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WARS OVER ENERGY

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HARMS OF EMPIRE
By Dick Bennett

Alice Walton’s “Chrystal Bridges” art museum will be opened in November, 2011. She is a talented painter herself; she selected the art to be displayed in the museum, or approved her advisors’ recommendations; and she chose the architect, the great Moshe Sadie, creator of the Skirball Cultural Center in the Santa Monica Mountains and of the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. Our world should celebrate her for having the wisdom to use her money for such a beneficial purpose.

The article on Alice Walton’s Chrystal Bridges art museum in The New Yorker (June 27, 2011) makes a convincing case for its genuine affirmation of art in nature as an expression of the “American spirit”: “We invite all to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art and the beauty of landscape.” All persons who yearn for a USA infused with this generous, inclusive, life-enlarging spirit for all people will celebrate this kind of patriotism.

In extreme, in dire contrast is the imperial policy of the United States—exclusive, cruel, lethal to millions of people. Since the beginning of World War Two, we have suffered under “McCarthyism” (to use the Senator as a symbol of the militarization of U. S. foreign policy) abroad and at home. The U.S. nuclear arsenal is part of this fearful, hostile, retaliatory, and murderous spirit that has produced permanent war.

We now have an even more dangerous problem: global warming. One scholar estimates that unless we stop the warming, and stop the world population from growing, we will inevitably be reduced from seven billion people (soon to be nine) to one, and the loss of entire species of other creatures exceeds imagination so immense it will be. But we cannot cope adequately with climate change by prevention, mitigation, and adaptation, requiring all of our resources and energies, until the leaders of our country have renounced their ethnocentric, nationalistic, self-regarding, security obsessed violence around the world and repression against their own population.

In Killing Hope and Rogue State William Blum argues that an “American holocaust” has occurred, and he backs up his argument by a country by country account. The U.S. has invaded or intervened in over forty countries since 1945, and those aggressions have killed millions of people and “many more millions have been condemned to lives of misery and torture as a result.” And the toll is far more than he reckoned, for his studies were published before the 2001 Afghanistan and 2003 Iraq wars began. Since then, hundreds of books and articles have confirmed his conclusions. See below for more by Blum.
Awlaki Assassination Puts Obama Above the Law (Covert Ops, US Wars and Military Action)
Welcome to the Drone Empire, in which the president's executioners can kill without legal restraint. http://www.thenation.com/columns/beat-devil

Obama Sends US Troops to Uganda to Fight Rebel Group

The deployment comes without approval from Congress or a thorough explanation as to why Ugandan rebels could possible concern the US
by John Glaser, October 14, 2011
| Print This | Share This | Antiwar Forum

President Barack Obama is sending about 100 US combat troops to Africa to hunt down and fight the leaders of the Christian rebel militant group the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in and around Uganda.

“I have authorized a small number of combat-equipped U.S. forces to deploy to central Africa to provide assistance to regional forces that are working toward the removal of Joseph Kony from the battlefield,” Obama said in letter sent Friday to House Speaker John Boehner. Joseph Kony is the head of the LRA.

Obama’s letter promised that US troops would not engage LRA forces "unless necessary for self-defense." But considering the deployment’s provocative nature, this caveat is probably meaningless.

“I believe that deploying these US armed forces furthers US national security interests and foreign policy and will be a significant contribution toward counter-LRA efforts in central Africa,” Obama said. How exactly a poor rebel group in Uganda is a concern for US national security was not specified.

Obama’s claim that the LRA is a legitimate national security concern is presumably supposed to simply be accepted without any evidence or explanation; truth by presidential decree. But it is also notable how quickly and easily, in disregard for the Constitutional requirements, the President can send American troops to far off places without Congressional approval.

Humanitarian intervention was again the hallmark of the justification for this military
engagement. Obama noted that the group “has murdered, raped, and kidnapped tens of thousands of men, women, and children in central Africa” and “continues to commit atrocities across the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan,” but the US supports and has supported similar atrocities and chooses to ignore comparable ones in other places, making humanitarian concerns unlikely in this case.

Obama’s military interventions were difficult to count even before this latest engagement. But his administration’s martial proclivities are proving to be vastly more wide-ranging than his hawkish predecessors.

EMPIRE OF BASES, US BASEWORLD, CORPORATE-MILITARY COMPLEX

Published on Thursday, January 15, 2004 by TomDispatch.com
America’s Empire of Bases by Chalmers Johnson

As distinct from other peoples, most Americans do not recognize -- or do not want to recognize -- that the United States dominates the world through its military power. Due to government secrecy, our citizens are often ignorant of the fact that our garrisons encircle the planet. This vast network of American bases on every continent except Antarctica actually constitutes a new form of empire -- an empire of bases with its own geography not likely to be taught in any high school geography class. Without grasping the dimensions of this globe-girdling Baseworld, one can’t begin to understand the size and nature of our imperial aspirations or the degree to which a new kind of militarism is undermining our constitutional order.

Our military deploys well over half a million soldiers, spies, technicians, teachers, dependents, and civilian contractors in other nations. To
dominate the oceans and seas of the world, we are creating some thirteen naval task forces built around aircraft carriers whose names sum up our martial heritage -- Kitty Hawk, Constellation, Enterprise, John F. Kennedy, Nimitz, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Carl Vinson, Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, John C. Stennis, Harry S. Truman, and Ronald Reagan. We operate numerous secret bases outside our territory to monitor what the people of the world, including our own citizens, are saying, faxing, or e-mailing to one another.

Our installations abroad bring profits to civilian industries, which design and manufacture weapons for the armed forces or, like the now well-publicized Kellogg, Brown & Root company, a subsidiary of the Halliburton Corporation of Houston, undertake contract services to build and maintain our far-flung outposts. One task of such contractors is to keep uniformed members of the imperium housed in comfortable quarters, well fed, amused, and supplied with enjoyable, affordable vacation facilities. Whole sectors of the American economy have come to rely on the military for sales. On the eve of our second war on Iraq, for example, while the Defense Department was ordering up an extra ration of cruise missiles and depleted-uranium armor-piercing tank shells, it also acquired 273,000 bottles of Native Tan sunblock, almost triple its 1999 order and undoubtedly a boon to the supplier, Control Supply Company of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and its subcontractor, Sun Fun Products of Daytona Beach, Florida.

At Least Seven Hundred Foreign
BLOOD ON OUR HANDS: The American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq by Nniconlas Davies. 2010. The significant subject of this book is the systematic lawlessness of the US invasion and occupation. If Justice were alive and well, she would order her police to wrap all of the malefactors with Crime Scene tape. Here’s some samples from the book.

Chapter 10, “Torture and Impunity,” should be entitled “Torture, Murder, and Impunity.” Torture was policy, not a few vicious soldiers. In 2006 Rear Admiral Hutson, former Judge Advocate General of the US Navy, wrote a Preface to a Human Rights First Report that identified 98 deaths in custody, “a dozen...as the result of the most horrific treatment.” No military or civilian officer above rank of major was ever charged, and “the highest punishment for anyone handed down in the case of a torture-related death has been five months in jail.” Immediately following readers are provided the 1996 US War Crimes Act and Articles 17 and 3 of the 3rd Geneva Convention. That is, Davies specifies crimes and criminals (but only a few of the many) and the laws US officers violated (all treaties are US law). The chapter gives a sickening short account of the tortures and murders and minimal accountability.

Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II. (1995). This book has been my rock of reality. Blum gives 55 cases of US illegal invasions or interventions in chronological order. Illegal. The purpose of the UN and the UN Charter was specifically to stop the national aggressions that had ravaged Europe in the first half of the 20th Century (by Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin) and end all unjustified national conquests. Unjustified? Read the Charter: No nation can attack or threaten to attack another nation unless in response to attack. Here’s part of the list: 1960-66: Dominican Republic, 1959- Cuba, 1965 Indonesia, 1964-70 Uruguay, 1964-74 Chile, 1964-73 Greece. Reality? To curb the relentless lies of a good USA opposed to “international lawlessness” that justified shredding the Constitution, expanding secrecy, nullifying Congressional oversight, government “above” the law.

Blum’s Rogue State (2000) analyzes this data into three parts:


“From 1945 to the end of the century, the US attempted to overthrow more than 40 foreign governments, and to crush more than 30 populist-nationalist movements struggling against intolerable regimes. In the process, the US caused the end of life for several million people, and condemned many millions more to a life of agony and despair.

ANOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON US EMPIRE, MILITARISM, COVERUPS, AND RATIONALIZING MYTHS
an extra copy if you wish to borrow.

MORE  http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
Call Congress Today: Get your priorities straight!

Kevin Martin, Peace Action to jbennett

peaceact@mail.democracyinaction.org

Dear James,

The Congressional Super Committee of 12 legislators are making big decisions about what Congress should do to cut over one trillion dollars from the federal budget. The future of our communities rides on their recommendations.

Call your Senators and Representative and tell them to get their priorities straight. Jobs, not wars! Call TOLL FREE 1-888-784-0527

Friday will mark the ten-year anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan - the longest war in U.S. history. For the past decade, our federal budget has prioritized wars abroad over our needs at home. The main obstacle to creating jobs for the millions of unemployed and to protecting Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid is the Pentagon budget and the costs of the wars. It's time to straighten out these twisted priorities.

Tell your Congressional Representative: Cut the Pentagon budget and bring the tax dollars home from the wars!

Van Jones told the activists gathered in Washington for the Take Back the American Dream conference that, "The war mongers have ruined our country! What if we had a trillion [spent on the wars] to rebuild Detroit?"

And we say, the answer is simple: change the federal spending priorities. It is wrong for 58% of federal discretionary spending every year to goes to the Pentagon, while poverty is higher than ever.

Tell your Senator and Representative: The biggest roadblock to creating jobs and funding human services is the Pentagon budget.

Call Congress now TOLL FREE: 1-888-784-0527

Thank you for continuing to take action.

In Struggle, Judith Le Blanc, Field Director, Peace Action
peace Action’s efforts to build solid opposition to the war in Afghanistan and to bring our troops home. CALL TODAY: Tell your Representative: Cut the Pentagon budget and bring the tax dollars home from the wars!

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Contact us peaceact@mail.democracyinaction.org

The Anti-Empire Report
October 4th, 2011 by William Blum www.killinghope.org

The crime of making Americans aware of their own history

[Why 9-11 happened-D] Is history getting too close for comfort for the fragile little American heart and mind? Their schools and their favorite media have done an excellent job of keeping them ignorant of what their favorite country has done to the rest of the world, but lately some discomforting points of view have managed to find their way into this well-defended American consciousness.

First, Congressman Ron Paul during a presidential debate last month expressed the belief that those who carried out the September 11 attack were retaliating for the many abuses perpetrated against Arab countries by the United States over the years. The audience booed him, loudly.

Then, popular-song icon Tony Bennett, in a radio interview, said the United States caused the 9/11 attacks because of its actions in the Persian Gulf, adding that President George W. Bush had told him in 2005 that the Iraq war was a mistake. Bennett of course came under some nasty fire. FOX News (September 24), carefully choosing its comments charmingly as usual, used words like "insane", "twisted mind", and "absurdities". Bennett felt obliged to post a statement on Facebook saying that his experience in World War II had taught him that "war is the lowest form of human behavior." He said there's no excuse for terrorism, and he added, "I'm sorry if my statements suggested anything other than an expression of love for my country." (NBC September 21)
Then came the Islamic cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen, who for some time had been blaming US foreign policy in the Middle East as the cause of anti-American hatred and terrorist acts. So we killed him. Ron Paul and Tony Bennett can count themselves lucky. [Dick: See Blood on Our Hands on the assassinations of opponents of US occupation of Iraq.]

What, then, is the basis of all this? **What has the United States actually been doing in the Middle East in the recent past?**

- the shooting down of two Libyan planes in 1981
- the bombing of Lebanon in 1983 and 1984
- the bombing of Libya in 1986
- the bombing and sinking of an Iranian ship in 1987
- the shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane in 1988
- the shooting down of two more Libyan planes in 1989
- the massive bombing of the Iraqi people in 1991
- the continuing bombings and draconian sanctions against Iraq for the next 12 years
- the bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998
- the habitual support of Israel despite the routine devastation and torture it inflicts upon the Palestinian people
- the habitual condemnation of Palestinian resistance to this
- the abduction of "suspected terrorists" from Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Lebanon and Albania, who were then taken to places like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where they were tortured
- the large military and hi-tech presence in Islam's holiest land, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere in the Persian Gulf region
- the support of numerous undemocratic, authoritarian Middle East governments from the Shah of Iran to Mubarak of Egypt to the Saudi royal family
- the invasion, bombing and occupation of Afghanistan, 2001 to the present, and Iraq, 2003 to the present
- the bombings and continuous firing of missiles to assassinate individuals in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, and Libya during the period of 2006-2011

It can't be repeated or emphasized enough. The biggest lie of the "war on terrorism", although weakening, is that the targets of America's attacks have an irrational hatred of the United States and its way of life, based on religious and cultural misunderstandings and envy. The large body of evidence to the contrary includes a 2004 report from the Defense Science Board, "a Federal advisory committee established to provide independent advice to the Secretary of Defense." The report states:

"Muslims do not hate our freedom, but rather they hate our policies. The overwhelming majority voice their objections to what they see as one-sided support in favor of Israel and
against Palestinian rights, and the long-standing, even increasing, support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan and the Gulf states. Thus, when American public diplomacy talks about bringing democracy to Islamic societies, this is seen as no more than self-serving hypocrisy."

The report concludes: "No public relations campaign can save America from flawed policies." (Christian Science Monitor, November 29, 2004)

The Pentagon released the study after the New York Times ran a story about it on November 24, 2004. The Times reported that although the board’s report does not constitute official government policy, it captures "the essential themes of a debate that is now roiling not just the Defense Department but the entire United States government."

"Homeland security is a rightwing concept fostered following 9/11 as the answer to the effects of 50 years of bad foreign policies in the middle east. The amount of homeland security we actually need is inversely related to how good our foreign policy is." – Sam Smith, editor of The Progressive Review

WARS GO EAST FOR BALANCE AND IMPERIAL HEALTH

By Dick Bennett


It’s true in foreign policy too. Balance of power. Balance of terror. Consider US wars. We were Westward once. Four hundred Indian nations exterminated. Two-thirds of Mexico expropriated.

We don’t hear much about the Filipino-American War (1899-1902). About a million Filipinos died directly or as a result of the US scorched earth pacification campaigns. Various forms of torture, such as “water cure” (familiar to us today as waterboarding) were systematically applied on prisoners. One historian described the unjustified invasion and occupation as an “orgy of racist slaughter,” while the
perverse mainstream public tolerated and sometimes celebrated the horror.

This was all a problem of Westward imbalance. We got out of balance Westward. It took a long time, but eventually we regained our balance. World War One was a start. Then World War Two in Europe balanced the Pacific Campaign. And finally, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, after assessing our gains and losses Westward and not feeling as reassured as we thought we would after so much expense and so many lives, we turned eastward in search of equipoise.

UNICEF reported that as a consequence of the First Gulf War invasion and decade of bombings of Iraq 500,000 children died. Secretary Albright said it was worth it. Then we invaded Afghanistan. The US makes no body count in these Eastern wars, but Wikipedia estimates possibly 37,000 Afghans have been killed since the 2001 invasion. Wikipedia cautions that all counts are probably underestimates. The body count in Iraq is so contentious that Wikipedia resorts to citing estimates by various private organizations. Iraq Body Count using WikiLeaks revelations gives over 150,000. Iraqis directly killed. Icasualties.org gives 2744 coalition forces killed in Afghanistan and 4794 in Iraq. Of course, and for all of these statistics, the indirect deaths (health infrastructure destroyed) may double the count.

Despite these counts, we cannot say we have balanced West with East, for Eastward slaughters are small compared to Westward, but these wars are new, and our newest president and generals believe in balance.

To make this argument iron-clad, we only need to remember that US wars in Central America function as the balance pole. Invasions to the west, invasions to the east, and in between invasions Southward of Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Grenada, Panama, and Nicaragua.

And all illegal. The gratifying symmetry proves our leaders’ remarkable forethought in global planning for national security.
**Dennis Kucinich: “Unaccountable, Immoral And, by Definition, Inhuman”**

Dennis Kucinich, Statement: “The use of lethal force by the United States in countries such as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia – countries we are not at war with – constitutes an already troubling method of waging war in which we are accountable to no one. As Philip Alston, the United Nations Special Rapporteur recognizes: ‘Not even the American public, let alone the international community, knows when and where the CIA has authorized the kill, the criteria for individuals who may be killed, how the CIA insures killings are legal, and what follow-up there is when civilians are illegally killed. It follows that the international law requirements of transparency and accountability are comprehensively violated.’

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