpeace.org.

Peace & Planet News

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Slavery

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it, the “total war” scenario justified everything. In her book *Operation Paperclip*, Annie Jacobsen describes how Nazi scientists were identified, sought out and then recruited by the U.S. government:

“The men profiled in this book were not nominal Nazis. Eight of the 21 ... each at some point worked side by side with Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, or Hermann Göring during the war. Fifteen of the 21 were dedicated members of the Nazi Party; 10 of them also joined the ultra-violent, ultranationalistic Nazi Party paramilitary squads, the SA (Sturmabteilung, or Storm Troopers) and the SS (Schutzstaffel, or Protection Squadron); two wore the Golden Party Badge, indicating favor bestowed by the Führer; one was given an award of one million reichsmarks for scientific achievement.”

“All of the men profiled in this book are now dead. Enterprising achievers as they were, just as the majority of them won top military and science awards when they served the Third Reich, so it went that many of them won top U.S. military and civilian awards serving the United States. One had a U.S. government building named after him, and, as of 2013, two continue to have prestigious national science prizes given annually in their names.”

Operation Paperclip was a huge success. Those who served Hitler’s “evil” killing machine were imported to serve the “righteous” killing machine. Hitler’s heroes were transformed into heroes of the “free world.”

After the Apollo 11 moon landing in July 1969, columnist Drew Pearson wrote in his column that von Braun had been a member of the SS. But von Braun’s glory had reached epic proportions, and Pearson’s article went relatively unnoticed. Von Braun was an American hero. Citizens all across the nation showered him with praise, glory, and the confetti of ticker-tape parades. After the Apollo space program ended, von Braun moved into the private sector. In his new life as a defense contractor, he traveled the world and met its leaders, including Indira Gandhi, the Shah of Iran, and Crown Prince Juan Carlos of Spain.

The year before he died, there was a motion inside the Ford White House to award Wernher von Braun the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The idea almost passed until one of President Ford’s senior advisers, David Gergen, famously wrote, in a note passed to colleagues, “Sorry, but I can’t support the idea of giving [the] medal of freedom to [a] former Nazi whose V-2 was fired into over 3000 British and Belgian cities. He has given valuable service to the United States since, but frankly he has gotten as good as he has given.” Von Braun was awarded the Medal of Science instead.

The imports did not stop there. Militarism also justified the recruitment of Nazi operatives. Klaus Barbie, the head of Gestapo in Lyon—a.k.a the “Butcher of Lyon”—was one of them. As a direct result

of that action, Klaus Barbie did not stand trial in France in 1950; he spent 33 years as a free man and a fugitive from justice.

In short, those guilty of crimes against humanity were turned into “intelligence” or “military” assets. Those who were involved in turning Nazis into assets had no moral dilemma or misgivings. The military machine required a job to be done and they carried out their jobs masterfully.

It is now clearer than ever that militarism is morally bankrupt. It can justify everything: Nuclear massacres, nuclear weapons, hundreds of military bases around the world, toppling regimes in Guatemala, Chile, Grenada or any other country for that matter. Add an undeclared war on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Add napalm and Agent Orange. And no, it did not stop when the Cold War ended. Militarism justified the invasion of Iraq and of Afghanistan, black sites, Guantánamo and so on. Militarism has



always served and justified injustice—at home and away from home.

Militarism also produces an emotional bias so strong that it amounts to a form of emotional slavery. In 2014, I published a book on how militarism benefits from the promotion of martyrdom. In one of the chapters, I describe a funeral where the wife of the fallen soldier wore a t-shirt with a slogan indicating her desire to become a martyr. The ceremony was held in the local schoolyard and the emotional hysteria spread to others. Teenage boys shouted at the highest ranking officer attending the ceremony: “Take us, too!” That was the desired outcome. The military machinery that had sent a soldier to an unnecessary death was not condemned. Instead, it was endorsed: The wife expressed her willingness to die. Boys from the local school expressed their desire to serve as soldiers. Journalists rushed to spread the hysteria across the country. Militarism won, again.

Emotional slavery works in the United States, too. Wars do not bring peace or security, but it is hard to condemn wars and the military when a neighbor has a son in Iraq, another a husband, and yet another a dad who was disabled in some other war. The bigger the military, the larger the number of neighbors, teachers, coworkers who are directly touched by a war. Militarism is morally bankrupt, and it regularly

sends people to kill and to die, but Stockholm syndrome lingers on: Captives of militarism identify with it: Instead of saying “No more war!” or “Bring our troops home!”, many people display ribbons and say: “We support our troops!” in Iraq, Af-

ghanistan or wherever they might be. time than that to focus on militarism and be honest about the fact that psychology should choose peace over militarism.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced psychologists to recognize that the world is faced with catastrophic conditions, such

In her book Operation Paperclip, Annie Jacobsen describes how Nazi scientists were identified, sought out and then recruited by the U.S. government.

ghanistan or wherever they might be.

Militarism is morally bankrupt, but it is very much alive in politics. The “military-industrial complex” continues to thrive on wars. In the absence of wars, the “war money” would disappear. Militarism serves imperialism and its modern

as pandemics, climate change and loss of biodiversity. It has also shown that in a world full of inequalities, solidarity plays an essential role. The pandemic also confirmed long-standing arguments that nuclear weapons, massive armies and border walls do not make humans more secure. The killing of George Floyd forced psychologists to reckon with racism, discrimination and police violence. Psychologists can only go forward by grasping the causal links between economic development, disappearing biodiversity, climate change and pandemics. Psychologists must prioritize public health over private interests and stop the forces that cripple health services. Psychologists must choose peace over militarism: Militarism wastes funds that should go to public health and puts the world in danger. Psychologists must prioritize addressing racism and discrimination across the world and in their own work settings, organizations and structures.

Serdar M. Değirmencioğlu is a writer with a PhD in Philosophy. He is a public scholar with a background in developmental and community psychology. He has written or edited ground-breaking books on children's rights, militarism and martyrdom, for-profit higher education, and personal debt. He received the 2020 PsySR Josephine “Scout” Wollman Fuller Award for his work on social justice for children. He has served as president of the European Community Psychology Association, and also of the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology and as a member of the Steering Committee of Psychologists for Social Responsibility.

I Too, Come ‘Carrying my Dead’

By Meredith Bruskin

...after poet Aurora Levins Morales

I am grappling with death.
Some days are like living in a cave
hollow, muffled, hiding from light.
Other days a walk in the rain,
a tender wrap of memory.

But when the bombs fall
it is hard to hear the echo of my grief.
There is no child that is not mine
no salt I cannot taste and yet
while the ashes swirl in some other
place
I sit here, holding yours.

What mark in the stone do
we make after all. What journey
begins in that odd release. Does
it matter finally, where we fall?

How strange it all is, every soul
buried, laced with stories.
A spider web
glistening in a cold morning sun.

Meredith Bruskin is a family nurse practitioner living in Maine and the author of “Between Sorrow and the Rest of Our Plans,” a chapbook inspired by her years in nursing.

U.S. Foreign Policy Is a Scam Built on Corruption

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

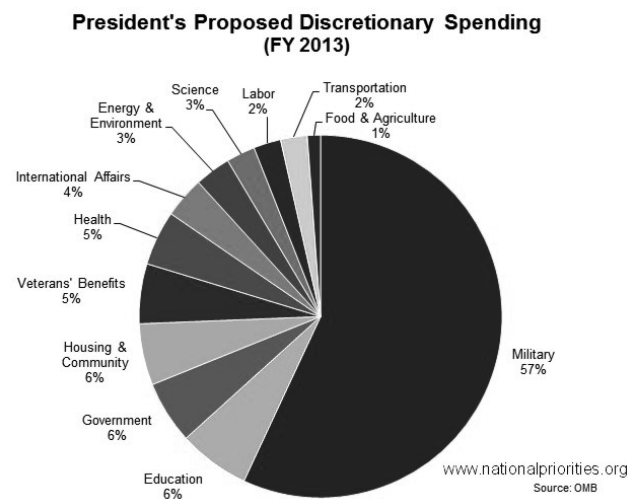
U.S. foreign policy seems to be utterly irrational. The United States gets into one disastrous war after another—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Ukraine, and Gaza. In recent days, the United States stands globally isolated in its support of Israel’s genocidal actions against the Palestinians, voting against a U.N. General Assembly resolution for a Gaza ceasefire backed by 153 countries with 89% of the world population, and opposed by just the United States and nine small countries with less than 1% of the world population.

In the past 20 years, every major U.S. foreign policy objective has failed. The Taliban returned to power after 20 years of U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Post-Saddam Iraq became dependent on Iran. Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad stayed in power despite a CIA effort to overthrow him. Libya fell into a protracted civil war after a U.S.-led NATO mission overthrew Muammar Gaddafi. Ukraine was bludgeoned on the battlefield by Russia in 2023 after the United States secretly scuttled a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine in 2022.

Despite these remarkable and costly debacles, one following the other, the same cast of characters has remained at the helm of U.S. foreign policy for decades, including Joe Biden, Victoria Nuland, Jake Sullivan, Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and Hillary Clinton.

What gives?

The puzzle is solved by recognizing that American foreign policy is not at all about the interests of the American people. It is about the interests of the Washington insiders, as they chase campaign contributions and lucra-



U.S. Military Spending.
Source: San Diego Veterans For Peace

tive jobs for themselves, staff, and family members. In short, U.S. foreign policy has been hacked by big money.

As a result, the American people are losing big. The failed wars since 2000 have cost them around \$5 trillion in direct outlays, or around \$40,000 per household. Another \$2 trillion or so will be spent in the coming decades on veterans’ care. Beyond the costs directly incurred by Americans, we should also recognize the horrendously high costs suffered abroad, in millions of lives lost and trillions of dollars of destruction to property and nature in the war zones.

The costs continue to mount. U.S. military-linked outlays in 2024 will come to around \$1.5 trillion, or roughly \$12,000 per household, if we add the direct Pentagon spending, the budgets of the CIA and other intelligence agencies, the budget of the Veteran’s Administration, the Department of Energy nuclear weapons program, the State Department’s military-linked “foreign aid” (such as to Israel), and other security-related budget lines. Hundreds of billions of dollars are money down the drain, squandered in useless wars, overseas military bases, and a wholly unnecessary arms build-up that brings the world closer to WWII.

Yet to describe these gargantuan costs is also to explain the twisted “rationality” of U.S. foreign policy. The \$1.5 trillion in military outlays is the scam that keeps on giving—to the military-industrial complex and the Washington insiders—even as it impoverishes and endangers America and the world.

To understand the foreign-policy scam, think of today’s federal government as a multi-division racket controlled by the highest bidders. The Wall Street division is run out of the Treasury. The Health Industry division is run out of the Department of Health and Human Services. The Big Oil and Coal division is run out of the Departments of Energy and Interior. And the Foreign Policy division is run out of the White House, Pentagon and CIA.

Each division uses public power for private gain through insider dealing, greased by corporate campaign contributions and lobbying outlays. Interestingly, the Health Industry division rivals the Foreign Policy division as a remarkable financial scam. America’s health outlays totaled an astounding \$4.5 trillion in 2022, or roughly \$36,000 per household, by far the highest health costs in the world, while America ranked roughly 40th in the world among nations in life expectancy. A failed health policy translates into very big bucks for the health industry, just as a failed foreign policy translates into mega-revenues of the military-industrial complex.

The Foreign Policy division is run by a small, secretive and tight-knit coterie, including the top brass of the White House, the CIA, the State Department, the Pentagon, the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate, and the major military firms including Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon. There are perhaps a thousand key individuals involved in setting policy. The public interest plays little role.

The key foreign policy makers run the operations of 800 U.S. overseas military bases, hundreds of billions of dol-

lars of military contracts, and the war operations where the equipment is deployed. The more wars, of course, the more business. The privatization of foreign policy has been greatly amplified by the privatization of the war business itself, as more and more “core” military functions are handed out to the arms manufacturers and to contractors such as Haliburton, Booz Allen Hamilton, and CACI.

In addition to the hundreds of billions of dollars of military contracts, there are important business spillovers from the military and CIA operations. With military bases in 80 countries around the world, and CIA operations in many more, the United States plays a large, though mostly covert role, in determining who rules in those countries, and thereby on policies that shape lucrative deals involving minerals, hydrocarbons, pipelines, and farm and forest land. The United States has aimed to overthrow at least 80 governments since 1947, typically led by the CIA through the instigation of coups, assassinations, insurrections, civil unrest, election tampering, economic sanctions, and overt wars. (For a superb study of U.S. regime-change operations from 1947 to 1989, see Lindsey O’Rourke’s *Covert Regime Change*, 2018).

In addition to business interests, there are of course ideologues who truly believe in America’s right to rule the world. The ever-warmongering Kagan family is the most famous case, though their financial interests are also deeply intertwined with the war industry. The point about ideology is this. The ideologists have been wrong on nearly every occasion and long ago would have lost their bully pulpits in Washington but for their usefulness as warmongers. Wittingly or not, they serve as paid performers for the military-industrial complex.

There is one persistent inconvenience for this ongoing business scam. In theory, foreign policy is carried out in the interest of the American people, though the opposite is the truth. (A similar contradiction of course applies to overpriced healthcare, government bailouts of

Despite these remarkable and costly debacles, ... the same cast of characters has remained at the helm of U.S. foreign policy for decades, including Joe Biden, Victoria Nuland, Jake Sullivan, Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and Hillary Clinton.

Wall Street, oil-industry perks, and other scams). The American people rarely support the machinations of U.S. foreign policy when they occasionally hear the truth. America’s wars are not waged by popular demand but by decisions from on high. Special measures are needed to keep the people away from decision making.

The first such measure is unrelenting propaganda. George Orwell nailed it in 1984 when “the Party” suddenly switched the foreign enemy from Eurasia to Eastasia without a word of explanation. The United States essentially does the same. Who is the U.S. gravest enemy? Take your pick, according to the season. Saddam Hussein, the Taliban, Hugo Chavez, Bashar al-Assad, ISIS, al-Qaeda, Gaddafi, Vladimir Putin, Hamas, have all played the role of “Hitler” in U.S. propaganda. White House spokesman John Kirby delivers the propaganda with a smirk on his face, signaling that he too knows that what he is saying is ludicrous, albeit mildly entertaining.

The propaganda is amplified by the Washington think tanks that live off of donations by military contractors and occasionally foreign governments that are part of the U.S. scam operations. Think of the Atlantic Council, CSIS, and of course the ever-popular Institute for the

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Ghost Riders of the Night

By David Rothauser

I think we all agree by now
Uncle Sam is the nameless, faceless plutocrats who
rule the world.
They are never held accountable,
They don't lobby,
They don't campaign,
They never run for office,
They don't vote.
They are great with marionettes,
They love their children who we never see,
Their wives who we never hear
Trump is as close as we ever get to the plutocrats.
But he is a court jester,
He entertains every day and night,
He wears the chameleon faces of the American
dream.
He distracts us from the real kings of the chess
match
And when he makes the wrong move,
They will slit his silly throat....
The ghost riders of the night.

U.S. Foreign Policy

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Study of War, brought to you by the major military contractors.

The second is to hide the costs of the foreign policy operations. In the 1960s, the U.S. government made the mistake of forcing the American people to bear the costs of the military-industrial complex by drafting young people to fight in Vietnam and by raising taxes to pay for the war. The public erupted in opposition.

From the 1970s onward the government has been far more clever. The government ended the draft, and made military service a job for hire rather than a public service, backed by Pentagon outlays to recruit soldiers from lower economic strata. It also abandoned the quaint idea that government outlays should be funded by taxes, and instead shifted the military budget to deficit spending which protects it from popular opposition that would be triggered if it were tax-funded.

It has also suckered client states such as Ukraine to fight America's wars on the ground, so that no American body bags would spoil the U.S. propaganda machine. Needless to say, U.S. masters of war such as Sullivan, Blinken, Nuland, Schumer, and McConnell remain thousands of miles away from the frontlines. The dying is reserved for Ukrainians. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) defended American military aid to Ukraine as money well spent because it is "without a single Ameri-

can service woman or man injured or lost," somehow not dawning on the good Senator to spare the lives of Ukrainians, who have died by the hundreds of thousands in a U.S.-provoked war over NATO enlargement.

This system is underpinned by the complete subordination of the U.S. Congress to the war business, to avoid any questioning of the over-the-top Pentagon budgets and the wars instigated by the Executive Branch. The subordination of Congress works as follows. First, the Congressional oversight of war and peace is largely assigned to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, which largely frame the overall Congressional policy (and the Pentagon budget). Second, the military industry (Boeing, Raytheon, and the rest) funds the campaigns of the Armed Services Committee members of both parties. The military industries also spend vast sums on lobbying in order to provide lucrative salaries to retiring members of Congress, their staffs, and families, either directly in military businesses or in Washington lobbying firms.

The hacking of Congressional foreign policy is not only by the U.S. military-industrial complex. The Israel lobby long ago mastered the art of buying the Congress. America's complicity in Israel's apartheid state and war crimes in Gaza makes no sense for U.S. national security and diplomacy, not to speak of human decency. They are the fruits of Israel lobby investments that reached \$30 million in campaign contributions in 2022, and that will vastly top that in 2024.

When Congress reassembles in January, Biden, Kirby, Sullivan, Blinken, Nuland, Schumer, McConnell, Blu-

mental and their ilk will tell us that we absolutely must fund the losing, cruel, and deceitful war in Ukraine and the ongoing massacre and ethnic cleansing in Gaza, lest we and Europe and the free world, and perhaps the solar system itself, succumb to the Russian bear, the Iranian mullahs, and the Chinese Communist Party. The purveyors of foreign policy disasters are not being irrational in this fear-mongering. They are being deceitful and extraordinarily greedy, pursuing narrow interests over those of the American people.

It is the urgent task of the American people to overhaul a foreign policy that is so broken, corrupted, and deceitful that it is burying the government in debt while pushing the world closer to nuclear Armageddon. This overhaul should start in 2024 by rejecting any more funding for the disastrous Ukraine War and Israel's war crimes in Gaza. Peacemaking, and diplomacy, not military spending, is the path to a U.S. foreign policy in the public interest.

Originally published by Common Dreams.

Jeffrey D. Sachs is an economist and public policy analyst, professor at Columbia University, where he was former director of The Earth Institute. He is known for his work on sustainable development, economic development, and the fight to end poverty. He is Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University and President of the U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He is an SDG Advocate for United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on the Sustainable Development Goals. From 2001 to 2018, Sachs was Special Advisor to the U.N. Secretary General.

Persons and Constitutional Rights

By Move to Amend National Team

The Supreme Court heard arguments in March about whether Donald Trump should be disqualified from serving as president under the 14th Amendment.

At issue is whether Trump's (in)actions on January 6, 2021, should prohibit him from becoming President again based on the text in Article 3 asserting that any officer of the United States who has previously taken an oath to uphold the Constitution should be disqualified if they "have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof."

While legal scholars disagree whether the 14th Amendment applies to Trump, can the same be said about whether any part of the 14th Amendment should disqualify a corporation from being a constitutional person?

clearly intended to apply exclusively to human persons.

Corporations are not mentioned in the Constitution. For the first 100 plus years of our history, corporations had no constitutional rights, only "privileges" strictly granted by the government.

Yet, the controversial takeaway of the 1886 *Santa Clara vs Southern Pacific Railroad Supreme Court* case was that Section 1 of the 14th Amendment provided corporate entities with equal protection constitutional rights, despite the Supreme Court not actually making that decision.

Corporations Hijacked the 14th Amendment

Santa Clara became the fraudulent "precedent" or cover for *Minnesota & St. Louis Ry. Co. v. Beckwith*

Corporate constitutional rights represent corporate coups, constitutional insurrections led by black-robed Supreme Court members (a large percentage of whom have been corporate attorneys) wielding made-up legal decisions for more than a century that have preempted our ability to protect the health, safety and welfare of people, communities and the natural world.

Article 1 of the 14th Amendment states:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

"Persons" clearly refers to human beings. The 14th Amendment was meant to protect previously enslaved human beings. "Due process" and "equal protection" were

three years later, declaring that corporations had equal protection and due process constitutional rights.

It also set a precedent for all subsequent Supreme Court decisions right up to the present for the granting of corporations constitutional rights (aka "corporate personhood").

Corporate constitutional rights represent corporate coups, constitutional insurrections led by black-robed Supreme Court members (a large percentage of whom have been corporate attorneys) wielding made-up legal

APPLYING "EQUAL PROTECTION"

Of the cases in this court in which the 14th Amendment was applied during the first fifty years after its adoption, less than one half of one percent invoked it in protection of the Negro race, and more than fifty percent asked that its benefits be extended to corporations.

— Justice Hugo Black



AFRICAN AMERICANS

CORPORATIONS

decisions for more than a century that have preempted our ability to protect the health, safety and welfare of people, communities and the natural world. The Supremes have a long history of affirming property/corporate rights over human rights.

This is precisely why the Supreme Court is disqualified to be considered to end corporate personhood.

It's up to us to end-run the Supreme Court by enacting the We the People Amendment (HJR54).

Each and every single one of us has first-hand experience living in a society in which virtually every realm (i.e. health care, education, media, employment, transportation, energy, food, housing, etc.) is dominated by corporations. Our right as self-governing individuals is enough to qualify us collectively to rule on the role of corporate entities.

Working to pass the We the People Amendment from the bottom up is the democratic means to achieve the ending of corporate rule.

In solidarity,

Ambrosia, Shelly, George, Daniel, Margaret, Michael, Jessica, Katie, Keyan, Cole, Jason, Kelsey, Alfonso, Jennie, Tara & Greg

The Move to Amend National Team

Move to Amend is a coalition of hundreds of organizations and hundreds of thousands of individuals committed to social, environmental and economic justice, ending corporate rule, and building a vibrant democracy that is genuinely accountable to the people, not corporate interests. For more information, visit movetoamend.org.

The Pentagon Is the Elephant in the Climate Activist Room

By Melissa Garriga and Tim Biondo

With nearly 10,000 people expected to take to the streets of New York City on September 17 for the March to End Fossil Fuels, the climate justice movement seems more organized than ever. But there's a big elephant in the room, and it has the Pentagon written all over it.

The U.S. military is the world's largest institutional oil consumer. It causes more greenhouse gas emissions than 140 nations and accounts for about one-third of America's total fossil fuel consumption. The Department of Defense (DoD) also uses huge amounts of natural gas and coal, as well as nuclear power plants at its bases around the country. How can we demand the United States be part of a movement that aims to end the use of fossil fuels and protect our planet when their own institution is wreaking havoc without accountability? The answer: you can't.

As long as we ignore the Pentagon's role in perpetuating climate change, our fight to protect the planet is incomplete. We also risk undermining our own effectiveness by not taking into account how the nearly trillion-dollar military budget takes away from people's access to resources that not only affect their capacity to fight for climate justice but also to live under extreme economic inequality.

We must divert spending away from military base occupation and war and into climate crisis aversion. Or else.

While U.S. officials want the consumer public to be responsible for their personal carbon footprint, such as making motorists switch to electric vehicles or banning incandescent light bulbs they are avoiding responsibility for the large carbon "bootprint" the military is leaving across the globe. From burn pits in Iraq, or the use of depleted uranium and cluster munitions in Ukraine, to the ever-expanding list of

domestic and overseas military bases—the United States military is not only destroying its own country but devastating indigenous communities and sovereign nations through extreme environmental degradation.

According to the Environmental Working Group, "more than 700 military installations are likely contaminated with the "forever chemicals" known as PFAS." But the problem goes far beyond drinking water. In Japan, the indigenous Ryukyuan is pushing back against yet another military base being built on the island of Okinawa. The new base is a major threat to the fragile ecosystem the Ryukyuan work hard to maintain. The damage to their marine ecosystem of course coincides with the poisoning of their drinking

water—first 12 months of the war." They explained how those measures are "equivalent to the annual emissions of Belgium, or those produced by nearly 27 million gas-powered cars on the road for a year." The damage doesn't end there. The war in Ukraine has compromised pipelines and methane leaks; attributed to dead dolphins and marine harm; caused deforestation, farmland destruction, and water contamination; as well as the increase in production of dirty energy like coal. It also carries the imminent threat of radiation leaks and nuclear catastrophe. The continuation of this war is the continuation of ecocide. We must do what we can to end it now and without further death and destruction.

The United States is not only fueling the current climate crisis but it is also fund-

From burn pits in Iraq, or the use of depleted uranium and cluster munitions in Ukraine, to the ever-expanding list of domestic and overseas military bases—the United States military is not only destroying its own country but devastating indigenous communities and sovereign nations through extreme environmental degradation.

water—a fight both Hawaii and Guam are all too familiar with.

All of these contributing factors of climate destruction are happening in "conflict-free" zones, but what impact does the U.S. military have on active warzones? Well, take a look at the Russian/Ukraine war—a war that the U.S. is helping to sustain to the tune of over a hundred billion dollars. CNN recently reported that "a total of 120 million metric tons of planet-heating pollution can be attributed to the

ing it at our expense and peril. The Pentagon uses up 64% of our government's discretionary spending (which includes things like education and healthcare). We are spending our money that could fund social programs into the continuation of climate disaster.

Ordinary Americans, especially Black, Brown and poor communities, are forced to pay for endless war and environmental degradation through higher taxes, fees, and utility bills. Climate change is a threat

to national security, with the potential to affect global stability and the ability of governments to provide essential services. Who remembers Vice President Kamala Harris ominous quote, "For years there were wars fought over oil; in a short time there will be wars fought over water."

The Pentagon's core mission is to prepare for potential attacks by human adversaries, but none of the United States' "adversaries"—Russia, Iran, China and North Korea—are certain to attack the United States. Nor is a large standing military the only way to reduce the threats these alleged adversaries pose who all have much smaller militaries in comparison. "As the government tries to scare Americans over these hypothetical "threats," they refuse to address the real danger communities across the world face every day due to climate change."

"It's simple—to defend earth we must end war and we must end it now."

The climate crisis is here now with real consequences. In the United States, climate change is already contributing to drought and wildfires in California, Hawaii, and Louisiana. Sea level rise threatens coastal communities and rising temperatures are likely to increase civil unrest and contribute to more job-related deaths.

We have to act now by pushing peace and cooperation around the globe. We must divert spending away from military base occupation and war and into climate crisis aversion. Or else.

We need a climate justice platform that calls for an end to wars abroad and at home. We need to permanently end the war on terror, which has cost trillions of dollars, killed millions of people, and created an endless cycle of violence and instability around the world.

We need to stop spending billions on weapons systems designed to fight imaginary enemies. Instead we should use that money for domestic priorities like health care, education, and infrastructure projects.

We need to work side by side with all nations to address climate issues. This includes those we have deemed as enemies as well as the Global South—who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis.

We need to make sure that our tax dollars are being spent on the things that matter most to us—and that means an end to endless war and environmental degradation. We need a Green New Deal which redirects federal funds from military spending towards domestic priorities like health care, education, and infrastructure projects.

When it comes to the fight for climate justice, the Pentagon is the elephant in the room. We can't keep ignoring its enormous "bootprint." It's simple—to defend earth we must end war and we must end it now. Peace is no longer something that should be looked at as an utopian idea—it is a necessity. Our survival depends on it.

Melissa Garriga is the communications and media analysis manager for CODE-PINK Women for Peace. She writes about the intersection of militarism and the human cost of war. Tim Biondo is the digital communications manager for CODE-PINK Women for Peace. They hold a bachelor's degree in Peace Studies from George Washington University.



Photo by Ellen Davidson



Invest in Communities, Not Violence

From the National Priorities Project/
Institute For Policy Studies

For far too long, the United States has clung to a budget that prioritizes war, deportations and detentions, and policing at the expense of human needs. It's time to reinvest these taxpayer dollars into real human needs—healthcare, education, housing, and a just energy transition to name a few. Here's how legislators have splurged on militarism, and what could happen if those funds instead benefited people and communities.

In FY 2023, out of a \$1.8 trillion federal discretionary budget, \$1.1 trillion, or 62%, was for militarized programs, including war and the military, deportations and detentions, and prisons and policing.

Less than \$2 out of every \$5 in federal discretionary spending was available to fund positive investments in people and communities.

The U.S. spent \$16 on the military and war for every \$1 that was spent on diplomacy and humanitarian foreign aid.

The United States spent \$51.1 billion for homeland security, half of which goes to the agencies responsible for detentions and deportations, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE, \$8.8 billion) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP, \$17.4 billion). This is nearly triple the spending for substance abuse and mental health programs.

The U.S. federal budget allocated twice as much for federal law enforcement, which includes federal prisons, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies (\$31 billion), as for child care and early childhood education programs (\$15 billion).

Since 2001, the United States has added \$2 to the discretionary budget for militarism for every \$1 added to invest in communities.

In the two decades following 9/11, the United States spent \$21 trillion on foreign and domestic militarism.

Over those 20 years \$16 trillion went to the Pentagon and more than half of that, \$7.2 trillion, went to Pentagon contractors.

In its first 20 years, spending on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reached \$1.4 trillion. Of that, about one-third, \$442 billion, went to ICE and CBP.

In the span of 20 years, spending on ICE and CBP more than doubled, from \$12 billion in FY 2002 to more than \$25 billion in FY 2021, adjusted for inflation.

Federal prison funding has increased by more than 11 times since 1976, exploding from \$901 million in 1976 to \$10 billion in 2021, adjusted for inflation. The number of people incarcerated in federal prisons increased ninefold, from 24,000 in 1980 to more than 219,000 by 2013.

The post-9/11 wars have contributed to 4.5 million deaths, including thousands of U.S. troops and civilian contractors, and the displacement of 38 million people.

More than 5 million people have been deported since the founding of DHS. There have been at least 287 fatal encounters with CBP since 2010.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of

immigrants are locked up in over 200 ICE detention centers, where they often face abusive conditions while they await determination of their immigration status.

In 2022, police killed 1,239 people—more than 3 people per day.

There are 1.9 million people currently incarcerated in the U.S.

A \$100 billion annual cut to military spending could have gone toward:

- 10 times as many households receiving public housing (10.39 million), or
- More than 1 in 3 children aged 0-5 going to Head Start (7.81 million), or
- Nearly 1 in 3 veterans receiving medical care (5.88 million), or
- More than 7 in 10 uninsured adults receiving health care (20.24 million), or
- Solar power for every household in the U.S. (131.2 million), with billions of dollars to spare.

For the nearly \$26 billion that ICE and CBP received in 2023, we could hire 230,000 registered nurses to address

shortages, provide early childhood education for more than half a million kids, or build solar farms to power more than half the nation's households.

Over the long term, reinvesting in human needs over militarism could be transformative. For far less than the \$21 trillion spent on militarism in the 20 years after 9/11, the U.S. could allocate enough funds to do ALL of the following:

- \$4.5 trillion to fully decarbonize the U.S. electric grid
- \$2.3 trillion to create 5 million jobs at \$15 per hour with benefits and cost-of-living adjustments for 10 years
- \$1.7 trillion to erase student debt
- \$449 billion to continue the extended Child Tax Credit for another 10 years
- \$200 billion to guarantee free preschool for every 3- and 4-year-old for 10 years, and raise teacher pay

The Institute For Policy Studies is a progressive organization dedicated to building a more equitable, ecologically sustainable, and peaceful society. In partnership with dynamic social movements, we turn transformative policy ideas into action.

I Don't Need Guns

by Caitlin Johnstone

Pointing pistols as the man burns,
as Gaza burns,
as civilization burns,
as the planet burns.
I don't need guns
I need fire extinguishers.

Raytheon racketeers and Pentagon
pimps
swollen fat from the blood of unnamed
victims
glossed over in headlines by The New
York Times
while National Guard troops patrol the
New York subways
and babies with legs like toothpicks fill
our screens.
Pouring arms into Israel
while humanitarian-LARPing aid
airdrops.

Waving around armageddon weapons
while accusing peacemongers of
treason.
Well sure I'd ask for seconds mister
president sir,
but see I don't need guns
I need fire extinguishers.

I need someone to put some fat back on
those babies.
I need someone to get the plastic out of
the oceans.
I need the bombs to stop and the siege
to lift
and a healthy planet for the kids to play
in.
I need kids to stop getting their limbs
blown off
so they can run and play in that healthy
world.
Can you drone strike me a thriving
biosphere?

Can you ICBM those Gazans some food?
Can you extinguish this fire with your
weapons and wars?

No?
Then get outta the way man.
We don't need guns
we need fire extinguishers.

"Free Palestine," the man on fire said.
"FREE PALESTINE!" he screamed.
And then the cops showed up with their
guns and their bullets,
because of course they fucking did.
And Gaza still burns,
and the world still burns,
and our eyes still burn,
and our lungs still burn,
and our hearts still burn,
and our rage still burns,
and they promise us the burning will
stop
if we just add in a few more guns.

We don't need guns you stupid cop.
We need this burning world to heal.

Aaron Bushnell's Divine Violence



Divine Violence by Mr. Fish

By Chris Hedges

Aaron Bushnell, when he placed his cell phone on the ground to set up a livestream and lit himself on fire in front of the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C., resulting in his death, pitted divine violence against radical evil. As an active duty member of the U.S. Air Force, he was part of the vast machinery that sustains the ongoing genocide in Gaza, no less morally culpable than the German soldiers, technocrats, engineers, scientists and bureaucrats who oiled the apparatus of the Nazi Holocaust. This was a role he could no longer accept. He died for our sins.

"I will no longer be complicit in genocide," he said calmly in his video as he walked to the gate of the embassy. "I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest. But compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal."

Young men and women sign up for the military for many reasons, but starving, bombing and killing women and children is usually not amongst them. Shouldn't, in

1991 to protect the Kurds following the first Gulf War. The suffering of the Kurds was extensive, but dwarfed by the genocide in Gaza. A no-fly zone for the Iraqi air force was imposed. The Iraqi military was pushed out of the northern Kurdish areas. Humanitarian aid saved Kurds from starvation, infectious diseases and death from exposure. But that was another time, another war. Genocide is evil when it is carried out by our enemies. It is defended and sustained when carried out by our allies.

Walter Benjamin—whose friends Fritz Heinle and Rika Seligson committed suicide in 1914 to protest German militarism and the First World War—in his essay "Critique of Violence," examines acts of violence undertaken by individuals who confront radical evil. Any act that defies radical evil breaks the law in the name of justice. It affirms the sovereignty and dignity of the individual. It condemns the coercive violence of the state. It entails a willingness to die. Benjamin called these extreme acts of resistance "divine violence." "Only for the sake of the hopeless ones have we been given hope," Benjamin writes.

Bushnell's self-immolation—one most social media

One day, if the corporate state and apartheid state of Israel are dismantled, the street where Bushnell lit himself on fire will bear his name. He will, like Palach, be honored for his moral courage.

a just world, the U.S. fleet break the Israeli blockade of Gaza to provide food, shelter and medicine? Shouldn't U.S. warplanes impose a no fly zone over Gaza to halt the saturation bombing? Shouldn't Israel be issued an ultimatum to withdraw its forces from Gaza? Shouldn't the weapons shipments, billions in military aid and intelligence provided to Israel, be halted? Shouldn't those who commit genocide, as well as those who support genocide, be held accountable?

These simple questions are the ones Bushnell's death forces us to confront.

"Many of us like to ask ourselves," he posted shortly before his suicide, "What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide? The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

The coalition forces intervened in northern Iraq in

posts and news organizations have heavily censored—is the point. It is meant to be seen. Bushnell extinguished his life in the same way thousands of Palestinians, including children, have been extinguished. We could watch him burn to death. This is what it looks like. This is what happens to Palestinians because of us.

The image of Bushnell's self-immolation, like that of the Buddhist monk Thích Quảng Đức in Vietnam in 1963 or Mohamed Bouazizi, a young fruit seller in Tunisia, in 2010, is a potent political message. It jolts the viewer out of somnolence. It forces the viewer to question assumptions. It begs the viewer to act. It is political theater, or perhaps religious ritual, in its most potent form. Buddhist monk, Thích Nhất Hạnh said of self-immolation: "To express will by burning oneself, therefore, is not to commit an act of destruction but to perform an act of construction, that is, to suffer and to die for the

sake of one's people."

Mohamed Bouazizi—Wikipedia

If Bushnell was willing to die, repeatedly shouting out "Free Palestine!" as he burned, then something must be terribly, terribly wrong.

These individual self-sacrifices often become rallying points for mass opposition. They can ignite, as they did in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, revolutionary upheavals. Bouazizi, who was incensed that local authorities had confiscated his scales and produce, did not intend to start a revolution. But the petty and humiliating injustices he endured under the corrupt Ben Ali regime resonated with an abused public. If he could die, they could take to the streets.

These acts are sacrificial births. They presage something new. They are the complete rejection, in its most dramatic form, of conventions and reigning systems of power. They are designed to be horrific. They are meant to shock. Burning to death is one of the most dreaded ways to die.

Self-immolation comes from the Latin stem *immolare*, to sprinkle with salted flour when offering up a consecrated victim for sacrifice. Self-immolations, like Bushnell's, link the sacred and the profane through the medium of sacrificial death.

But to go to this extreme requires what the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr calls "a sublime madness in the soul." He notes that "nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant power and spiritual wickedness in high places." This madness is dangerous, but it is necessary when confronting radical evil because without it "truth is obscured." Liberalism, Niebuhr warns, "lacks the spirit of enthusiasm, not to say fanaticism, which is so necessary to move the world out of its beaten tracks. It is too intellectual and too little emotional to be an efficient force in history."

This extreme protest, this "sublime madness," has been a potent weapon in the hands of the oppressed throughout history.

The some 160 self-immolations in Tibet since 2009 to protest Chinese occupation are perceived as religious rites, acts that declare the independence of the victims from the control of the state. Self-immolation calls us to a different way of being. These sacrificial victims become martyrs.

Communities of resistance, even if they are secular, are bound together by the sacrifices of martyrs. Only apostates betray their memory. The martyr, through his or her example of self-sacrifice, weakens and severs the bonds and the coercive power of the state. The martyr represents a total rejection of the status quo. This is why all states seek to discredit the martyr or turn the martyr into a nonperson. They know and fear the power of the martyr, even in death.

Daniel Ellsberg in 1965 witnessed a 32-year-old anti-war activist, Norman Morrison, douse himself with kerosene and light himself on fire—the flames shot 10 feet into the air—outside the office of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara at The Pentagon, to protest the Vietnam War. Ellsberg cited the self-immolation, along with the nationwide anti-war protests, as one of the factors that led him to release the Pentagon Papers.

The radical Catholic priest, Daniel Berrigan, after traveling to North Vietnam with a peace delegation during the war, visited the hospital room of Ronald Brazee. Brazee was a high school student who had drenched himself with kerosene and immolated himself outside the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Syracuse, New York to protest the war.

"He was still living a month later," Berrigan writes. "I was able to gain access to him. I smelled the odor of burning flesh and I understood anew what I had seen in North Vietnam. The boy was dying in torment, his body like a great piece of meat cast upon a grill. He died shortly thereafter. I felt that my senses had been invaded in a new way. I had understood the power of death in the modern world. I knew I must speak and act against death because this boy's death was being multiplied a thousandfold in the Land of Burning Children. So I went to

continued on next page ...

Dear Techno Savages, Leave Us Alone

By Koohan Paik-Mander

Barbarians of the Eurocene, whose shackles are forged in economies of algorithms and war, you nuclear monsters who anger at the beauty of flesh and Mother Earth, I come from the ancestors of abundance and the descendants of the future. I ask you techno-savages to leave us alone. You and your disruptions are not welcome among us. We don't want chip-implants in our brains. We don't want to move to Mars. You are alien to our embodied existence. We are of the Earth.

No formal government represents us, so I address you with no greater authority than that with which wilderness always speaks. We are proud members of the ancient tribe, joyous in its unenclosed riot of spontaneous diversity. I hereby declare that the exquisite ecologies of Nature, of which we are a part, be independent of the tyrannical disruption you seek to impose on us. You have no moral right to rule us through ideology or algorithmic pseudo-science nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear.

You have neither solicited nor received our free and informed consent. Your User Agreements are cryptic shams of extortion, within which gangsters have hidden dead

bodies. Your transactional mind does not know our relational way of being with each other and with Nature. Your insolent topologies flout the very currency of the natural world—those boundaries of time and space, geographies and seasons, ebb and flow, systole and diastole, and carrying capacity. You are a cancerous rib pulled from capitalism's side, ceaselessly demanding unending growth, as if metastacization were a good thing. Artificial intelligence will never affirm life, no matter how many 3-D facsimiles it prints. Your singular motive is profit. Your reductive logic is an insult and a danger to Life itself.

You have never engaged in our great nuanced languages, yet you profit from the extraction of our wealth—ore, minerals, human bodies and oil—and the enclosure of Earth, moon, and genomes. Now, you dare to stake claim on our self-determination. You will never succeed, as long as our existence and relationships remain in the embodied world. You cannot digitize and monetize our agency. You do not know our culture, our ethics, or the unwritten codes that provide more order than could ever be obtained by any of your disruptions.

Digital technologies are capitalism's greatest "triumph." Trillions of algorithms work ceaselessly 24/7 to buy and sell on world stock markets, to secure deals to cut down

forests, extract commodities on all continents and seabeds, to set up factory farms, and to displace traditional sustainable communities, which have survived for millennia precisely because of their respect for cycles and geographies.

And still, you endlessly claim to be the provider of "solutions"! You use this assertion to lure us into your precincts. You invent problems that don't exist. Stop! We cannot accept the ravaging of the Earth and human civilization that you present as "solutions." You are the problem.

Where there are real conflicts, where there are wrongs, we will identify them and address them by our means. We have our own Social Contract. This governance will arise according to the conditions of our world, not yours.

Ours is a world that values the interconnectedness of all beings. Priority is given to mutual support, human scale of space, Nature's scale of time, body joy, diversity of contexts, and sustaining our vital relationship to all forms of life—past, present, and future. This is the path to real, lasting wealth, but it is invisible to you.

We are humanity of all ages, on a continuum of all genders, and in a plurality of all shades, like those of the Earth, from the dark hues of rich humus to iron-rich red clay to the chalky Dover cliffs—and everything in-between. There are no disabilities. Every person is a song.

Out of wisdom will emerge post-capitalist governance, just as it spontaneously sprang in Zuccotti Park, atop Mauna Kea, on urban farms, and in other places where people are valued over profit. Our embodied connection to place is a sacred one.

Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on coercion, manipulation, deception, extraction and accelerating inequity—all cruel ruses that have been imposed for the last 500 years in a multitude of forms: colonialism, capitalism, and militarism, now culminating as insidious techno-feudalism.

Now, you target us as the next wave of raw material! You wring your greedy hands, with reveries of extracting all the data in the world and more, to fill your large-language maw. You dream of replacing forests and farmlands with endless computer gulags and nuclear reactors to process your data hoards. You plot to channel infinite computations into glorious palaces, prisons and genocides.

But you are powerless over the mortal coil that inspires in you loathing and disgust.

You are terrified of your own children, for they are reminders of the apocalyptic loan you over-borrowed against their future. Because you fear their reality, you work desperately to devote your brief time on Earth to a fool's search for a way to ship humanity to Mars. You're a joke.

By contrast, what great fortune to be born into this embodied world! Imagine, to share an existence with mitochondria of a nudibranch, lenticular clouds, slender-toed geckos, and all the sentiments and expressions imaginable in an awe-inspiring intricate web of life! We honor her seasons, the wane and wax of the moon, the ebb and flow of tides, sunrise and sunset, and countless other rhythms. Sacred cycles and places are our scripture, instructing when and how to plant, to fish, to harvest, to give birth, to bury one's dead. But your new technologies erase, in one fell swoop, these ancient guideposts, to the peril of a livable future.

Your increasingly hostile and colonial measures place us in the same predicament as all those who have also struggled historically for liberation. We must declare ourselves immune to your delusions of omnipotence. You cannot algorithm us into silence and conformity.

Our small communities are spread across the Planet, determined to dismantle capitalism and return to joy, love, beauty, and wonder, connecting with nature, our bodies, and each other. It has happened before, and it shall happen again.

Koohan Paik-Mander is on the boards of *World BEYOND War and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space*. She is also on the advisory committee of the *Global Just Transition project at Foreign Policy in Focus* and part of the *CODEPINK* working group "*China is Not Our Enemy*." She is co-author of *The Superferry Chronicles: Hawaii's Uprising Against Militarism, Commercialism and the Desecration of the Earth*.



Earth Goddess Returns to Bloom at Atlanta Botanical Garden. Photo: Secret Atlanta

Aaron Bushnell

... continued from previous page

Catonsville because I had gone to Hanoi."

In Catonsville, Maryland Berrigan and eight other activists, known as the Catonsville Nine, broke into a draft board on May 17, 1968. They took 378 draft files and burned them with homemade napalm in the parking lot. Berrigan was sentenced to three years in a federal prison. I was in Prague in 1989 for the Velvet Revolution. I attended the commemoration of the self-immolation of a 20-year-old university student named Jan Palach. Palach had stood on the steps outside the National Theater in Wenceslas Square in 1969, poured petrol over himself and lit himself on fire. He died of his wounds three days later. He left behind a note saying that this act was the only way left to protest the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which had taken place five months earlier. His funeral procession was broken up by police. When frequent candlelit vigils were held at his grave at Olsany cemetery, the communist authorities, determined to stamp out his memory, disinterred his body, cremated it and handed the ashes to his mother.

During the winter of 1989, posters with Palach's face covered the walls of Prague. His death, two decades ear-

lier, was lionized as the supreme act of resistance against the Soviets and pro-Soviet regime installed after the overthrow of Alexander Dubček. Thousands of people marched to the Square of Red Army Soldiers and renamed it Jan Palach Square. He won.

One day, if the corporate state and apartheid state of Israel are dismantled, the street where Bushnell lit himself on fire will bear his name. He will, like Palach, be honored for his moral courage. Palestinians, betrayed by most of the world, already look to him as a hero. Because of him, it will be impossible to demonize all of us.

Divine violence terrifies a corrupt and discredited ruling class. It exposes their depravity. It illustrates that not everyone is paralyzed by fear. It is a siren call to battle radical evil. That is what Bushnell intended. His sacrifice speaks to our better selves.

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Presbyterian minister, author, and television host. His books include *America: The Farewell Tour*; *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, and *Wages of Rebellion: The Moral Imperative of Revolt*. He previously worked overseas for the *Dallas Morning News*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and *NPR*, and hosted the Emmy-nominated *RT America* show *On Contact*.

For the U.S. Establishment, Violence Is the Answer

By William J. Astore

College and university campuses across the USA are increasingly the sites of violence, but that violence is largely being committed by police units called in to disperse and arrest protesters. The police, I assume, are, as they say, just following orders. The question is: Who's giving those orders? And the answer most often seems to be senior administrators at those colleges and universities. Welcome to your education in liberal values!

Police do what they're trained to do, just as soldiers do what they're trained to do. Soldiers aren't freedom-bringers and diplomats: they are trained in the use of deadly force under the most violent of conditions. Police aren't educators and negotiators: they are also trained in the use of suppressive force under violent conditions.

On campuses across America, police have done what police are armed and trained to do here. They break out their riot gear, their sniper rifles, their armored cars, their tools of behavior modification (e.g. cuffs, Tasers, truncheons, rubber bullets, tear gas and pepper spray), and they go to work. They literally kick ass and take names (and mug shots, fingerprints, and so on).

Police are here to protect and to serve, so we're told. But



University of Texas police officers arrest a man at a pro-Palestinian protest on campus, April 24, 2024, in Austin, Texas. Photo: Jay Janner / Austin American-Statesman via AP

to protect and to serve whom? And for what cause? Ultimately, police protect the powerful, those with property and money, because those are the ones giving them their orders. If and when police begin to refuse orders from above, that's when the powerful will truly begin to worry.

It's interesting that some student protesters, as at Columbia, are now being compared (as by MSNBC) to the January 6 protesters and rioters for Trump. It's a sign of desperation by the establishment to equate anti-genocide protesters with pro-Trump rioters, but there you have it. Recall on January 6 that the police largely stepped aside

and allowed protesters for Trump into the Capitol. I don't see the police stepping aside on campuses or taking selfies with protesters, or even removing barriers, as some police did on January 6.

The overly violent and repressive responses we're witnessing across America to largely peaceful protests reveals the imperative at the heart of America's political system. Recalling the movie "Rollerball," the one thing you're never supposed to do as a corporate-citizen is to question management decisions. America's managers have decided to support Israel's genocide in Gaza, and YOU ARE NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THAT. If you do, your protest will be suppressed, often quickly and violently.

There's a reason America's managers "invest" so much in the "thin blue line" of the police. They believe in violence as the way to uphold their power and privilege. It doesn't matter that violence hasn't always worked, especially in foreign wars (Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc.). They'll continue to use violence as long as it remains profitable to do so, whether economically or politically.

How long before people are killed or seriously injured

Police do what they're trained to do, just as soldiers do what they're trained to do. ... Police aren't educators and negotiators: they are also trained in the use of suppressive force under violent conditions.

in these police actions? How long before those who are killed or wounded are denounced as "bums," as President Richard Nixon called the dead students of Kent State? How long before we hear that the "silent majority" supports Trump and/or Biden in their call for "law and order"?

How long before Israel renders Gaza Palestinian-free, as various U.S. police forces mobilize to render college campuses protester-free?

And how long before we're told once again that America is the greatest, most exceptional, nation on earth because of all our freedoms?

William J. Astore, a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF) and professor of history, is a TomDispatch regular and a senior fellow at the Eisenhower Media Network, an organization of critical veteran military and national security professionals. His personal blog is Bracing Views.

Parable

By Nickole Brown

Let us not with one stone kill one bird,
much less two. Let us never put a cat
in a bag nor skin them, regardless
of how many ways there are to do so.
And let us never take the bull, especially
by his gorgeous horns. What I mean is

we could watch our tongues or keep
silent. What I mean is we could scrub
the violence from our speech. And if we find
truth in a horse's mouth, let us bless her

ground-down molars, no matter how
old she is, especially if she was given
as a gift. Again, let's open her mouth—that of the
horse,
I mean—let us touch that interdental space where
no teeth grow, where the cold bit was made to grip.
Touch her there, gently now, touch that gentle

empty between her incisors and molars, rub her
aching, vulnerable gums. Don't worry: doing so calms
her.

Besides, she's old now; she's what we call
broken; she won't bite. She's lived through
two thirteen-year emergences of cicadas

and thought their rising a god infestation,
thought each insect roiling up an iteration
of the many names of god, because god to her is
the grasses so what comes up from grass is
god. She would not say it that way. Nor would she

say the word *cicada*—words are hindrances
to what can be spoken through the body, are
what she tolerates when straddled,

giddy-up on one side then *whoa* on the other. After,
it's all *good girl, Mable, good girl*,
before the saddle sweat is rinsed cool
with water from the hose and a carrot is offered
flat from the palm. Yes, words being

generally useless she listens instead
to the confused rooster stuttering when the sun
burns overhead, when it's warm enough
for those time-keepers to tunnel up from the
dark and fill their wings to make them
stiff and capable of flight. To her, it is the sound

of winter-coming in her mane
or the sound of winter-leaving in her mane—
yes, that sound—a liquid *shushing*
like the blood-fill of stallion desire she knew once
but crisper, a dry crinkle of fall
leaves. Yes, *that* sound, as they fill their new wings
then lumber to the canopy to demand
*come here, come here, come
here, now come.*

If this is a parable you don't understand,
then, dear human, stop listening for words.

Listen instead for *mane, wind, wings,
wind, mane, wings, wings, wings.*

The lesson here is of the mare
and of the insects, even of the rooster
puffed and strutting past. Because now,
now there is only one thing worth hearing,
and it is the plea of every living being in that field
we call *ours*, is the two-word commandment
trilling from the trees: *let live, let live, let live.*
Can you hear it? *Please, they say. Please.
Let us live.*

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Some Thoughts on the Campus Protests

By David Rovics

As I watch what is (and isn't) happening on college campuses across the United States and beyond recently, a number of thoughts come to mind that seem worth exploring.

Taking over physical space and having a protest encampment there is a powerful tactic. It's a tactic that requires collective organization, and the participation of significant numbers of seriously committed individuals. As long as a physical space can be held in some visible form, it can continue to be a magnet for solidarity, more organizing, and popular education, as well as opposition, attacks, ridicule, and more. Past powerful examples of holding physical space and generating a lot of attention, controversy, and even political changes have included the IWW's free speech campaigns of the 1910s, the union sit-down strikes of the 1930s, the campus occupations of the 1960s, Alcatraz Island and other campaigns of the American Indian Movement in the 1970s, the urban squatting movement in many parts of Europe and New York City in the

they were being misrepresented in the press. This was a pattern that could be observed repeating itself regularly across the country during Occupy Wall Street, as well as during the global justice movement in the decade preceding Occupy.

The corporate media is using the protests as an opportunity to try to fear-monger around the supposed atmosphere of antisemitism and general chaos on the campuses. This campus uprising is getting heavy media coverage. Partly this is because of dramatic events, police repression, brutal physical treatment of students and professors caught on camera, etc., and partly this is because an agenda is being served by covering the protests from a certain angle. Bear in mind that protests and even large social movements do not automatically get media coverage of any kind, let alone positive press. And getting lots of media coverage, whether it's positive or negative, comes with major pros and cons.

Politicians, especially Republicans, are hoping to use their manufactured crisis as a means to win upcoming elections, à la Nixon in 1972. The only crisis in this

continuing, daily massacres of children that are now getting far less news coverage on many outlets—or in order to get “law-and-order” candidates elected. This political strategy has been used successfully on various notable occasions, such as the pivotal election of 1972, which Nixon won.

It is significant, however, that this movement is taking place during a Democratic administration, and can't easily be painted as (and isn't) a partisan phenomenon. The reality is that the mainstream of the Democratic Party leadership is 100% behind Israel, no matter how genocidal the government running the country may be at a given time. My experience with the global justice movement that began during the long reign of Democratic Party neoliberalism and imperialism in the 1990s was that the fact that it was opposing capitalism and transnational corporate hegemony during a time of a Democrat-led government helped clarify the beliefs and intentions of the movement as a whole, and made us less susceptible to getting distracted by what most of us felt to be the hopeless arena of U.S. electoral politics.

The repression against protest and free speech in the past six months has been extreme. Even by the standards set by repressive police states like ours over the past couple of generations, the political atmosphere in the Congress and in the media has been especially rabid and one-dimensional. Whereas during the genocidal American war in Vietnam, despite a tremendous degree of campus activism and mobilization of society in general, for a long time it was a real taboo to call in the riot cops to arrest your students. Fast forward to 2024, it seems to be standard practice.

Whether the student-led movement will be able to seize the mantle of defenders of free speech is an open question, and a very important one. Without painting the students, staff, or faculty across the United States with too broad a brush, it's fairly obvious to say that for many people involved, this is a movement to free Gaza and it's a movement for free speech, against conflating opposition to Israeli genocidal practices with being anti-Jewish, against throttling free speech, canceling valedictorian speeches on false grounds, or banning student organizations. For other people involved, free

been normative for there to be a greater concern for “safety” than for freedom of discourse. Without an unequivocal support for the fundamental notion presented by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, we stand to lose this argument.

If the movement doesn't subside quickly, psy ops tactics to divide and conquer it will (continue to) be employed on a massive scale, and this takes many forms. Successful movements are profoundly inclusive in nature. Unsuccessful ones adopt exclusive attitudes. There are always dishonest actors working for one or another division of the police across the country, along with random wingnuts and brainwashed sectarians, who will be pushing for the movement to behave in exclusive and cliquish ways, always pushing for divisions within the movement to be explored, pushing to denounce people within the movement who are perceived to have made mistakes. This phenomenon must be recognized and opposed through rejecting exclusivity and embracing inclusivity.

There's a difference between “widespread protests” and “massive protests,” and it's important to note this and the perceived atmosphere various media are trying to establish, for whatever varied and contradictory reasons. This movement is getting massive media coverage. There are a lot of reasons for this, but it's important not to mistake massive media coverage for a massive movement. Occupy Wall Street also got massive media coverage. The global justice movement a decade earlier did not. The impact of Occupy getting huge media coverage from the beginning was pretty evident; the movement didn't have time to develop in some organic way, but was just everywhere all of a sudden. This gave it the appearance of being a big movement, but this was only really the case in certain cities. The media coverage gave a lot of people within the movement and outside of it very inaccurate impressions about how big, how organized, or how much potential various local groups had to accomplish what both the media and many participants imagined could be accomplished. Unlike with the case of movements that got virtually no press, such as the global justice movement, Occupy never had large-scale protests in most of the country unless it was a protest announced in advance on local media, and this was also the case with the racial justice movement of 2020. And in both of these cases, although repressive authorities and police brutality played a huge negative role, it was when the media stopped covering these movements that they largely just seemed to dissipate.

In conclusion, in case it's not abundantly obvious, I hope to see this movement grow dramatically, and bring our bipartisan, genocide-enabling political leadership to its senses.

David Rovics is an American singer/songwriter. His music concerns both topical subjects such as the 2003 Iraq War, anti-globalization, anarchism, and social justice issues, and labor history.



Columbia University student encampment for divestment. Photo: Middle East Eye

1970s and 1980s, the Tahrir Square occupations in various Arab countries of the 2010s, and Occupy Wall Street in 2011.

The tactic of occupying a public space is often opposed by the authorities with state violence. Holding physical public space generally involves violating the law on a daily basis. Usually there are laws against setting up tents in public spaces and other laws against spending the night in those tents. The authorities in most countries tend to get worried when a whole bunch of people are very publicly and intentionally violating laws, because it undermines what they call “the rule of law” and their authority. If negotiations are even attempted, authorities quickly resort to violence in many countries.

If the repression doesn't kill the movement, it can cause a solidaristic reaction, and make it grow instead. There are many examples of social movements that started relatively small, but then after being violently repressed, dramatically grew as a result of the broader community being outraged by the way protesters were treated by authorities, as well as the way

equation, of course, is that Israel is committing genocide. There is no antisemitism crisis, and there is no chaos on the campuses—overwhelmingly just peaceable, public campouts of concerned citizens who are doing what they are doing out of outrage against genocide, and at great risk to their personal safety, personal

There is no antisemitism crisis, and there is no chaos on the campuses—overwhelmingly just peaceable, public campouts of concerned citizens who are doing what they are doing out of outrage against genocide, and at great risk to their personal safety, personal finances, and academic futures.

finances, and academic futures. The reason for the massive media coverage is to create the impression of a crisis, either in order to distract attention from any number of other things—such as the famine that is taking hold in Gaza, or the con-

speech may not be such a priority. Recent years have seen many left-identified people on campuses across the country protesting against and shutting down events involving speakers identified, rightly or wrongly, as rightwing in some way. It has

An Ode to My School, Destroyed by Israel

The school I taught at in Gaza City was my second home. Now it lies in ruins, some of my beloved students are dead, and I am terrified for the rest.



Sister Nabila Saleh with her students at the Rosary Sisters School in Gaza City. Photo: Aid to the Church in Need

By Ruwaida Kamal Amer

Before the war, I was a full-time science teacher. I did some journalistic work in parallel, producing stories about social issues and all the beautiful things in Gaza. Now, I find myself working as a fulltime journalist, reporting on the destruction of my school and the killing of my students.

It was something of a coincidence that I started teaching at the Rosary Sisters School, a private Catholic school in the Tal el-Hawa area of Gaza City. After graduating from university nine years ago, I began working with AlNayzak (Meteor) Foundation as an educational trainer: I would go into private and public schools to provide guidance in the sciences for the staff. In 2019, Meteor asked me to go to Rosary Sisters, which had recently built new biology, chemistry, and physics labs—facilities that remain all too rare in the Gaza Strip.

I had only been there one day helping set up the equipment in the labs when the principal, Sister Nabila Saleh, asked me to stay and teach fourth- and fifth-grade science. I accepted the offer immediately, having long wanted to teach young students. It was an auspicious beginning, and it turned out to be one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my life.

I love teaching and forming deep connections with my students. In class, we are serious so that they can learn, understand the materials, and achieve high scores in exams. For the sciences especially, intensive and continuous study and concentration are required. Outside of class, though, the students and I are close. Despite our age gap, I would consider us to be friends.

My home at the school was the science labs. Anyone who needed me could find me there. The students loved it there, too: at the beginning of the school year, I would draw up a study plan for each class and make sure that there were days we'd spend in the labs conducting experiments. Even so, during almost every class, the students begged to be allowed to work in the labs.

The remarkable educational opportunities that the school provided—including the labs—were due in large part to the work of the principal, Sister Saleh, who made a great effort to build and completely modernize the school's facilities. Sister Saleh and the devoted and talented staff hoped to make it one of the best private schools in the area. And indeed they did: Since the school was founded in 2000, its student body has grown nearly tenfold, to over 1200 students of both Muslim and Christian backgrounds.

Yet the fact that the school exists in the Gaza Strip means that no matter how much work and devotion was poured into it, the risk of destruction was never far away. During the previous war, in 2021, my lab was badly damaged when the Israeli occupation forces targeted the school; the reconstruction work took nearly a year. Classrooms and other school buildings were also damaged, requiring more intensive reconstruction—some of which wrapped up just weeks before the current war began.

In addition to the physical damage, this destruction was devastating on a personal level: the school was my second home, where I spent eight hours every day.

But the damage to the school during the 2021 war cannot be compared to the complete destruction of the current war. When the war broke out, the school year—which had begun in late August—was immediately canceled, and classes have been unable to resume since. During the subsequent four-and-a-half months, more than 80% of



The aftermath of an attack by Israeli forces on the Holy Rosary Sisters School in Gaza City.

the school's buildings have been destroyed.

In November, while Israeli forces were present in the Tal el-Hawa area, they entered the school with bulldozers and tanks, demolishing the school yard and destroying the wall surrounding



Palestinians with foreign passports leave Gaza to Egypt via the Rafah Crossing, southern Gaza Strip, February 6, 2024. Photo: Abed Rahim Khatib/Flash90

the campus. The library—which was filled with books, equipped with a number of laptops, and had a television screen for interactive lesson displays—was bombed, and it burned to the ground. Only ashes remain.

The elevator that was built last year was burned and destroyed, as was the school theater, where we gathered for the most beautiful moments—from graduation ceremonies to national, cultural, and religious celebrations. Israeli tanks and bulldozers even destroyed the kindergarten toys. These are hideous, bloody acts of retaliation.

I was shocked when I saw the images of the damage caused to the school. It is an educational institution; there is no political or military goal that could be achieved by destroying it. Seeing years of hard work being wiped out is indescribably painful.

Since the beginning of the war, I have been experiencing intense anxiety for the well-being of my students. I care about them not

ing one of them.

Unfortunately, these fears came to pass. I lost two students, Habiba Jarada and Salma Al-Atrash, both of whom were 12 years old and in the eighth grade. Each one had a unique and beautiful personality: they were active, intelligent, affectionate, and sophisticated. Both children were in the midst of developing a strong sense of self and their academic abilities.

Habiba was constantly checking in and comforting those around her. She would always ask me, "How are you doing? The most important thing for me is that you are happy." When I was tired from classes and the students had exhausted me, she would say, "Who's making you tired? Just tell me." Israel killed her during the early days of the war.

Salma, who was always full of laughter, first became my student a year ago. Shortly thereafter, I also began teaching her brother, Muhammad. He once said to me, "My sister Salma tells me that you are a good teacher, and that I will learn to love science as much as you do."

Muhammad was a distinguished student, always competing with his friend Omar. He used to tell me that he wished he could take four science classes. After Salma surprised me by dyeing her hair blue, Muhammad would always ask me whether I liked it.

Salma was martyred during a bombing in Gaza City in October. Her family, including Muhammad and their mother, are missing under the rubble—I do not know if they survived.

I still think about the children's mother, who once described to me the deep investment parents must make so that their children can reach the greatest academic heights. In Salma she has lost her beautiful and gentle daughter, whom she devoted 12 years to ensuring had a good life.

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A Family's Struggle to Survive in Gaza

By Doug Hostetter

Before joining the Pax Christi Advocacy Team at the United Nations, I directed the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) United Nations Office in New York for more than a decade and Co-Chaired the Israel/Palestine NGO Working Group Israel/Palestine at the United Nations. MCC supported several NGOs that were doing relief, development and peace work in Israel and Palestine. On visits to Gaza, I became friends with several staff members of Al-Najd Developmental Forum, one of the MCC supported NGOs with headquarters in Gaza City. Al-Najd, with Mennonite support, helped Gazan families develop home gardens and raise rabbits and chickens.

I have kept in touch with two of the Al-Najd staff over the years through Facebook Messenger. After the Hamas attack on October 7 and the Israeli response of massive bombing, I soon learned that in the early bombing the building that housed Al-Najd was completely destroyed and Mostafa Al-Naffar, one of my staff friends there, had also killed. My remaining friend, Amgad Al-Mhalwi, who has worked at Al-Najd for 17 years, has continued sending me updates on his family.

Amgad's family was originally from Hamama (25 miles north of Gaza), but in 1948 Israeli military forces drove the family out of Hamama to the Nuseirt refugee camp near Gaza

City, in what the Palestinians call the "Nakba" ("the catastrophe," when during the creation of the state of Israel, the Israeli army forced the evacuation of more than 400 Palestinian villages). Amgad (36) and his wife Qamer (25), both former university students, married five years ago and now have two boys, Majd (3) and Ibrahim (2). Amgad and Qamer lived with his extended family of about 50 people in a compound of houses near Gaza City. When the IDF ordered everyone to leave northern Gaza in the first week of the war, several of Amgad's extended family were killed while trying to travel to the south as ordered. Amgad decided that it was safer to shelter in the north rather than getting killed trying to go south.

"We left our house first to my aunt's house, then to my uncle's house, then to my wife's family's house, then to Al-Huda School in the Sheikh Radwan area, and after that, Ramez Luxury School, then Musab bin Omair School, and then finally to Umar bin Aas School."

Each time that they moved, it was because of shelling and bombing in that area, but actually there were no safe places to go.

The Umar bin Aas school was already overcrowded but Amgad found a classroom on the third floor of the school (about 5 X 5 meters) which provided a safe, if crowded, refuge for the 55 people of Amgad's extended family.

The school seemed secure until November 19, when the Israeli

Defense Force (IDF) moved into the area started shelling.

"My brother, the shells were everywhere. They were all around, next to the school. Many of the children who were in the school courtyard were injured and died. A shell came behind the school and people began to flee under the bombardment.

"We said, 'What do we do? Where do you go under heavy bombardment?' We decided it was safest to stay in the school.

"I was just outside the classroom door when, shortly after the afternoon prayer, at 3:20 pm a tank shell hit the classroom wall sending shrapnel throughout the classroom. The explosion blew me away from the door, and when I reentered the classroom, it was full of blood and screaming.

"My beautiful father was dead, and my uncle's wife was not moving, and my sister's neck was sliced open. I was crying,



Ibrahim and Majd on the evening of November 19, 2023.

and my brother was praying, he died while praying. My wife's face was bloody, her whole body is covered in blood. She was crying and screaming, and my children were crying and screaming, my whole family was screaming. I was in shock, uninjured and watching everyone scream.

"The most beautiful people in the world died that day. My father, the most affectionate person in the world, my brother who loved my children so much. My sister, who in my heart was more like my daughter, and my aunt was the fourth member of my family to die in that room.

"Thirty people were killed in the school that day and over a hundred were wounded. Three shells hit the school while we were there, and a fourth exploded as we were fleeing, and I don't know how many hit later.

"I carried my two children and took my wife, sister, and brother to the nearest medical clinic.

"My older brother told me that he would bury my dead family members. I was unable to say



Amgad with Majd on Gaza beach before the war

goodbye to any of them. The bombs and shells were falling, and I had to try to get my chil-



dren to safety.

"It was the worst day of my life.

"Both of my boys had been in the room by their mother when the shell hit that night. They had witnessed their grandfather, their uncle, and their aunt being killed, with blood all over everyone in the classroom. My sister was bleeding profusely from her neck, my cousin had his hand severed, and shrapnel had destroyed both of my brother's eyes. The boys were screaming, quaking in fear and peeing in their pants."

I did not hear from Amgad for a month and a half and was worried that he and his family had been killed in the massive bombing. Amgad and family miraculously had made their way, mostly walking, the 20 miles from Gaza City to Rafah on the Egyptian border. I finally got a short message: "We are in Rafah. My family is tired, sick and cold. We do not even have a tent to live in."

Amgad eventually was able

to buy a nylon tent for \$400, but there was no heat, and food and water were very hard to find.

January 22:

"The children became sick. We need psychological support and food. We are very tired. We long to return to our homes, even though they are destroyed. The experience of that night in the bloody classroom has changed my boys. Najd now always wants to sleep with Amgad and Ibrahim always wants to sleep with Qamer. When the boys hear bombing, they wet their pants and ran terrified to their parents. If they see red, even a piece of clothing, they run away screaming, blood, blood, blood."

On February 12 the Israeli Defense Forces rescued two Israeli hostages in Gaza. To distract from the IDF operation to rescue the hostages, they bombed and shelled other areas of Rafah killing at least 67 Palestinian women and children.

Amgad and his family were living in a nylon tent in Rafa that night, February 12th.

"Tonight was very difficult. Very strong bombardment. I saw my son Majd trying to hide from the bombing. He was trembling as he tried to hide his face in the ground, thinking that if no one could see him, he wouldn't die. Food, money, water for me, that is okay, but here we are not safe. We need safety. Please pressure your government to end this war and the occupation."

This article was written in cooperation with Amgad Al-Mhalwi and the staff of the Al-Najd Developmental Forum

Doug Hostetter is a member of the Pax Christi International United Nations Team.



Majd and Ibrahim before the conflict

Israel Is Assaulting Gaza Hospitals with Full U.S. Support

Hospitals should be places of healing, not theaters of war.

By Kathy Kelly

Many decades ago in Chicago, my favorite of several part-time student jobs was operating the “old-style” telephone switchboard at a small hospital called Forkosh Memorial. The console of coils and plugs included a mirror so operators could keep an eye on the hospital entrance, which on weekends and evenings was also monitored by an elderly, unarmed security guard named Frank. He sat at a classroom style desk near the entrance with a ledger book. Over the course of four years, on weekends and evenings, “security” at the hospital gen-



Palestinian Red Crescent first aid waiting to receive bodies from Al-Najjar Hospital in the city of Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip, on January 10, 2024. Photo: Shutterstock

edics; ambulances have been bombed. This has all been systematic,” Khan explained. “Now there are 10,000 to 15,000 bodies decomposing. It’s the rainy sea-

targeting specialists and hospital administrators. Three health care professional organizations have issued a statement expressing deep concern that the Israeli military has abducted and unlawfully detained Dr. Khaled al-Serr, a surgeon at the Nasser Hospital in Gaza.

On February 19, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described conditions in the Nasser hospital after Israel ordered evacuation of Palestinians from the complex. “There are still more than 180 patients and 15 doctors and nurses inside Nasser,” he said. “The hospital is still experiencing an acute shortage of food, basic medical supplies, and oxygen. There is no tap water and no electricity, except a backup generator maintaining some lifesaving machines.”

Eight years ago, in October of 2015, the United States military destroyed Afghanistan’s Kunduz hospital, run by Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). For more than an hour, a C-130 transport plane repeatedly fired incendiary devices at the hospital’s emergency room and intensive care unit, killing 42 people. Thirty-seven additional people were injured. “Our patients burned in their beds,” read the MSF’s in-depth report. “Our medical staff were decapitated or lost limbs. Others were shot from the air while they fled the burning building.”

The horrific attack outraged war resisters and human rights groups. I remember joining a group of activists in upstate NY who assembled outside a hospital emergency room with a banner proclaiming “To bomb this site would be a war crime.”

In 2009, on a smaller, yet still horrific scale, I witnessed an Israeli onslaught in Gaza called “Operation Cast Lead.” In the emergency room of the Al Shifa hospital, Dr. Saeed Abuhassan, an orthopedic surgeon, described experiences similar to Khan’s. This surgeon grew up in Chicago, very close to the neighborhood where I lived. I asked him what he would want me to tell our neighbors back home. He listed a litany of horrors and then he stopped. “No,” he said. “First, you must tell them that U.S. taxpayer money paid for all of these weapons.”

Taxpayer money feeds the bloated, swollen Pentagon budget. U.S. Senators, last week, cowed by AIPAC, decided to send Israel an additional \$14.1 billion to boost military spending. Only three Sen-

continued on next page ...

Taxpayer money feeds the bloated, swollen Pentagon budget. U.S. Senators, last week, cowed by AIPAC, decided to send Israel an additional \$14.1 billion to boost military spending.

erally consisted solely of Frank and me. Fortunately, nothing much ever happened. The possibility of an attack, invasion or raid never occurred to us. The notion of an aerial bombardment was unimaginable, like something out of “War of the Worlds” or some other sci-fi fantasy.

Now, tragically, hospitals in Gaza and the West Bank have been attacked, invaded, bombed and destroyed. News of additional Israeli attacks is being reported on a daily basis. Last week, Democracy Now! interviewed Dr. Yasser Khan, a Canadian ophthalmologist and eye surgeon who recently returned from a humanitarian surgical mission at the European Hospital in Khan Yunis in Gaza. Dr. Khan spoke of bombings taking place every few hours resulting in a constant influx of mass casualties. The majority of patients he treated were children from age 2 to 17. He saw horrific eye injuries, shattered faces, shrapnel wounds, abdominal injuries, limbs severed above the bone, and traumas caused by drone launched laser guided missiles. Amid the overcrowding and chaos, health care workers tended to patients while lacking basic equipment, including anesthesia. Patients lay on the ground in unsterile conditions, vulnerable to infection and disease. Most of them also suffered from severe hunger.

Normally, a child who undergoes an amputation faces as many as 12 additional surgeries. Khan wondered who would do the follow-up care for these children, some of whom have no surviving relatives?

He also noted sniper fire prevented doctors from going to work. “They’ve killed health care workers, nurses, para-

son right now in Gaza so all the rainwater mixes with the decomposing bodies and that bacteria mixes with the drinking water supply and you get further disease.”

According to Khan, Israeli forces have kidnapped 40 to 45 doctors, specifically

My School

... continued from page 12

Some of my students have sent me messages of reassurance on Facebook. I have taught more than a thousand students over the past five years, but only a few of them have managed to reach out to me since the start of the war. Although I am constantly worried for each and every one of them, I am relieved that those who sent me messages are fine and still alive. Some of my students have been able to leave Gaza, and I am grateful that they survived this terrible ordeal.

I have also met a number of my students who were displaced to the same areas as me in southern Gaza: some in the coastal area of Al-Mawasi, and others in Khan Yunis’ European Hospital, where they have sought refuge with their families. Seeing them brought me great joy, and I hugged them tightly.

Their circumstances are brutal and arduous. They wanted to talk to me, to complain to me about their pain. They told me that they try to shelter inside and avoid going outside, so as not to fall victim to Israel’s missiles. Their faces were pale, their bodies exhausted, and their hearts terrified of the war.

Like my students, my colleagues at the

school are also struggling greatly. There is a WhatsApp group that we use to communicate and check in on each other. All of the teachers have lost something dear to their hearts, a painful void that cannot be filled. Each one has lost their home, and many have lost several, or even all, of their close relatives. But these teachers are strong and pray daily for our survival and for the war to end.

I, too, hope that the war will end and that I will return to my work at the school. Each night I dream that I go back to school and that everyone is fine. I hope that this dream will soon come true—for me and

my students.

Last month, I found my sixth-grade student Sarah sleeping in one of the corridors at the European Hospital. When she opened her eyes, she shouted to her mother, “Teacher Ruwaida is here!” Her mother thought she was dreaming, but Sarah insisted it was real. She ran to me, her eyes full of tears, and embraced me. She asked if the school year would be repeated: “Have we lost a year of our lives?”

I told her that first we want the war to end, and then we can think about such issues. She told me that the most basic tasks have become very difficult: she hardly gets the chance to use the bathroom, and cannot shower. The one thing that enables her to hold on to a remnant of her previous life is the Internet, which she uses to communicate with her classmates and friends.

She asked me to send them all a message telling them that I’m fine. I agreed, but she had one further request; despite the horrors of the last few months, Sarah has held onto her sense of humor. In addition to letting the students know I am okay, she asked me to answer one more question: “When is the next science exam?”

*First published in +972 magazine
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Palestinians children look out of a window at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the city of Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, February 16, 2024. Photo: Abed Rahim Khatib/Flash90

What Does NATO Have to Do with the Genocide in Gaza?

By David Swanson

NATO will be celebrating 75 years of itself—and plotting future wars and weapons sales—in Washington D.C. in July, and a lot of people are busy planning a counter-summit and rally to oppose NATO's agenda.

For those who care about life on Earth, or who are upset by the horrors and risks of one of the current wars in Gaza or Ukraine, taking steps to move humanity away from the course plotted by the largest military alliance ever to exist may seem an obvious to-do-list item.

For those upset by the horrific war in Gaza, in particular, and inclined toward the common ritual of calling it “not a war”—as if there existed elsewhere some kind of war that wasn't horrible or didn't mass-murder families—paying any attention to NATO may seem like a distraction from the moral imperative to put a halt to a public genocide in Palestine sanctioned by the “rules based order.”

But the slaughter in Gaza could not exist without the U.S.-led military industrial complex, and its largest and most effective tool is NATO. One of NATO's many partners around the globe is Israel. Israel's horrific wars are of the same species as everybody else's horrific wars. And without NATO, neither the U.S. nor Israel could make any claim to being part of an “international community” or a “rules based order.”

Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty limits new members of NATO to European nations that are invited by NATO to join it. But NATO has not limited itself to Europe. It does not view its purpose as merely “resisting armed attack” (in the language of that treaty). Not only has it reconceived the concept of resisting actual attacks as deterring potential attacks—often through

behavior that is clearly more provocative than deterrent—but NATO also conceives of itself as a global alliance that will wage wars anywhere on Earth, regardless of any attack on a NATO member.

Outside of Europe, therefore, NATO has added dozens of additional nations as “partners” rather than members. To invite a nation to be a member, existing members must agree that, according to Article 5, an attack on one is an attack on all. To add a “partner,” however, no such commitment is required. NATO may very well go to war in the event that one of its partners goes to war, but it is not obliged to by treaty. It is thus free to do weapons deals with partner governments, embed partner militaries in its “interoperable” system of weapons types, trainers, and operators, and decide on an ad hoc basis what wars to wage.

Always viewing militarism as the answer to the problems it creates, NATO has established partnerships across the region of Western Asia that have wreaked havoc, spreading weaponry and instability. One initiative, the Mediterranean Dialogue, includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. Another, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In addition, through what NATO calls “Partners Across the Globe,” NATO has established partnerships with Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. NATO partners Israel and Pakistan are estimated to possess 170 nuclear weapons each, both without joining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Western Asian NATO partners include some of the most oppressive, authoritarian and dictatorial governments, deemed the least “free” by the U.S.-funded Freedom House rankings, and considered by the U.S. Department of State responsible for all va-

and inhumane destruction of Gaza. U.S. advisors make feeble attempts to suggest Israel should pause or at least try to be more precise in their attacks. In its quest for hegemonic superiority, the United States tears into ever tinier shreds whatever remains of a commitment to human rights, equality and human dignity.

What kept Forkosh Hospital secure, decades ago, was a social contract that presumed safety for a small hospital serving the local population.

If we can't find the morality to stop supplying weapons for ongoing Israeli onslaughts against Gaza and its places of healing, we may find we have created a world in which no-one can count on upholding basic human rights. We may be creating intergenerational wounds of hatred and sorrow from which there will never, ever be any safe place to heal.

Kathy Kelly (kathy.vcnv@gmail.com) is board president of World BEYOND War; she co-coordinates the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal.

riety of brutal human rights abuses—plus Israel, which is also one of the most brutal, warmaking governments—one that has recently been ordered to cease its murderous activities by the International Court of Justice and the United Nations Security Council—even if deemed flawless and “democratic” by the U.S. government that arms it.

NATO and NATO members have been supporting Israel since its creation by funding, arming, and training the Israeli military and providing diplomatic cover for Israel's crimes. Israel imports weapons primarily from the United States and Germany, but also imports and exports weapons with other NATO members. In 2017, Israel established a permanent official mission to NATO headquarters in Brussels, and there have been efforts over the years to integrate Israel more closely into NATO to take advantage of Israel's advanced weapons systems, so frequently tested and demonstrated on Palestinians.

NATO members have purchased bil-

and security. Over the last year cooperation has grown, with NATO welcoming Israel's intention to strengthen the naval interoperability by recognizing Israel as a partner for NATO's Operation Sea Guardian, and Israel's Defence Force military medical academy now serving as a unique asset for NATO's Partnership Training and Education Centres community.”

NATO's Secretary General also claimed that Russia, China, and North Korea, were aligning with Iran as enemies of “freedom and democracy.” NATO and the Israeli government view Iran as an important enemy. Israel played a significant role in pushing for the disastrous war in Iraq, and has been a leading proponent of the still-threatened war on Iran for decades. “The illusion of distance can no longer hold. NATO must take the strongest possible stance against the Iranian regime including through economic, legal and political sanctions and credible military deterrence,” said NATO's Secretary General.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Brussels.

ions in weapons from Israel, including the Arrow 3 missile defense system (sold to Germany for \$3.5 billion) and “Kamikaze drones” and counter-drone systems. Israeli weapons exports soared after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, when NATO members saw a chance to acquire Israel's advanced military technology. NATO is particularly interested in Israel's use of artificial intelligence, which began with Israel's attack on Gaza in 2021 but became a key component of its military strategy after October 7, 2023. In Israel's targeting of Palestinians, the army has used an artificial intelligence-based program known as “Lavender,” which has played a central role in the bombing that has killed tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people in Gaza.

Israeli military officials have briefed NATO on Israel's “innovations,” and Israel's President Isaac Herzog visited NATO headquarters in 2023—the first time an Israeli president has addressed NATO allies there. Like a pair of presidents, the president of Israel and the unelected-to anything secretary general of NATO held a joint press conference.

NATO put out a statement on that occasion that read, in part: “NATO and Israel have worked together for almost 30 years, cooperating in domains such as science and technology, counter terrorism, civil preparedness, countering weapons of mass destruction and women, peace

NATO headquarters and the dominant decision-maker in NATO, the U.S. government, have been supportive of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, despite division among NATO member governments. Belgium, Spain, and Slovenia, have expressed some sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians, while European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has commented publicly to U.S. President Biden: “Well, if you believe that too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide less arms in order to prevent so many people being killed.” Such logic does not seem to penetrate NATO, which is increasingly taking over the role of governments in budgeting, warmaking, policing, scientific research, education, and diplomacy—all without any pretense of accountability to any public, as NATO wages and fuels wars for “democracy.”

Articles churned out in the past few months by NATO-aligned stink tankers have been pushing for much closer collaboration between Israel and NATO.

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Hospitals

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ators voted against the bill.

From Palestine, Huwaida Arraf, a Palestinian-American human rights attorney, wrote on X: “The scary part is not that Israel is planning the forcible transfer of the Palestinians it hasn't slaughtered, but that the so-called ‘civilized world’ is allowing it to happen. The ramifications of this coordinated evil will haunt its collaborators for generations to come.”

At Forkosh Hospital in the 1970s, I had a mirror to see what was happening behind my back, but everyone on earth can see, directly, the horror of U.S. support for a genocidal event happening on our watch. Gravely distorted versions of what occurred on October 7, cannot—even if believed—justify the scale of the horrors being reported in Gaza and the West Bank each day.

The U.S. government continues enthusiastically to bankroll Israel's systemic

Why Didn't Israel's Nuclear Weapons Move the Hands on the Doomsday Clock?

By Terry Lodge

On Tuesday, January 23, 2024, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists published its annual update and reset of the iconic Doomsday Clock. The Clock is a symbolic design that warns the public about how close humanity is to destroying the world with dangerous technologies and trends of our own making. It is a metaphor, a reminder of the perils we must address if we are to survive on the planet. When it was created in 1947, the greatest danger to humanity came from

But conspicuously missing from the Atomic Scientists' Doomsday Clock assessment is any mention of Israel's controversial nuclear warfighting capacity. The sole mention of Israel in the risk assessment appears in this passage which bemoans the dangers of uncontrolled Iran nuclear enrichment:

Because the [Iran] nuclear agreement remains in limbo, international monitors are increasingly unable to capture data on Iran's nuclear efforts. This is a particularly worrisome development, given the escalating war in Israel/Gaza, which raises the possibility

A highly successful Israeli deception and disinformation campaign convinced U.S. inspectors that the Dimona complex was for civilian use, including a fake control room at the reactor complex, complete with false control panels that seemed to be running a faked 24-megawatt research reactor.

nuclear weapons, in particular from the prospect that the United States and the Soviet Union were headed for a nuclear arms race. The Atomic Scientists considered possible catastrophic disruptions from climate change in its hand-setting deliberations beginning in 2007.

In January 2023, the Atomic Scientists set the Clock at "90 Seconds to Midnight"—the most dire setting since the first proclamation in 1947. This year, they held the Clock setting at "90 Seconds to Midnight", citing threats to planetary survival, citing the widespread and growing reliance on nuclear weapons, increased risks of nuclear escalation, climate chaos, biological threats, and artificial intelligence (AI). Pointing to an undiminished nuclear threat and a new arms race," the Atomic Scientists highlighted U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons modernization efforts against the backdrop of the Russo-Ukraine war and ongoing potential for a nuclear faceoff there. Also mentioned were Russian President Putin's decision to "suspend" the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START); his decision to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus; the Russian Duma's October 2023 vote to revoke Moscow's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; concerns over a possible nuclear arms race between China and the U.S.; a recent U.S. congressional commission report that argued that the "U.S. and its allies must be ready to 'deter and defeat' both Russia and China" to avert a nuclear war. And North Korea's advancing nuclear provocations; the quiet growth in India's and Pakistan's nuclear arsenals; and the lack of U.S. seriousness in re-establishing an Iran nuclear deal all were mentioned.

of a wider conflict in the Middle East. Iran now has the means to rapidly produce the fissile material for a small number of weapons within weeks of a decision to do so.

Israeli Resisters

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within a legacy of great peacemakers.

The earliest recorded act of conscientious objection occurred in 295 A.D. when Maximilianus refused his conscription into the Roman Army. He was beheaded for refusing to kill. Later, he was canonized as a saint.

Like Maximilianus, Austrian farmer Franz Jägerstätter was arrested and executed for refusing conscription by the Nazis. He wrote, "I find that [my hands being in chains is] much better than if my will were in chains. Neither prison nor chains nor sentence of death can rob a man of the Faith and his free will."

"When, in 1944, devout Quaker Bayard Rustin was sentenced to three years for refusing to serve in World War II, he devoted his prison time to racial justice work." A disciple of Gandhian nonviolence, he organized his fellow prisoners to resist segregation in the prison. He was so successful that the head of the prison described him as "an extremely capable agitator." Upon release, he traveled the country organizing communities, including the "First Freedom Ride" in 1947.

James Lawson, also a student of Gandhi, spent 13 months in prison between 1951 and 1952 for refusing to serve during the Korean War. Lawson went on to become, along with Rustin, an essential advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King.

Since its campaigns were broadcast on TV



How is it that, with more than 26,700 Palestinians dead (as of January 30, 2024) in a genocide that has seen over 29,000 bombs dropped on the Gaza Strip in a record-breaking carpet bombing by an out-of-control army, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists saw fit to excoriate Iran for supposedly being weeks away from having the Bomb yet completely omitted mention of Israel's massive 60-year-old nuclear arsenal?

For years after beginning its weapons program in the 1950's, Israel actively concealed the fact from its best friend and ally, the U.S. A highly successful Israeli deception and disinformation campaign convinced U.S. inspectors that the Dimona complex was for civilian use, including a fake control room at the reactor complex, complete with false control panels that seemed to be running a faked 24 megawatt research reactor. Israel began gleaming spent fuel from Dimona for plutonium in 1966 and was probably building nuclear

bombs by the time of the 1967 war. U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger provided Israel cover in the late 1960's and early 1970's by hiding Israel's true purpose for buying U.S. warplanes, to drop nuclear bombs. Kissinger accepted Israel's ambiguous pledge to not "be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East."

This U.S. acquiescence allowed Israel to develop an outlaw, deliverable nuclear weapons arsenal secretly and outside of the reporting and inspection controls of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Presently, Israel has at least 90 warheads, deliverable via aircraft, land-based ballistic missiles, and submarine-based cruise missiles. Israel's Jericho III intercontinental ballistic missiles are capable of delivering a nuclear warhead from 4000 miles away, which means that Iran, Pakistan (another outlaw nuclear state) and all of Russia west of the Urals—including

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Ben Arad, the third conscientious objector imprisoned since October 7.

across America, the civil rights movement challenged the public, especially American youth, to choose between justice and segregation—between equality and oppression. At the same time, there was a surge of draft evaders and conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War, including prominent leaders like "good troublemaker" John Lewis.

Refusing and avoiding conscription became so popular during the Vietnam War that President Nixon's commission reported that the movement was "expanding at an alarming rate," leaving the government "almost powerless to apprehend and prosecute them."

With the majority of Israelis oppos-

ing an end to the war in Gaza and 72% of them supporting no humanitarian aid, Tal and Sofia are not part of a growing popular movement, like what took place during the Vietnam War. But their contributions to peace are no less important.

Whether or not other young Israelis join them in jail—Tal and Sofia were part of a group of 200 Jewish Israeli 12th graders who pledged in August 2023 to refuse military service to protest the government's effort to overhaul Israel's judicial system—what Tal and Sofia have done places profound marks on the pages of history.

Members and contributors to the Fellowship of Reconciliation include the likes of Jane Addams, A.J. Muste, Mahatma Gandhi, Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King Jr., Daniel Berrigan, Dorothy Day, James Lawson, and countless other brave conscientious objectors and peacemakers.

Today, as the world is watching a genocide take place in real-time—as of this writing, the death toll in Gaza is approaching 32,000 and famine is setting in—FOR-USA is proud to be raising money for an ad in an Israeli newspaper lifting up two of the most important conscientious objectors of our time. We invite you to join us by following Tal and Sofia's journey at forusa.org/IsraeliRefusers.

Ariel Gold is the executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the oldest interfaith peace and justice organization in the United States.

Veterans Demand Termination of Weapons to Israel

Letter calls on State Department Inspector-General to investigate illegal shipments and numerous violations of federal law

In a letter to the Inspector-General of the U.S. State Department, a national veterans' organization today demanded the State Department terminate weapons shipments to Israel and called on the Inspector General to investigate alleged criminal acts by senior Biden administration officials in violation of U.S. law, including ratified treaties, which are the supreme law of the land.

Josh Paul, former State Department senior official who resigned over weapons shipments to Israel said, "The Secretary and all relevant officials under his purview should take this letter from Veterans For Peace with the utmost seriousness. It is a stark reminder of the importance of abiding by the laws and policies that relate to arms transfers."

Mike Ferner, VFP National Director, said, "Just as any good soldier can recognize when they are given an unlawful order, we believe some State Department staff are horrified at the orders they're given and will decide to uphold the law, find the courage to speak out and demand an end to the carnage. VFP enthusiastically supports Josh Paul for what he did and we believe the public does, too. The IDF has killed over 30,000 Palestinians and is utterly destroying Gaza. These actions amount to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, and VFP wants them investigated."

"Unless no one in the entire U.S. State Department has seen the news in the last four months, they have to be aware of Israel's illegal activity. But just in case, our letter to the Inspector General spells it out in chapter and verse. We believe the State Department—from the Secretary down to every staff person working on arms transfers to Israel—is in criminal violation of U.S. statutes regarding how U.S. weaponry can be used. There's no 'Israel exception' that makes it okay for U.S. weapons to be used in genocide even if it's labeled self-defense," Ferner concluded.

The letter from Veterans For Peace alleges violations by the U.S. government and its officials of:

- The Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, which prohibits U.S. weapons transfers when it's likely they will be used by Israel to commit genocide; crimes against humanity; and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, including attacks in-



Veterans For Peace delegation at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. Photo: Ellen Davidson

tionally directed against civilian objects or civilians protected or other serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, including serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against children. Dozens of authoritative complaints and referrals made by hospital administrators in Gaza, as well as by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Palestine Authority, South Africa, Turkey, Medicins sans Frontières, UNRWA, UNICEF, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the World Food Programme, have confirmed that there is an ongoing human rights and humanitarian disaster due to Israel's cutoff of water and electricity, deliberate destruction of sewage infrastructure and delaying of aid shipments by Israeli forces.

- The Foreign Assistance Act, which

forbids the provision of assistance to a government which "engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights."

- Arms Export Control Act, which says countries that receive U.S. military aid can only use weapons for legitimate self-defense and internal security. Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza goes way beyond self-defense and internal security.

- The U.S. War Crimes Act, which forbids grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, including perpetrated by the Israeli Occupying Forces.

- The Leahy Law, which prohibits the U.S. Government from using funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights.

- The Genocide Convention Imple-

mentation Act, which was enacted to implement U.S. obligations under the Genocide Convention, provides for criminal penalties for individuals who commit or incite others to commit genocide.

Human rights attorney, Terry Lodge, who drafted the VFP letter, pointed out what he called "The State Department's double standard to determine war criminality," citing a December 6, 2023, determination by Secretary Blinken, "that the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of Sudan had 'committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.' As horrible as the crimes of the RSF may be, they pale compared to what Israel is doing in Gaza."

Veterans For Peace has over 100 chapters in the U.S. and since 1985 has exposed the true costs of war and militarism. Its goal is to abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

Israeli Nukes

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Moscow—are within range of Israeli nuclear bombs should the rogue Netanyahu regime decide to use them.

Israel's provocative approach to foreign relations before and since commencing the genocidal invasion of Gaza certainly suggests that nuclear weapons might be used against real or imagined existential threats to Israel. In May 2023, Prime Minister Netanyahu assessed that "95% of Israel's security problems come from Iran" and then in September, he insisted at the United Nations that "[A]bove all, Iran must face a credible nuclear threat." The current Israeli government, widely deemed to be the most politically reactionary in Israel's history, has uttered more than 500 incitements to genocide against Palestinians, including use of nuclear weapons in Gaza.

Compounding this bleak picture, Israel has been set back militarily by its inva-

sion and is having difficulties achieving military objectives such as destruction of Hamas and dominance over Lebanon's Hezbollah military. Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza is stressing the decades-long Iran-Israel shadow war. Israel's repeated conventional bombings of its neighbors threaten to provoke war beyond the genocide. After repeated Israeli airstrikes on Syria, Russia on January 18, 2024 deployed warplanes to patrol the border to deter Israeli attacks, and has re-occupied two previously vacated outposts built to monitor violations of the demilitarized zone between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The U.S. has been drawn into attacking the Houthis in Yemen and in effect is protecting Israel's genocidal campaign. The genocide is pushing Iran to move closer to development of nuclear weapons which will likely lead Saudi Arabia to follow suit.

Given significant, recently-compiled information about the illegal and highly controversial Israeli nuclear weapons arsenal in the Atomic Scientists' own archives,

one wonders whether their nonmention of Israel's menacing nuclear capabilities was intentional. This failure to properly frame the fragile, growing Middle East crisis undermines the Doomsday Clock's 76 years of objective warning.

Israel has an outsized arsenal, routinely considers nuclear war to be a policy option, and is headed by an incompetent and malign government causing a spiraling crisis of global dimensions. Humanity is much closer to the brink of using nuclear weapons than at any time since 1947, and certainly is inside of 90 seconds to midnight. Israel is sabre-rattling its arsenal. This is not the moment for the Doomsday Clock to stop telling the world exactly what time it is.

Toledo lawyer Terry Lodge specializes in environmental and energy issues and has been active in the peace movement for many years, defending people arrested for resisting wars. He was the 2018 recipient of the Johnsrud Unsung Heroes Award presented by the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability. He can be contacted at lodgelaw@yahoo.com

'In the War of Propaganda, It Is Difficult To Defeat the United States'

By Caitlin Johnstone

One under-appreciated moment from Tucker Carlson's recent interview with Vladimir Putin came after Putin implied that NATO powers were behind the 2022 bombing of the Nord Stream pipeline. Carlson responded by asking why Putin wouldn't present evidence of this to the world, so as to "win a propaganda victory."

"In the war of propaganda it is very difficult to defeat the United States because the United States controls all the world's media and many European media," Putin replied, adding, "The ultimate beneficiary of the biggest European media are American financial institutions."

I don't know about the specific nature of his Nord Stream insinuations, but Putin is definitely correct about the strength of the American propaganda machine. Of all the fronts one could possibly choose to challenge the United States on, propaganda is surely the least favorable. The U.S. empire has by far the most sophisticated and effective propaganda machine ever to have existed, operating with such complexity that most people don't even know it exists.

In a "fact-checking" article titled "5 lies and 1 truth from Putin's interview with Tucker Carlson", Politico Europe labels the above claim a lie on the basis that



Disney's World War II Propaganda.

government-funded media op under the umbrella of the U.S. propaganda services umbrella USAGM.

I really couldn't have come up with a more perfect illustration of what I'm talking about here than the U.S. government and its European lackeys running a complex and elaborate project to further slant European media against the Russian Fed-

which their wealth is premised, and they will cooperate with establishment power structures in various ways toward that end.

The fact that these mass media outlets look independent but function as propaganda organs for the U.S. empire allows its propaganda to fly into people's minds without triggering any gag reflex of critical thinking or skepticism, which wouldn't be the case if people knew those outlets were feeding them propaganda. Propaganda only really has persuasive power if you don't know it's happening to you.

The invisibility of U.S. propaganda is further aided by the subtle methods by which it is administered, which we've seen exemplified beautifully in the coverage of Israel's ongoing U.S.-backed mass atrocity in Gaza.

In an article titled "Coverage of Gaza War in the New York Times and Other Major Newspapers Heavily Favored Israel, Analysis Shows," The Intercept reports that a review of 1,000 articles from the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times about Israel's war on Gaza found that the outlets consistently used word choices which

son and Othman Ali report. "The term 'slaughter' was used by editors and reporters to describe the killing of Israelis versus Palestinians 60 to 1, and 'massacre' was used to describe the killing of Israelis versus Palestinians 125 to 2. 'Horrific' was used to describe the killing of Israelis versus Palestinians 36 to 4."

This is the sort of manipulation that a casual news consumer wouldn't notice. Unless you're on alert for bias and are keeping track of what words are and aren't being used where, you're probably not going to notice the absence of emotionally-charged words when reporting on Palestinians who are killed by Israelis.

This type of slant shows up in all sorts of ways, like today's headlines about the IDF killing a six year-old Palestinian girl named Hind Rajab along with her family. Reliable propaganda organs of the empire like CNN, The New York Times and the BBC have respectively gone with the headlines "Five-year-old Palestinian girl found dead after being trapped in car under Israeli fire", "Missing 6-Year-Old and Rescue Team Found Dead in Gaza, Aid Group Says," and "Hind Rajab, 6, found dead in Gaza days after phone calls for help". In contrast, Al Jazeera reports on the same story with the headline "Body of 6-year-old killed in 'deliberate' Israeli fire found after 12 days," and Middle East Eye goes with "Hind Rajab: Palestinian girl found dead after being trapped under Israeli fire for days".

It's easy to spot the difference when they're placed next to each other like I just did, but unless you're really watching out for it and have a good background on what's going on here you're likely to miss what's happening. If you're like most people and don't read past the headline, you'd never know from the imperial media headlines that the child was killed by Israel, and you'd certainly never know about her terrified phone call for help while trapped by IDF fire and surrounded by the bodies of her dead relatives. If you look to the legacy media and its algorithmically-boosted online iterations for information about the world, you went one more day with a distorted perspective of what's happening in Gaza.

The western press constantly write headlines like this when trying to minimize the impact of someone's death at the hands of a party they sympathize with, particularly with regard to Palestinians. Last month the

The invisibility of U.S. propaganda is further aided by the subtle methods by which it is administered, which we've seen exemplified beautifully in the coverage of Israel's ongoing U.S.-backed mass atrocity in Gaza.

Russia has state-run media whereas U.S. media is privately owned.

"The biggest news media companies are privately owned and operate without direct government control, in contrast to the state-controlled media landscape in Russia," writes Politico's Sergey Goryashko. "Russian state TV and the primary news agencies there are the property of the government, and the Kremlin controls other media or destroys those not willing to collaborate."

At the bottom of the article is a line which reads as follows: "Sergey Goryashko is hosted at POLITICO under the EU-funded EU4FreeMedia residency program."

EU4FreeMedia is a European Union narrative management operation set up to help integrate "Russian journalists in exile" into leading European publications, ie to provide maximum media amplification to Russian expats who have a bone to pick with the current government in Moscow. It is run with participation from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a U.S.

eration, which then manifests as a Politico article calling Putin a liar and claiming propaganda does not exist in the west.

There's an old joke that goes like this:

A Soviet and an American are on an airplane seated next to each other.

"Why are you flying to the U.S.?" asks the American.

"To study American propaganda," replies the Soviet.

"What American propaganda?" asks the American.

"Exactly," the Soviet replies.

In reality the nature of the U.S.-centralized empire allows it to run a massive, nonstop international propaganda campaign through mass media platforms which are mostly privately owned. A diverse network of factors feeds into this dynamic which I've detailed in my unusually lengthy article "15 Reasons Why Mass Media Employees Act Like Propagandists", but the gist of it is that anyone who's wealthy enough to control a mass media platform is going to have a vested interest in preserving the status quo upon

served Israeli information interests.

"Highly emotive terms for the killing of civilians like 'slaughter,' 'massacre,' and 'horrific' were reserved almost exclusively for Israelis who were killed by Palestinians, rather than the other way around," The Intercept's Adam John-

BBC published an article titled "Record number of civilians hurt by explosives in 2023", as though they were mishandling fireworks or something instead of being actively killed by Israeli bombs. The BBC later revised their atrocious headline, but

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Propaganda War

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revised it in the opposite direction, replacing "Record number" with "High number" to further minimize the impact.

Contrast this with the BBC's headlines when it's reporting on Ukrainians killed by Russian airstrikes. Here's a recent one titled "Ukraine war: Russian air strikes claim five lives in Kyiv and Mykolaiv", and another titled "Ukraine war: Baby killed in Russian strike on Kharkiv hotel".

Got it? In Ukraine people die from bombs because Russia launched Russian airstrikes and killed them very Russianly, whereas in Gaza people get hurt by explosions because they got too close to some

type of explosive material.

Last week The Washington Post ran an opinion piece titled "Is America complicit in Israel's bloody war in Gaza?", which is already a ridiculously skewed headline because the answer is self-evidently yes—implying that there's any question of this skews things in America's favor. But even this was too much for the Post's editors, who re-titled the piece "Has the Israel-Gaza war changed your feelings about being American?" to keep Americans from thinking too hard about Israel's bloody war in Gaza and their country's complicity in it.

In a Wednesday article titled "Biden Tries Again With Arab Americans in Michigan", New York Times editorial board member Farah Stockman wrote the absolutely insane line "The Oct. 7 Hamas

attack on Israel seems to be affecting Biden's election prospects." And then The New York Times actually printed it.

Read that line again. She's saying Arab Americans are rejecting Biden because of the October 7 Hamas attack, which is of course absurd; they're rejecting Biden because he's backing a genocide in Gaza. She wrote this nonsensical line because in the New York Times you can't say things like "Israel's genocide in Gaza" or "the president's facilitation of crimes against humanity", and you won't be hired if you're the sort of person who'd be inclined to. Instead we're pretending that for some inexplicable reason Arab Americans are just hopping mad at Biden because October 7 happened.

But again, these little manipulations fly under the radar if you're not on the look-

out for them. Such is the brilliance of the U.S. empire's invisible propaganda machine. That's why it's very difficult to win a propaganda war against the United States, that's why westerners have been so successfully manipulated into accepting a status quo of endless war, ecocide, injustice and exploitation, and that's why the world looks the way it looks right now.

Caitlin Johnstone is a 100% crowd-funded rogue journalist, bogan socialist, anarcho-psychonaut, guerrilla poet and utopia prepper living in Australia with her American husband and two kids. She writes about politics, economics, media, feminism and the nature of consciousness. She is the author of the illustrated poetry book Woke: A Field Guide For Utopia Preppers. Her website is caityjohnstone.medium.com/.

I Keep Moving

by Jenny Pacanowski
Homeless woman

Veteran women comprise the fastest-growing segment of the population of veterans experiencing homelessness.

Seriously, nowhere is safe.

The grate's warmth gave enough comfort to capture a few winks

All my belongings lay underneath my head, my functional ruck sack pillow.

No one can steal it without awakening me.

My sleeping bag wraps around me like a cocoon without the luxury of a beautiful transformation.

I awake to the same day,

replaying,

as time passes without any effort or contribution from me.

I lowered my guard just long enough to get kicked by a cop

for sleeping on the street near Macy's.

NO REST.

I keep moving, my bruised ribs slowing me slightly.

It is a bitter reminder that I am surrounded by emptiness.

I long for the days when my buddies had my back.

Sleep came quick after the exhausting yet purpose driven days convoying on the roads of Iraq.

I would lie on top of my sleeping bag

Surrounded by guns and the soldiers who knew how to use them.

Life was simple, dare I say, easy.

Or at least predictable

You followed orders.

You did your job.

You were in danger

You were protected.

You lived or died.

You could rely on the fact that there was NO GRAY.

We kept moving.

Like I do now,

Sitting in the middle of the Iraq desert with a disabled vehicle was like

waiting for the vultures to pick your eyes out

while you were still bleeding, immobilized by injury

And death was imminent yet lingering.

So, I still keep moving.

No one needs to see me,

It only hurts them,

Blaming themselves for my actions that

Their good intentions have no control over.

I don't care.

I don't want to be saved.



I don't deserve it.

I hate the daylight.

People stare and scoff, "get a job", "lazy", "bum"

Avoiding eye contact because

I am a reality that could afflict anyone

I'm an uncomfortable reminder of fear.

Of loss

I keep moving throughout the tourist spots, watching for the school buses from out of state.

Hoping,

I am the first nomadic traveler they have ever seen and their offerings flow into my hat.

Those careless eaters with nice coats and fancy sneakers,

Always leave warm french fries and half consumed burgers in their Mickie-D bags.

Sometimes the conscientious, bleeding hearts want to bargain with my freedom of choice.

"Don't buy alcohol or drugs with my money"

"OK"

As the 40 ounces of liquid flow down my throat, Reality drifts away into the soft fuzzy glow of the street lamp.

No one truly sees me as the sun dwindles on the horizon.

There is enough sobriety in that thought for anyone.

I escape from the gawking onlookers

by finding solace among the statues at the edge of the park.

My buzz is wearing off as my feet begin to throb.

My combat boots have served me well.

They have endured the brunt of my searching.

Once upon a time,

Me and my boots had

Missions to Complete

Tasks to perform

Winning hearts and minds

Fearing our departure

Awaiting our arrival

Honoring our return

Now I place one foot in front of the other

to the pace of my beating heart along a blank map.

Jenny Pacanowski is the founder and director of Women Veterans Empowered & Thriving: womenveteranempowered.org, a reintegration program that utilizes writing and performance to empower the veteran's experiences and facilitate skills to thrive in daily life. She is a poet/combat veteran, a public speaker and a playwright. While deployed to Iraq in 2004, Jenny was a combat medic and provided medical support for convoys with the Marines, Air Force and the Army.

By Pat Elder

Joshua Frank's article, Making Gaza Unlivable ought to be read by everyone. Frank is the managing editor of CounterPunch. He describes the collapsing infrastructure and dire circumstances of Gaza in this January 12 story:

"Like the Allied forces of World War II, Israel is killing indiscriminately. Of the 29,000 air-to-surface munitions fired, 40% have been unguided bombs dropped on crowded residential areas. The U.N. estimates that, as of late December, 70% of all schools in Gaza, many of which served as shelters for Palestinians fleeing Israel's onslaught, had been severely damaged. Hundreds of mosques and churches have also been struck and 70% of Gaza's 36 hospitals have been hit and are no longer functioning. According to HRW, Israel is using a lack of food and drinking water as a tool of warfare."

We'll examine the deadly contamination that accompanies the Israeli onslaught, starting with Aljazeera's coverage.

Aljazeera reports: "Thousands upon thousands of Israeli and western-supplied bombs dropped on Gaza bring not just death but a toxic legacy from explosive chemicals, dust, and debris from destroyed buildings that pollute the air and the ground. Israel's military offensive in Gaza is leaving a new layer of toxic chemicals in Gaza's soil, adding to those left behind from many wars it has waged before."

Nada Majdalani the Palestinian director of EcoPeace Middle East described the situation: "We are at the verge of an environmental catastrophe in terms of the spread of diseases and the accumulation of corpses in the streets. This makes Gaza susceptible to pandemic diseases. . . We are seeing collective amounts of threats to the environment and to the public health. The Israelis are utilizing chemical weapons like white phosphorus. This is affecting the air pollution. The residue from white phosphorus bombs is now in the atmosphere. With the rainy season we expect that these residues will precipitate with the rain. Unfortunately, many people are now utilizing rainwater for drinking. People are also drinking untreated, salty water. This is dangerous for people with kidney and liver diseases. There is a danger of parasitic infections, hepatitis, and chicken pox." According to Nada, 97% of Gaza's aquifer was unfit for human consumption before the war. Now, she says there are tremendous problems regarding solid waste and wastewater due to the shortage of fuels necessary to operate treatment plants. Consequently, untreated sewage is entering the Gaza Sea and is draining into the streets.

There are reports that the Israeli military is pumping fuel and seawater into the tunnels throughout Gaza, a death blow to the drinking water aquifer.

Heavy metals like lead, zinc, chromium, copper, platinum, titanium, cadmium, nickel, and vanadium may be coursing through the streets and flushing into the sea, along with PFAS and phosphorus. Wastewater treatment fa-



Smoke rises above the Gaza Strip after a white phosphorus attack by Israel on Oct. 11, 2023. This was the first full day of Israeli atrocities when many Gazans were burned alive. Photo: Ali Jadallah/Anadolu

cilities everywhere on earth are conduits for chemical contamination even when they're working properly.

According to AP News, blast fragments found on-site show that the vast majority of bombs dropped on Gaza are U.S.-made. The weapons include 2,000-pound "bunker-busters" that have killed thousands in densely populated areas.

The JDAM bombs include precision-guided 1,000 and 2,000-pound "bunker-busters."

"It turns earth to liquid," said Marc Garlasco, a former Pentagon defense official and a war crimes investigator for the U.N. "It pancakes entire buildings."

Washington has donated 100 BLU-109 bombs to Israel that are meant to penetrate hardened structures before exploding, the report said.

The 2,000-pound BLU-109 bomb was specifically designed to kill civilians by penetrating hardened targets below the ground where families may be taking cover. A delayed-action fuse detonates the 550 pounds of high explosive tritonal, ensuring complete destruction of the location.

Tritonal

Tritonal is made up mostly of 2,4,6-trinitrotoluene, known as TNT. It accounts for a large portion of the explosives-related contamination in Gaza. TNT presents various health and environmental concerns. Potential symptoms of exposure may include irritation of the skin and mucous membrane, liver damage, jaundice, cyanosis, peripheral neuropathy, muscle pain, kidney damage, cataract, dermatitis, leukocytosis, anemia and cardiac irregularities. (NIOSH 2016)

The most likely routes of exposure to TNT are from drinking contaminated water or skin contact with contaminated surface water or soil. Potential exposure to TNT also occurs through inhalation, or by eating crops grown in contaminated soil (ATSDR 1995) The European Chemicals Agency, ECHA says this substance may cause cancer, is suspected of damaging fertility or the unborn child, and is suspected of causing genetic defects.

General Dynamics has made fantastic

profits peddling this deadly substance. The company employs more than 100,000 people worldwide and generated \$42.3 Billion in revenue in 2023, more than the annual gross national income of most nations on earth. (115 nations.)

A kind of false circular reasoning holds that manufacturing weapons for use in Israel by Boeing, General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin and others is good for the American economy. Actually, the weapons are provided to Israel at U.S taxpayer expense while the product of the munitions adds nothing of positive value, like building hospitals or rebuilding crumbling infrastructure in the U.S. or Gaza.

Gabriel Black with the World Socialist Website has compiled an excellent survey of the weapons the United States provides to Israel. Data from Reuters, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and Al Jazeera suggests this fleet consists of:

- F-35s manufactured by Lockheed Martin
- F-16s by General Dynamics and Lockheed,
- F-15s made by McDonnell Douglas / Boeing.

These warplanes are equipped with bombs, missiles, and guidance kits largely manufactured in the United States.

According to Al Jazeera, Israel has dropped 25,000 tons of ammunition—about double the power of the atomic bomb dropped by the United States on

Hiroshima in World War II.

The explosive charge in many conventional bombs often consists of RDX. Gazans may be exposed if they breathe RDX fumes from explosions. People may also be exposed to RDX by drinking contaminated water or by touching contaminated soil. RDX is associated with Liver Injury, Edema, Anemia, Hemosiderosis and Spinal Diseases

Joint Direct Attack Munition

The Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) is an add-on kit that turns "dumb" bombs into "smart" ones. All of the world's JDAMS are made by Boeing in a single factory in St. Louis, Missouri.

More than 1,100 General Dynamics workers in Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania supply weapons to Israel. Many of the factories producing weapons are organized under the United Auto Workers (UAW) or the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). It is reminiscent of the 1965 Phil Ochs song, I ain't marching anymore:

*Now the labor leader's screamin'
When they close the missile plants.
Call it peace or call it treason
Call it love or call it reason
But I ain't marching anymore*

The people of Gaza must do what they can to avoid breathing the smoke from bombs dropped by the Israelis. When modern apartment buildings are engulfed in flame they emit poisonous gases. This figure captures the science of deadly smoke inhalation.

The chemicals here are found in the smoke from the bombing of an apartment building.

Burning a massive apartment building may generate many thousands of toxic chemicals and gases while modern science hasn't been able to keep up with the adverse health effects that may result from each.

Imagine all the materials that go up in flames. These likely include plastics, foams, textiles, carpets, human and animal corpses, wood products (treated lumber, plywood, flooring), asbestos, lead, paint, synthetic fabrics, electronics, furniture, household chemicals, etc.

Asbestos is particularly concerning.

Respiratory ailments, cardiac hazards,
continued on next page ...



Raw sewage is flooding the streets and polluting the sea in Gaza

Poisoning Gaza

... continued from previous page

and cancers connected with exposures to an environment affected by these fires are far greater than those a generation ago, mainly because the chemical compositions used today to manufacture products and weapons have changed dramatically. The alarming number of cancers among veterans (and their dependents) exposed to deadly chemicals on American military bases tells the story. The American and Israeli governments and their militaries are criminal enterprises.

White Phosphorus

Although Syria has long complained of Israel's use of Napalm, we don't have evidence of its use in Gaza, although we know the Israelis are using White Phosphorus, another frightening incendiary weapon. It is extremely toxic to humans.

Gazans are exposed to white phosphorus by breathing in air that contains the chemical or by swallowing water or food contaminated with it. White Phosphorus is a chemical made from phosphate rocks. Manufacturers use white phosphorus to make products like bombs, computer chips and rat poison. It's a brave new world.

White phosphorus bombs can cause in-

juries that are more serious and harder to treat than injuries from conventional bombs. White phosphorus causes very painful burns. People have reported seeing smoke coming from their injury as the white phosphorus continues to burn in their skin. It's evil. Because white phosphorus dissolves easily in fat, it is absorbed through the skin and into the body, where it can cause damage to the kidneys, liver, and heart.

As Nada Majdalani explained, Gaza is entering its rainy season. Rainwater washout of bomb sites contaminates nearby waterways, their sediment, and the aquatic life people consume.

Israel has a history of spraying heavy doses of pesticides along the buffer zones with Gaza to deprive potential 'terror elements' of cover, but farmers in Gaza say their crops and livelihoods are damaged.

We saw Israel's lax enforcement regarding PFAS and brominated fire retardants, so it is not surprising that the nation is swimming in pesticides. Environmental and Health agencies designed to protect public health are instead subservient to the corporate national security state.

The use of pesticides and insecticides in Israeli agriculture is among the highest in the world, another factoid for the BDS folks. The most contaminated fruits and vegetables are: apples, leafy vegetables, wheat, barley, strawberries and grapes.

It's not surprising that Israel also has

among the highest rates of non-Hodgkin lymphoma in the world. Israeli children are widely exposed to organophosphate pesticides.

There aren't any grownups in the Israeli room. We are witnessing the maturing

the plague."

Pat Elder was a co-founder of the DC Antiwar Network and a long-time member of the Steering Committee of the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth. He is an investigative journalist



November 2023: Anti-militarist youth organizers blocked all entrances to Boeing manufacturing plant 598 near St. Louis, Missouri.

of a rabid fascist state. Israel is leading the way to a new world order! Addressing the rise of the far-right in America, Noam Chomsky explains, "The ground is well prepared for the rise of neofascism to fill the void left by unremitting class war and capitulation of the mainstream political institutions that might have combatted

with Civilian Exposure, an organization based in Camp Lejeune, NC that tracks how the military poisons people around the world. Pat's focus is on documenting contamination caused by the U.S. military's use of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in routine fire-fighting drills. pat.elder@civilianexposure.org

Dead and Divine and Brother of All

By Matthew Hoh

At some point during this genocide in Gaza, the closing lines from Walt Whitman's American Civil War poem A Sight in Camp in Daybreak Gray and Dim began to haunt me daily as I took in the photos and videos I wished I had never seen.

Man or woman, or boy or girl, an impossible number of faces, all suffused

A lone Palestinian Jew was crucified in Jerusalem by an occupying power 2000 years ago and a six-year-old Palestinian Muslim boy was starved to death by an occupying power yesterday in Gaza City

with horror and sorrow, and longing and suffering, Whitman's words are with me:

Young man I think I know you—I think this face is the face of the Christ himself,

Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

And here again he lies, Whitman says. The unendingness of it, not only in the numbers and scale but also in its timeless-



ness, its eternity, and its humanity and divinity.

But, if in their death and destruction, in their torment and terror, I see divinity, am haunted by it, then what is in those who murder, defile and desolate, including those who supply and support the genocide?

I purposefully have avoided using the words good and evil in the 15 years I have spoken publicly about war and peace. Perhaps it seems odd and incongruent, yet I have found not much use for those words. These last months have changed that perception, and as I recognize those killed in Gaza as martyrs, I class not especially as

evil those who are carrying out the bombing and starving. It is those who lie and cover for the murderers, those who allow and profit from this genocide, that I call evil.

I was present at the U.N. Security Council last week as the United States introduced a ceasefire resolution that permitted the Israelis to continue to kill under the banner of humanitarianism. It is in these lies I see the greatest inhumanity: a willingness to enable an ethnic cleansing while calling it something else. Empowering and equipping a genocide and stating the weapons and munitions are

for self-defense... starvation, something that can't be helped. I see those men and women who sit at that table in Manhattan and those behind the podiums in Washington, DC, and I know them as evil.

It is Good Friday today, the evening. Whitman's words carry a harder and deeper resonance. However, I do not wish on this most holy of days to feign a belief I do not have, although it is one I aspire to. I do not believe in the risen Christ. Maybe someday I will, I would greet Him eagerly.

While I don't recognize divinity as from resurrection, I realize and comprehend it in the martyrs of our shared human history. A lone Palestinian Jew was crucified in Jerusalem by an occupying power 2000 years ago and a six-year-old Palestinian Muslim boy was starved to death by an occupying power yesterday in Gaza City. Their deaths, the cost of opposition to Empire, and their betrayals, for the same reasons of money and power, are as human as any condition. Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani? Their martyrdoms haunt our species just as Whitman's words haunt my impossible prayers for their relief.

Again, they lie. In their faces I see the same death, the same divinity, and I know them. They are my brothers.

Matthew Hoh is a member of the advisory boards of Expose Facts, Veterans For Peace and World Beyond War. In 2009 he resigned his position with the State Department in Afghanistan in protest of the escalation of the Afghan War by the Obama Administration. He previously had been in Iraq with a State Department team and with the U.S. Marines. He is a Senior Fellow with the Center for International Policy.

Rethinking the War in Ukraine

By Arnold Oliver

Now that the Ukrainian military aid bill has been passed we have an opportunity to assess the developing conflict and offer suggestions. Here we will argue for more diplomacy and less war. None of this essay should be construed as support for Russian behavior—which has been abysmal. And at the end, there will be a bonus history lesson from European Member of Parliament Clare Daly.

Back in the 1960's President John F. Kennedy acquired some hard-won experience in managing crises and dealing with the USSR (now the Russian Federation) in a nuclear armed world. Two well-known observations he made at that time are relevant now. First, at his inaugural address in 1961 he declared, "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

Although Kennedy's words seem reasonable, the fact is that the United States has repeatedly refused to negotiate with the Russian Federation about the crisis in Ukraine, starting even before the Russian invasion in early 2022. Beyond that, the United States exerted its influence to help halt talks between Ukraine and Russia in March of 2022, shortly after the Russian invasion. At that time the Ukrainian position was much stronger, having just thrown the Russians back from the gates of Kiev. The United States again refused to engage in talks as recently as February of 2024. This U.S. rejection of diplomacy may not be out of fear, but is unhelpful to the cause of peace.

In the past, the United States has engaged in high level negotiations even while fighting was ongoing. We know that during both the War of 1812 and the Vietnam War, and in Afghanistan as well, high level talks between the warring parties took place while military action continued. No one in Washington seems interested in doing anything similar now, even during an expanding crisis with a nuclear armed Russia.

A second quote from Kennedy, equally relevant, came only months after the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962. JFK declared that the United States sought to, "avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating defeat or nuclear war." It seems to some of us that U.S. foreign policy makers have forgotten that message with respect to the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Policy makers in Washington and NATO seem confi-



In October of 1962. JFK declared that the United States sought to, "avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating defeat or nuclear war."

dent that they can tiptoe along the line of nuclear war with little risk. That is a confidence that some of us do not share given what we know about how nations stumble into war, and how those wars sometimes spiral out of control.

For many months the conflict has steadily escalated, with both sides now striking energy and other infrastructure well behind the front lines. Just a few days ago the United States announced that it was going to provide Ukraine with long range missiles that can strike anywhere inside Ukrainian territory now occupied by Russia, and they have now done so. The new missiles are supposedly not to be used for strikes against Russian territory, but given the ongoing tit for tat cycle of attacks now underway, one wonders how long the limits on the use of the missiles will last. The next step for the Russians may be the use of hyper-sonic missiles which are less vulnerable to air defenses. And if Russia faces the prospect of losing, in the words of President Kennedy, a "humiliating defeat", nuclear weapons may well come into the mix. How do we know this? It is because Russian leaders have said so. (In the past, the United States has also rattled the nuclear sabre.)

Ukraine seems to be in a bad position. They are running out of troops and having trouble enlisting new ones. Many of the Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines have been there for more than two years with hardly any breaks or respite. That is not sustainable, and in fact it is remarkable that so many Ukrainian troops have carried on the fight for so long. Generally, combat units in the front lines with 90

days or more of continuous fighting have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) rates approaching 100%. Thousands of Russian soldiers are similarly stressed.

New aid from the United States is already arriving in Ukraine, but it will be of limited use if Ukraine lacks the soldiers to make use of it. Ukraine's new conscription law will not take effect until mid-May, but it will be late summer before new recruits can be properly trained in significant numbers to join the struggle. For Ukraine, this is not good news. In addition, many potential military recruits in both Ukraine and Russia seem reluctant to enlist in the service of regimes riddled with corruption. Who can blame them?

Clare Daly, the feisty Irish member of the European Parliament, has drawn a comparison to Ukraine's difficult position now and that of the Irish republic in 1922. Although the Irish at that time felt strongly that all of Ireland should be part of the republic, they made the difficult decision to not fight the British over the six counties of the north at that time. But through diplomatic and other means, the Irish still struggle for a unified Ireland.

It is unlikely that Ukraine will win this round, but like the Irish they will doubtless pursue their national aspirations into the future. Member of Parliament Daly wants a halt to the war in Ukraine, and so do many of the rest of us.

Arnold Oliver is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. A Vietnam veteran, he belongs to Veterans For Peace, and can be reached at soliver@heidelberg.edu.

Guantánamo Art

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and amplifying our cries for justice. It's my honor to curate this exhibition. "Art from Guantánamo" marks a historic moment—a beacon of hope illuminating the darkness of secrecy and isolation.

Each piece narrates a story of shattered dreams, stifled aspirations, and voices yearning to be heard.

As visitors navigated the exhibition, they were confronted with uncomfortable truths—the human consequences of policies enacted in the name of national security. The art became a call to action, urging a demand for accountability and the upholding of fundamental principles of human rights.

Among the collective voices, four names resonate with enduring resilience—Khalid Qassim, Moath Al-Alwi, Tawfiq Al-Bihani, and Ammar al-Baluchi. These artists, imprisoned in Guantánamo for over two decades despite three of them have been cleared for release, continue to defy injus-

tice through their art, their spirits unbroken by the passage of time. Their art, bleeding from behind bars, epitomizes the unwavering spirit of resilience in the face of injustice.

Among the attendees of the exhibition were Guantánamo lawyers Alka Pradhan and Navy Lieutenant Jennifer Joseph, who represent several of the prisoners. During a panel discussion, Pradhan shed light on the legal complexities surrounding Guantánamo, remarking, "It is deeply moving to witness the resilience and humanity of men who have endured unimaginable suffering. This exhibition serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing crisis at Guantánamo and underscores the urgent need for global unity to put an end to this atrocity."

Today, 30 individuals remain imprisoned in Guantánamo, 16 of whom have been cleared for release. However, despite efforts to address the situation, reports of abuse in the prison persist. Last month, detainees in Guantánamo went on a hunger strike to protest the mistreatment and abuse they endure, yet the U.S. government continues to suppress such reports, denying journalists access to the prison for accurate reporting.

During her visit to Guantánamo last year, the former U.N. Special Rapporteur Fionnuala Ní Aoláin expressed significant concerns regarding the treatment of prisoners. Her report highlights alarming issues such as the ongoing detention of individuals without trial, limited access to healthcare, and the potential use of torture methods, including prolonged periods of solitary confinement. Additionally, she emphasized the absence of proper legal procedures, drawing attention to the prolonged imprisonment of individuals without formal trials.

Guantánamo symbolizes injustice, torture, and abuse of power. It is where humanity and beauty are sentenced to death. However, the "Art from Guantánamo" exhibit in the European Parliament conveys a different message—one of survival. Now that many of us have borne witness to the men's powerful stories, we must ensure that they are never again silenced and in doing so, commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice, dignity, and freedom for all.

Mansoor Adayfi, a Yemen national formerly imprisoned—without charge or trial—at the U.S. offshore prison in Guantánamo Bay, currently lives in Serbia.

U.N. Speech

... continued from page 1

memory of Stanislav Petrov.

Eight years later, in 1991, the same year I graduated high school, the Soviet flag came down at the Kremlin, and the Cold War ended. Collectively, we had been given the potential of a world no longer divided into two opposed nuclear-armed camps. The reality of that potential proved short-lived, and now here we sit, no safer and arguably at a greater risk of nuclear war than in 1983.

Looking back, that lost potential for a world that could have been elicits a bitterness, part anger and part dependency, that casts a grave and sorrowful shadow over this institution.

In the past 30 years, the number of nuclear-armed nations has grown. Arms treaties have been broken, including unilaterally and without merit by my own country. Modernization of nuclear forces by all parties has greatly increased the destructive capability of missile and bomber fleets, so even though numbers and yields of nuclear weapons have diminished, improved accuracy has increased the destructive power of those fleets. There are warheads designated as “usable” nuclear weapons. Disturbingly, we have generals, diplomats and politicians who believe such things exist.

The dissolution of arms control talks following the abrogation of the treaties leaves us with nuclear-armed powers that not only do not have the mechanisms to restart talks but also do not have the means to talk even during a crisis. That speaks nothing of the lack of political will or the immense mistrust between the nuclear powers.

I have been speaking of the nuclear weapons at the top rung of the escalation ladder. Today, it is the weapons being used in Ukraine that are leading us to that top rung, which is an apocalyptic point of no return.

The U.S. and NATO strategy for the war in Ukraine has been two-pronged: economic and military. Neither has worked and neither will work. As the strategy has failed, it has not been revisited, replaced or remanded, but reinforced. Thus, we have seen a steady wave of escalation for two years.

The United States and its allies never considered diplomacy, a needed third prong, which should have been the primary and dominant effort. Diplomacy was openly disparaged and repudiated. This was appalling diplomatic malpractice. And now, as a consequence, we sit here today as the killing, the destruction and the suffering enter their 26th month.

The reality in warfare is that whatever new technology or tactic you introduce, your enemy will counter it and, more often than not, does so in an escalatory manner, to which you respond in kind. It is circular by nature but also linear, hence the infamous escalation ladder. You escalate or you de-escalate. There is no neutral or parallel option.

Ukraine is no exception to this. Attack the Kerch Bridge or blow up the Nord Stream pipeline, and Russia attacks Ukrainian energy infrastructure and port facilities.

I have been speaking of the nuclear weapons at the top rung of the escalation ladder. Today, it is the weapons being used in Ukraine that are leading us to that top rung, which is an apocalyptic point of no return.

ties. Send HIMARS rockets and Storm Shadow missiles to Ukraine, and Russia introduces glide bombs and hypersonic weapons.

On [March 18], President Putin announced a Russian goal of buffer zones in Ukraine, presumably territory to the west of the annexed oblasts that will be taken as a response to the extended range munitions and F16 fighters

to be provided to Ukraine. In recent weeks, multiple NATO heads of state and their generals, most prominently the French, have openly called for the deployment of NATO combat units to Ukraine. The Russian response has been to remind us of their nuclear capabilities.

This is an escalatory game for fools and madmen. We

This is an escalatory game for fools and madmen. We are lucky we have made it this far. The arguments for continuing this war reside in the domain of those whom the American political scientist C. Wright Mills labeled crackpot realists in the first decade of the Cold War.

are lucky we have made it this far. The arguments for continuing this war reside in the domain of those whom the American political scientist C. Wright Mills labeled crackpot realists in the first decade of the Cold War. Yet those crackpot realists had the good sense not to engage in a war like Ukraine, and both sides had leaders like Jack Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, and Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, men who had the courage and integrity to negotiate.

I do not condone or support Russia's invasion. Al-

tives here from Iraq, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and other nations if you believe war ever comes to an end. I believe the representative from Algeria can tell you what landmines do to a people and a land.

The escalatory trajectory of this war points to a risk greater than anyone should be willing to accept. This in-

stitution must do everything in its power to preclude any further escalation of this war and everything possible to force a ceasefire and initiate a political process for a lasting peace. If a ban on the transfer of weapons and munitions into this war is what is needed to force a ceasefire and negotiations, then so it must be.

This Security Council must accept the responsibility of this moment and act to end this existential peril we face.

Finally, I wish to make a plea to abolish the U.N. Security



though provoked, it is a preemptive war that violates international law and is a strategic error. However, it must be noted that Russia attempted negotiations in 2021, 2022 and 2023, efforts that may have prevented, concluded or frozen this war if those diplomatic offers had been responded to in kind.

This war is a brutal and unwinnable meatgrinder. The toll is shocking and disgusting. It is a moral horror. Hundreds of thousands of casualties and ten million refugees. Incalculable environmental and infrastructure damage.

ity Council veto. Whatever justifications the veto may have had, specious and self-serving as they often were, the ongoing genocide in Gaza has forever nullified such arguments. Claims made at this table that to protect civilian lives, ceasefire resolutions must be vetoed are as Orwellian as the assertions made in Washington, DC, and Tel Aviv that genocide is self-defense.

As the Palestinian people are being defiled and destroyed, the United States for more than five months has defied the world, providing diplomatic cover and unlimited military assistance to Israel as it carries out its unholy genocide in Palestine. In order for this institution to honor its founding commitments and principles, the permanent member veto must be abolished. Never again should a nation be able to protect occupation, oppression, apartheid and genocide.

Madam President, again, thank you for this opportunity to address this body.

Matthew Hoh is a member of the advisory boards of Expose Facts, Veterans For Peace and World BEYOND War. In 2009 he resigned his position with the State Department in Afghanistan in protest of the escalation of the Afghanistan War by the Obama Administration. He previously had been in Iraq with a State Department team and with the U.S. Marines. He is a Senior Fellow with the Center for International Policy.

Art From Guantánamo Shatters the Silence in the Halls of Power

An evocative art exhibition at the E.U. parliament, which ran from April 2 to 5, transcended the physical confines of the military prison, offering a poignant glimpse into the lives of those ensnared within its walls.

By Mansoor Adayf

From the distant shores of Guantánamo Bay to the heart of the European Parliament in Brussels, a powerful exhibition titled “Guantánamo: Art in Captivity” emerged, shattering the silence that has long shrouded the infamous U.S. military prison. The exhibit, which relayed poignant stories from the men detained, demonstrated the power of art to bring to life the haunting images of the pain and suffering they endured.

Attending and presenting at the exhibit, I embraced my identity as detainee 441—a prisoner classified as the worst of the worst, but who, against all odds, was welcomed in the European Union parliament for the second time to tell a different story of Guantánamo—the men’s stories. Our story.

Guantánamo is present for the second time at the E.U. parliament; the first time was last year where two Irish Members of European Parliament (MEPs) Clare Daly and Mick Wallace hosted a special conference about Guantánamo. The gathering’s importance cannot be overstated, as it provided a platform for former prisoners, 9/11 family victims, former camp staff, the former United Nations special rapporteur to Guantánamo, lawyers, activists, and advocates to raise their voices against atrocities committed in the name of justice.

At its core were firsthand accounts of Guantánamo’s horrors. Former prisoners and military personnel, including ex-Army captain and Muslim chaplain James Yee, shared tales of detention, tor-

ture, and resilience.

In the European Parliament, a resounding message echoed: We won’t rest until Guantánamo is closed and every individual’s rights are honored. This wasn’t just a gathering; it symbolized the enduring human spirit’s commitment to justice. May its impact inspire future generations to fight for what’s right and just.

As voices filled the chamber, a collective call to action emerged. Attendees were urged to confront Guantánamo’s reality and demand accountability for its crimes. Powerful testimonies highlighted the plight of detainees and the need to hold perpetrators accountable.

Art was always present at Guantánamo, even in the opening days of 2002 when the U.S. government sent its first prisoners to Camp X-Ray. Even when we were isolated from the rest of the world and had nothing in our cages, using apple stems as pencils and Styrofoam cups and clamshells as our paper, we drew flowers. Later, we used toilet paper, powdered tea,

Even when we were isolated from the rest of the world and had nothing in our cages, using apple stems as pencils and Styrofoam cups and clamshells as our paper, we drew flowers.

and soap to draw and write poetry.

Of course, any form of artistic expression was always against the camp rules. Camp administrators, guards, and interrogators routinely confiscated our work and punished us. They punished us for singing and dancing, too. They feared that we, the monsters they constructed us to be, were sending each other secret messages, instead of finding ways to cope with the



brutality of detention and torture. Artistic expression made us feel human in a place that was designed to strip us of our dignity.

Before 2010, it was customary for art to be integrated into interrogation sessions within the chambers. Artwork produced during these sessions was routinely confiscated, repurposed as evidence, and classified accordingly. An illustrative example is a painting by Suliman, created during an interrogation session in 2007, serving as proof to interrogators of his artistic abilities. The painting bore multiple red stamps denoting its classification

through a process of review and censorship by multiple agencies and departments in order to leave the prison. Some of our artwork disappeared, some was redacted and silenced, and some made it out of the military prison. Was that ship a message? Was the art communicating an imminent threat? Anything suspicious lead to immediate disappearance (a death sentence). If artworks survived the scrutiny of the censors, they were registered, numbered, and stamped. But that didn’t mean the artwork wouldn’t be confiscated or taken later.

Like Guantánamo prisoners, some art died at Guantánamo. Some art is still held there waiting to be released..

I was one of the prisoners who made it out of Guantánamo—more fortunate than many who continue to languish behind bars. My journey to this point—standing in front of the E.U. parliament as a free man without shackles, chains, and no guards dragging me around for sport—was long and arduous. While I stood in my orange shirt looking at each painting for the first time after I was released in 2016, the memories of the place that tortured and detained me flashed through my mind, tears blurring my vision as I reconnected with my paintings. It was not just feelings of anguish however that filled my memories, but resilience as well—the resilience that I knew then would get me here now. “It’s nice to see you again my sweethearts. I’m glad we made it in one piece. I’ve missed you.”

These are all things I said to my paintings, which could never be reduced to a piece of paper but are testaments to our struggle for survival amid unimaginable cruelty.

This evocative exhibition, which ran from April 2 to 5, transcended the physical confines of the military prison, offering a poignant glimpse into the lives of those ensnared within its walls. Each stroke of the brush is a testament to the artists’ resilience, a silent plea for justice. Each painting is proof of survival, also an act of resistance.

While the U.S. government suppressed our voices by banning and threatening to burn our artwork in 2017, courageous MEPs like Stelios Kouloglou, Daly, Wallace have breathed life into our creations, challenging these oppressive measures

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