OMNI NEWSLETTER ON CONSEQUENCES OF US WARS #1, APRIL 9, 2011, Compiled by Dick Bennett as part of OMNI’s multi-various campaign to expose the harms perpetrated by US militarism and empire, and for a Culture of Peace.

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WHAT THE WARS DO DIRECTLY

KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE: IRAQ
----Gordon, Joy. Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions. Harvard UP, 2010. Rev. Fellowship (Fall 2010). Killing at least 500,000 civilians during over a decade of invasion, sanctions, and bombings followed by an illegal and unjust invasion and occupation for seven more years, purportedly to keep the US safe, is largely unknown in the US. Yet it is surely genocide.

BOMBING: LIBYA
Medea Benjamin and Charles Davis | “Instead of Bombing Dictators, Stop Selling Them Bombs”
Medea Benjamin and Charles Davis, Common Dreams
"When all you have is bombs, everything starts to look like a target. And so after years of providing Libya's dictator with the weapons he's been using against the people, all the international community - France, Britain and the United States - has to offer the people of Libya is more bombs, this time dropped from the sky rather than delivered in a box to Muammar Gaddafi's palace."
READ MORE http://www.readersupportednews.org/off-site-opinion-section/57-57/5374-instead-of-bombing-dictators-stop-selling-them-bombs

THE POOR FIGHT AND DIE FOR ILLEGAL US WARS
--Kriner, Douglas and Francis Shen. The Casualty Gap: The Causes and Consequences of American Wartime Inequalities. Oxford, 2010. Rev. Andrew Bacevich, “Unequal Sacrifice,” The Nation (9-20-10, a significant essay on US wars). By comparing official casualty records in four US wars (WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq) with Census data, the authors conclude that “when America goes to war, it is the poorer and less educated in society who are more likely to die in combat,” except during WWII.

COMBAT INJURIES
Protect Your Manhood: End the War in Afghanistan

Every young man thinking of enlisting or facing deployment to Afghanistan should consider carefully the findings of a new study on combat injuries in Afghanistan.

http://www.commondreams.org/view/2011/04/08-6

DEATHS OF RETURNING VETS


“Bitter Memories of War on the Way to Jail”

By Chris Hedges, truthdig.com

http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/bitter_memories_of_war_on_the_way_to_jail_20101220/

The speeches were over. There was a mournful harmonica rendition of taps. The 500 protesters in Lafayette Park in front of the White House fell silent. One hundred and thirty-one men and women, many of them military veterans wearing old fatigues, formed a single, silent line. Under a heavy snowfall and to the slow beat of a drum, they walked to the White House fence. They stood there until they were arrested.

The solemnity of that funerary march, the hush, was the hardest and most moving part of Thursday’s protest against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It unwound the bitter memories and images of war I keep wrapped in the thick cotton wool of forgetfulness. I was transported in that short walk to places I do not like to go. Strange and vivid flashes swept over me—the young soldier in El Salvador who had been shot through the back of the head and was, as I crouched next to him, slowly curling up in a fetal position to die; the mutilated corpses of Kosovar Albanians in the back of a flatbed truck; the screams of a woman, her entrails spilling out of her gaping wounds, on the cobblestones of a Sarajevo street.

My experience was not unique. Veterans around me were back in the rice paddies and lush undergrowth of Vietnam, the dusty roads of southern Iraq or the mountain passes of Afghanistan. Their tears showed that. There was no need to talk. We spoke the same wordless language. The butchery of war defies, for those who know it, articulation.

What can I tell you about war?

War perverts and destroys you. It pushes you closer and closer to your own annihilation—spiritual, emotional and, finally, physical. It destroys the continuity of life, tearing apart all systems, economic, social, environmental and political, that sustain us as human beings. War is necrophilia. The essence of war is death. War is a state of almost pure sin with its goals of hatred and destruction. It is organized sadism. War fosters alienation and leads inevitably to nihilism. It is a turning away from the sanctity of life.

And yet the mythic narratives about war perpetuate the allure of power and violence. They perpetuate the seductiveness of the godlike force that comes with the license to kill with impunity. All images and narratives about war disseminated by the state, the press, religious institutions, schools and the entertainment industry are gross and distorted lies. The clash between the fabricated myth about war and the truth about war leaves those of us who return from war alienated, angry and often unable to communicate. We can’t find the words to describe war’s reality. It is as if the wider culture sucked the words out from us and left us to sputter incoherencies. How can you speak meaningfully
about organized murder. Anything you say is gibberish.

The sophisticated forms of industrial killing, coupled with the amoral decisions of politicians and military leaders who direct and fund war, hide war’s reality from public view. But those who have been in combat see death up close. Only their story tells the moral truth about war. The power of the Washington march was that we all knew this story. We had no need to use stale and hackneyed clichés about war. We grieved together. Read more http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/bitter_memories_of_war_on_the_way_to_jail_20101220/

DOLLAR COSTS OF THE IRAQ AND AFGHAN WARS
Joseph Sitglitz and Ellen Bilmes. *The Three Trillion Dollar War.* Recently Stiglitz increased his estimate of the wars to 4 to 6 trillion, because of the extraordinary expense of wounded vets continuing for many decades.

WIRETAPPING
https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12ee396433cf394d
“The Right to Sue Over Wiretapping”
*The New York Times* | Editorial
"The final outcome of this legal challenge is far from certain; the government, if it follows its pattern, is likely to cite another familiar defense that a full trial would reveal state secrets. But just by allowing this lawsuit to proceed, the Second Circuit has sent an important message: The government cannot count on simplistic legal arguments to avoid scrutiny of its program to spy on civilians. When one challenge is allowed, others will follow." READ MORE http://www.readersupportednews.org/off-site-opinion-section/64-64/5375-the-right-to-sue-over-wiretapping

UNINTENDED AND INDIRECT CONSEQUENCES
HISTORY OF US WARS
*Unintended Consequences: The United States at War* by Kenneth J. Hagan and Ian J. Bickerton

Kenneth J. Hagan › Visit Amazon's Kenneth J. Hagan Page
Find all the books, read about the author, and more.

“Mincing no words, these accomplished historians, one Australian and one American, plumb the past, from the American Revolution through to Iraq, keenly demonstrating that U.S. wars have produced unintended, often negative, outcomes. U.S. leaders’ exaggeration of threats, their ignorance of local conditions, and their flawed assumptions that political ‘victory’ can be achieved through military force have led to unforeseen, unwanted consequences. Clausewitz got it wrong: war is not a continuation of policy but rather a radical alteration of policy. Sharply departing from the traditional way of thinking about u.s. wars, Bickerton and Hagan challenge us to understand that war has raised
"What this book so succinctly points out is that America's involvement in wars—from the War of Independence through to Iraq (and the authors reject the whole idea of the War on Terror as a war)—has always produced the "unintended consequences" of the title. Their analysis of World War II, for example, brilliantly points out the unintended result of how President Truman used the atom bomb—that it effectively started the Cold War."—Steven Carroll, The Age

LIFE EXPECTANCY: “Collapsing empire watch”
Monday, Oct 11, 2010  It's easy to say and easy to document, but quite difficult to really internalize, that the United States is in the process of imperial collapse. Every now and then, however, one encounters certain facts which compellingly and viscerally highlight how real that is. Here's the latest such fact, from a new study in Health Affairs by Columbia Health Policy Professors Peter A. Muennig and Sherry A. Glied (h/t):

In 1950, the United States was fifth among the leading industrialized nations with respect to female life expectancy at birth, surpassed only by Sweden, Norway, Australia, and the Netherlands. The last available measure of female life expectancy had the United States ranked at forty-sixth in the world. As of September 23, 2010, the United States ranked forty-ninth for both male and female life expectancy combined.

Just to underscore the rapidity of the decline, as recently as 1999, the U.S. was ranked by the World Health Organization as 24th in life expectancy. It's now 49th. There are other similarly potent indicators. In 2009, the National Center for Health Statistics ranked the U.S. in 30th place in global infant mortality rates. Out of 20 "rich countries" measured by UNICEF, the U.S. ranks 19th in "child well-being." Out of 33 nations measured by the OECD, the U.S. ranks 27th for student math literacy and 22nd for student science literacy.


Many volumes would be required even to introduce this subject—e.g. DECLINE OF MUNICIPAL, COUNTY, AND STATE SERVICES

END OF CONSEQUENCES OF WARS NEWSLETTER #1