OMNI ARMISTICE/VETERANS' DAY NEWSLETTER #2, NOVEMBER 11, 2009, WE, THE PEOPLE BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE, Compiled by Dick Bennett

NEWSLETTER #1, Nov. 11, 2008
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SENATOR Mark Pryor: Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908. www.pryor.senate.gov; http://pryor.senate.gov/contact/

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OMNI VETS IN EUREKA SPRINGS
Lyell Thompson (WWII), Carl Barnwell (Vietnam War), and Dick Bennett (Korean) represented Veterans for Peace and OMNI in the Veterans’ Day Parade in Eureka Springs 11-11-09. We and our large banner were cordially welcomed by the parade organizer who invited us, by all in the parade who voiced their feelings, and by many along the parade route. Nobody vocally objected to our being there; many thanked us strongly for it. One woman in the restaurant afterward came to our table to say we were the voice of sanity. The majority of our citizens
oppose US permanent war.

In addition to Fayetteville, OMNI has created activities in Bentonville/ NWACC, Springdale, and Greenland. I spoke to the librarians in the ES library about a possible event at their library, to maintain our connection with ES. Dick

Veterans For Peace Statement for Armistice/Veterans' Day 2009

Veterans' Day began as "Armistice" Day, to celebrate November 11, 1918 when the guns of World War One finally stopped - and what cause for celebration there was!

From August 1914 until November 1918, 30 million soldiers were killed or wounded and another 7 million were taken captive. Never before had people witnessed such industrialized slaughter. A hint of the wreckage can be glimpsed by visiting a Great War memorial in any European town and invariably seeing a list of names long enough to include every young man who lived there at the time - hence the "lost generation."

Today we can hardly imagine the horror of the trenches where rats provided a real service by eating away at the corpses hanging on the barbed wire, in shell holes and half-buried in the walls of the dugouts.

The reality of the battlefield permeated the consciousness back home; so much so that even in America, whose troops arrived in Europe only in the closing months of the war, Congress responded to a universal hope that such a war would never happen again. It passed a resolution calling for "exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding...inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples." Later, Congress added that November 11 was to be "a day dedicated to the cause of world peace."

Armistice Day was more than a time for department store midnight madness sales. It meant more than military color guards marching in parades featuring the cleaned-up machinery of war. It was a reminder of the insane, horrific cost of war paid by soldiers at the front, those who ministered to the dead and wounded, and their families back home. It was a day to reflect on that memory and vow to learn to live in a world without war.

These days, when some still give all, but very few give some, it's easy for most of us to go on with our lives of work, shopping and family as if that's all there was. It's easy to overlook the tremendous pain and pressures caused by the multiple deployments needed for a "volunteer" military - unless someone in your family is directly involved in the fighting or is cut down by war's wide blade of "collateral damage" that can strike an Army base in Texas as well as a village in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Some truths are indeed universal. Veterans For Peace abides by two very simple ones: Wars are easy to start and hard to stop; and the innocent on all sides always suffer most.

The doughboys of WWI, shivering in the soggy, rotten trenches of Europe in November 1918, would have nodded wearily in agreement.

Mike Ferner, President Veterans For Peace

A Veterans Day Message from Vets to the President:
Do Not Escalate in Afghanistan info@bravenewfoundation.org
President Obama may send up to 40,000 additional troops to Afghanistan… 1 soldier = $1 million/year…Quagmire in its ninth year…
Watch the Video | Sign the Petition | Email a Friend

Dear Dick,

News reports indicate that in the next few weeks, President Obama plans to announce his decision to send up to 40,000 more troops to Afghanistan. If he does so, he will be making the biggest mistake of his presidency. Sign our petition to send a clear message to President Obama: Do not send more soldiers into this quagmire. [Dick: My software did not reproduce this signing capability. Greenwald’s email is the best I can do here.]

Yours, Robert Greenwald and the Brave New Foundation team
info@bravenewfoundation.org

MESSAGE ON AFGHANISTAN FROM PEACE ACTION
Dear James,

In 1954, President Eisenhower declared that Veterans Day would be a national holiday where "all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose" of peace. In honor of all the veterans who have lost their lives in war, it is time to put war behind us. Ask your Representative to support HR 3699 to prevent funds for more troops to Afghanistan.

This Veteran’s Day we must reflect on the steps forward and backwards we have made in this pursuit. Today will be a day to mourn for all those who have lost their lives because of war. Not only American veterans, but the people who have lost their lives needlessly in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq.

Peace Action would urge all people to honor our troops this Veteran’s Day by e-mailing your Representative in Congress and asking her or him to keep our troops safe by keeping them home. E-mail your Representative here and tell her or him to support HR 3699.

Sincerely, Paul Kawika Martin, Political Director, Peace Action

SUPPORT THE TROOPS: VETERANS’ HEALTH CARE INSURANCE
Contact: Mark Almberg, Physicians for a National Health Program, (312) 782-6006, cell: (312) 622-0996, mark@pnhp.org

*Over 2,200 veterans died in 2008 due to lack of health insurance*
*Harvard researchers say 1.46 million working-age vets lacked health coverage last year, increasing their death rate*

A research team at Harvard Medical School estimates 2,266 U.S. military veterans under the age of 65 died last year because they lacked health insurance and thus had reduced access to care. That figure is more than 14 times the number of deaths (155) suffered by U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2008, and more than twice as many as have died (911 as of Oct. 31) since the war began in 2001.

The researchers, who released their analysis today, pointedly say the health reform legislation pending in the House and Senate will not significantly affect this grim picture.

The Harvard group analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s March 2009 Current Population Survey, which surveyed Americans about their insurance coverage and veteran status, and found that 1,461,615 veterans between the ages of 18 and 64 were uninsured in 2008. Veterans were only classified as uninsured if they neither had health insurance nor
received ongoing care at Veterans Health Administration (VA) hospitals or clinics……..

CALL YOUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
  Take a moment on this Veterans / Armistice Day to call your Congressperson at (202) 224-3121 and tell them you need them to stop funding the wars and occupations.

PHYSICAL VALOR, PATRIOTISM, PERMANENT WAR, MEDIA
Beginning November 8, the Morning News and the NWA Times began a series, “to last through year’s end,” about 50 men and women “who have received top commendations for bravery and valor.” Nothing in my recollection of local or national newspapers equals this exhibition of nationalism, militarism, and imperialism. The newspapers declare: “Since 2001, more than 1.9 million Americans have been deployed to war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan, displaying the highest form of service to country.” The statistic and claim of “service” are equally shocking. Our editors consider the risk and waste of our youth in illegal and useless foreign wars to be “the highest form of service”? What have they served? Sometimes you hear the soldiers and the public say: they defended US freedom? But how was our freedom threatened by Iraq or Afghanistan or Pakistan (or by Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua)? Instead, we have witnessed the waste of the lives of our soldiers, their civilians, and trillions of dollars urgently needed for the sustenance of millions of people and a planet threatened. “War is tragic and frightening.” Then should our youth be thrust into tragedy and fear to fight for lies and delusions resulting in torture and killing of innocents and chaos? (Read Chomsky’s summary history of torture: http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/05/19-7)

  We need a national teach-in on the so-called war against “terrorism” as the defense of U. S. freedom, and the valor alleged to have defended it. We need a national teach-in on better ways to defend freedom than by violence and endless wars.

MILITARY REFUSERS AND MORAL VALOR
  And we need a national education on the distinction between physical and moral and intellectual courage. Why have not the Morning News and the NWA Times praised those troops who have refused to violate international laws and kill civilians? Democracy Now interviewed (August 5, 2009) Spc. Victor Agosto, court-martialed August 5, 2009 for refusing to redeploy to Afghanistan on moral grounds after having served in Iraq. And Camilo Mejia, who refused redeployment and was imprisoned in 2003(?) to protest torture and other war crimes committed by US. He is appealing his conviction on international law grounds. Both have been designated Soldiers of Conscience by Amnesty International. Mejia is now Chair of Iraqi Veterans Against the War.

  And we need to dig at the roots of why our leaders will send 1.9 million of our youth to our two latest brutal wars and most of our youth are willing to go. Howard Zinn here zeroes in on nationalism. Zinn, Howard on Nationalism. “Put Away the Flags” in We Who Dared to Say No to War

Published on Sunday, July 1, 2007 by The Progressive
“Put Away the Flags”

“…. we would do well to renounce nationalism and all its symbols: its flags, its pledges of allegiance, its anthems, its insistence in song that God must single out America to be blessed. Is not nationalism -- that devotion to a flag, an anthem, a boundary so fierce it engenders mass murder -- one of the great evils of our time, along with racism, along with religious hatred? …..”


RECENT BOOKS ON US MILITARISM AND EMPIRE (from OMNI Biblio 35)
IMPERIALISM (see: Iran, Iraq, Nationalism, Patriotism, Terrorism, War)
Kinzer, Stephen. Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq. Times Books/Holt, 2006. “The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was not an isolated episode. It was the culmination of a 110-year period during which Americans overthrew fourteen governments that displeased them for various ideological, political, and economic reasons...No nation in modern history has done this so often, in so many places so far from its own shores.”
--Greider, William. Come Home, America: The Rise and Fall (and Redeeming Promise) of our Country. Rodale, 2009. “The U.S. military...has itself become the gravest threat to our peace and
security….Our risks and vulnerabilities around the world are magnified and multiplied because the American military has shifted from providing national defense to taking the offensive worldwide, from being a vigilant defender to being an adventurous aggressor in search of enemies.”


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From OMNI Biblio 34

**IMPERIALISM** (see: CIA, Cold War, Cuba, Debt, Exceptionalism, Foreign Policy, Gulf War, Guantanamo, Human Rights, Intolerance, Iran, Islam, Mexico, Middle East, Patriotism, Refugees, Victims)

--Murphy, Cullen. *Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America*. Houghton Mifflin, 2007. Rev. *NYT Book Review* (May 13, 2007): both nations were afflicted by "a sense of exceptionalism"; both became obsessed with security.

--Lutz, Catherine. *Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle Against U.S. Military Posts*. A quarter of a million U.S. troops are massed in over seven hundred major official overseas airbases around the world. In the past decade, the Pentagon has formulated and enacted a plan to realign, or reconfigure, its bases in keeping with new doctrines of pre-emption and intensified concern with strategic resource control, all with seemingly little concern for the surrounding geography and its inhabitants.

The contributors in *The Bases of Empire* trace the political, environmental, and economic impact of these bases on their surrounding communities across the globe, including Latin America, Europe, and Asia, where opposition to the United States’ presence has been longstanding and widespread, and is growing rapidly.

Through sharp analysis and critique, *The Bases of Empire* illuminates the vigorous campaigns to hold the United States accountable for the damage its bases cause in allied countries as well as in war zones, and offers ways to reorient security policies in other, more humane, and truly secure directions.

"These fascinating case studies provide a powerful assessment of the worldwide network of U.S. military bases and the burgeoning anti-base campaign, and analyze the changing nature of empire building and the re-mapping of the sociopolitical terrain within the context of the 'global war on terror.'

Kimberly Theidon, Harvard University

Also by Lutz: *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century*


<http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p111295_index.html>


Immediately after 9/11, government officials and commentators claimed that the terrorist attacks had "changed everything." In contrast, economist and historian Robert Higgs warned that history would likely repeat itself in one key respect: the government's hasty reactions would resemble its responses to previous crises, providing little more than opportunities for special interests to feather their nests and for the government itself to expand its powers at the expense of the public’s wealth and civil liberties.
Resurgence of the Warfare State is Robert Higgs’s real-time analysis of the U.S. government’s tragic but predictable response: the quick enactment of the USA PATRIOT Act, the federal takeover of airport security, the massive increase in defense and other government spending, and the carnage in Afghanistan and Iraq wrought by leaders unaccountable for their costly and deadly mistakes.

Governmental responses to crises have been—and will likely continue to be—a bonanza for political, corporate, and even religious opportunists who seek power and financial gain by exploiting the fears of the American public.

END OF VETERANS’ DAY NEWSLETTER #2, 2009