OMNI NEWSLETTER #4 ON US WAR ON TERRORISM,

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One of the most important critiques to be put forward so far from the civil libertarians, [Cole and Lobel] offer unsparing criticism, muster their arguments with skill and artistry, and most importantly they offer constructive criticism of the current Bush administration model.

—HARPER’S
Highly recommended . . . clear, incisive, and informative.

—LIBRARY JOURNAL
A resounding argument contra administration policy, more effectively stated than Alan Dershowitz's recent Preemption.

—KIRKUS
[Cole and Lobel] argue eloquently and forcefully that preventive war makes flawed foreign policy.

—PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Now in Paperback — Winner of the first Roy C. Palmer Civil Liberties prize, the book Zbigniew Brzezinski calls “a timely and unsparing exposure of the disastrous consequences of the ‘war on terror’ demagogy of the Bush administration”
If [terrorists] do attack again, I hope we will have the likes of David Cole and Jules Lobel to help us think through our response.

—THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS
In this brilliantly conceived critique, two of the country’s leading constitutional scholars argue that the Bush administration’s preemptive approach to domestic and international security has not only compromised our character but has in fact made us more vulnerable to future terrorist attacks.

In a groundbreaking analysis of efforts employed in the name of protecting its citizens—preventive detention, coercive interrogation, pretextual prosecutions, registration of Arab and Muslim men, and preventive war—law professors David Cole and Jules Lobel expose the government’s abysmal record of failed prosecutions and empty successes. The authors argue that these results, when coupled with the resentment such coercive tactics have engendered throughout the world, have left us less safe than we would be had we employed a more sensible and less controversial preventive strategy. The book concludes by proposing an alternative preventive strategy to guide us into the future.

Already standard reading for those who question the idea that “war” is the appropriate response to terrorism, Less Safe, Less Free offers an eloquent and original argument for a return to the rule of law.

David Cole is a professor of law at Georgetown University, the legal affairs correspondent for The Nation, and the author, most recently, of the American Book Award–winning Enemy Aliens. He lives in Washington, D.C. Jules Lobel is a professor of law at the University of Pittsburgh, a constitutional lawyer, and an expert on emergency powers and the laws governing war. He lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

“Privatizing the War on Terror”
John W. Whitehead, Antiwar.com, RSN, January 18, 2012
Whitehead reports: "America's troops may be returning home from Iraq, but contrary to President Obama's assertion that 'the tide of war is receding,' we’re far from done paying the costs of war."
READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/306-10/9505-privatizing-the-war-on-terror

FROM AL-QAEDA TO CHINA: Michael Klare
December 6, 2011

Tomgram: Michael Klare, A New Cold War in Asia?
Last Friday, the U.S. military formally handed over its largest base in Iraq, the ill-named “Camp Victory,” to the government of Prime Minster Nouri al-Maliki. The next morning, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius officially declared counterinsurgency wars in the Middle East dead in -- if you don’t mind an inapt word -- the water. (He is personally in mourning.) He quoted one unnamed official describing Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta’s planning for the new Pentagon budget in this fashion: “It’s not going to be likely that we will deploy 150,000 troops to an area the way we did in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

No indeed. As a result, in the inter-service scramble for the biggest slice of the Defense Department’s budgetary pie, the winners, Ignatius tells us, are going to be the Air Force and the Navy. Translated geopolitically, this means that the focus of future military planning will switch to the Pacific -- with this country’s largest foreign creditor, China (not al-Qaeda), as the new enemy.
In the what's-old-is-new category, this is priceless. In the spring of 2001, the Bush administration was focused on a strategic review of global military policy, led by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, which “concluded that the Pacific Ocean should now become the most important focus of U.S. military deployments, with China now perceived as the principal threat to American global dominance” and its number one enemy. In response, the Chinese were already issuing their own threats. (Terrorism, the Bush administration then felt, was for wusses and Democrats, which is why they paid next to no attention to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, despite warnings from officials of the outgoing Clinton administration, the CIA, and others.)

September 11, 2001, of course, sent them in quite another direction that -- we can only assume -- left China’s leaders thanking their lucky stars, while the U.S. military bogged itself down in two disastrous wars in the Greater Middle East. A decade later, the U.S. is economically weaker, a battered former “sole superpower” still in need of an enemy, still thinking about global energy supplies, and, if anything, more reliant than ever on a military-first policy in the world. As always, TomDispatch regular Michael Klare, author of Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet, is ahead of the curve in grasping just what’s at stake and why we should be worried as the Obama administration pivots, readying itself for its return to the pre-9/11 Bush moment. Sigh. (To catch Timothy MacBain's latest Tomcast audio interview in which Klare discusses the American military build-up in the Pacific,

click here or download it to your iPod here.) Tom

“Playing With Fire: Obama’s Risky Oil Threat to China “
By Michael T. Klare

When it comes to China policy, is the Obama administration leaping from the frying pan directly into the fire? In an attempt to turn the page on two disastrous wars in the Greater Middle East, it may have just launched a new Cold War in Asia -- once again, viewing oil as the key to global supremacy.

The new policy was signaled by President Obama himself on November 17th in an address to the Australian Parliament in which he laid out an audacious -- and extremely dangerous -- geopolitical vision. Instead of focusing on the Greater Middle East, as has been the case for the last decade, the United States will now concentrate its power in Asia and the Pacific. “My guidance is clear,” he declared in Canberra. “As we plan and budget for the future, we will allocate the resources necessary to maintain our strong military presence in this region.”

While administration officials insist that this new policy is not aimed specifically at China, the implication is clear enough: from now on, the primary focus of American military strategy will not be counterterrorism, but the containment of that economically booming land -- at whatever risk or cost.

The Planet’s New Center of Gravity

The new emphasis on Asia and the containment of China is necessary, top officials insist, because the Asia-Pacific region now constitutes the “center of gravity” of world economic activity. While the United States was bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the argument goes, China had the leeway to expand its influence in the region. For the first time since the end of World War II, Washington is no longer the dominant economic actor there. If the United States is to retain its title as the world’s paramount power, it must, this thinking goes, restore its primacy in the region and roll back Chinese influence. In the coming decades, no foreign policy task will, it is claimed, be more important than this.

Click here to read more of this dispatch.
DESAPARECIDOS USA: BIN LADEN, Allende
In 1973, with CIA, Kissinger, and Nixon in close support, General Pinochet’s troops overthrew and murdered the elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende. His body was dumped in a grave by the sea, the first of the Desaparecidos Pinochet would hide away.

MAJOR INVESTIGATIONS BY MOTHER JONES (Sept.-Oct. 2011).  
MASSIVE FBI ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS
“The Informants: The FBI Has Built a Massive Network of Spies to Prevent Another Domestic Attack. But are they busting terrorist plots—or leading them?” By Trevor Aaronson. “Our yearlong investigation into the FBI’s vast program to infiltrate and spy on America’s Muslim communities, Plus 508 prosecutions, 158 stings, 49 agent provocateurs: We crunch the numbers.” “Locked Up (for the FBI) Abroad. The feds’ secret program to have American citizens detained and interrogated by foreign governments.” “Inside ‘rendition-lite.’”

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NORWAY AND AROUND WORLD, Jewish Peace News  
jpn@jewishpeacenews.net to jbenet 7-27-11
I'm enclosing a few of the better articles describing and providing analysis for the mass murders in Norway, as well as to the reactions to them in the US. The last link below describes some of the reactions in Israel. An outstanding feature of reactions everywhere has been the tendency to blame Muslims, even before any actual information was available. Then, once it was known that the murderer was a white Christian, many still insisted that this, too, was somehow (at least in part) the fault of Muslims. Additional interesting characteristic of much of mainstream commentary is the wish to use the terms 'terrorist'/terrorism' exclusively to acts performed by Muslims - another symptom of deeply internalized racism.
Racheli Gai, JPN

And from Israel, Yossi Gurvitz: http://972mag.com/israelis%E2%80%99-perverse-support-of-terrorism/

Gary Younge: Europe's Homegrown Terrorists  
July 25, 2011
Two weeks after the fatal terrorist attacks of July 7, 2005, in London, and one day after another failed
attack, a student, Jean Charles de Menezes, was in the London Underground when plainclothes police officers gave chase and shot him seven times in the head.

Initial eyewitness reports said he was wearing a suspiciously large puffa jacket on a hot day and had vaulted the barriers and run when asked to stop. Anthony Larkin, who was on the train, said he saw “this guy who appeared to have a bomb belt and wires coming out.” Mark Whitby, who was also at the station, thought he saw a Pakistani terrorist being chased and gunned down by plainclothes policemen. Less than a month later, Whitby said, “I now believe that I could have been looking at the surveillance officer” being thrown out of the way as Menezes was being killed.

The Pakistani turned out to be a Brazilian. Security cameras showed he was wearing a light denim jacket and clearly in no rush as he picked up a free paper and swiped his metrocard.

“The way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe,” wrote John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*. “The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.”

When some Western commentators see a terrorist attack they are apparently far more comfortable with what they believe than what they know.

So it was on Friday when news emerged of the appalling attacks in *Norway* that have left an estimated seventy-six dead and a nation traumatized. *Rupert Murdoch’s Sun in Britain* (the bestselling daily newspaper) ran with the headline “Al Qaeda massacre: Norway’s 9/11.” The Weekly Standard insisted: “We don’t know if al Qaeda was directly responsible for today’s events, but in all likelihood the attack was launched by part of the jihadist hydra.” Jennifer Rubin at the Washington Post then claimed: “This is a sobering reminder for those who think it’s too expensive to wage a war against jihadists.”

In just a few hours an entire conceptual framework had been erected—though hardly from scratch—to discuss the problem of Muslims in particular and non-white immigration in Europe in general and the existential threat these problems pose to civilization as we know it.

Then came the fact that the terrorist was actually a white, fundamentalist Christian and a neo-Nazi, Anders Breivik, raging against Islam and multiculturalism. Unlike Muslims in the wake of Islamist attacks, Christians weren’t called upon to insist upon their moderation. No one argued that white people had to get with the Enlightenment project. But the bombings—and the presumptions about who was responsible—suggest that the true threat to European democracy is not Islam or Muslims but, once again, fascism and racists.

The belief that Muslims must have been involved chimes easily with a distorted, hysterical understanding of the demographic, religious and racial dynamics that have been present in Europe for well over a generation, variants of which are also at work in the United States today.

The general framing goes like this. Europe is being overrun by Muslims and other non-white immigrants, who are outbreeding non-Muslims at a terrifying rate. Unwilling to integrate culturally and unable to compete intellectually, Muslim populations have become hotbeds of terrorist sympathy and activity. Their presence threatens not only security but the liberal consensus regarding women’s rights and gay rights that Western Europe has so painstakingly established; and overall, this state of affairs represents a fracturing of society that is losing its common values. This has been allowed to happen in the name of not offending specific ethnic groups, otherwise known as multiculturalism.
One could spend all day ripping these arguments to shreds, but for now let’s just deal with the facts.

There have been predictions that the Muslim population of Europe will almost double by 2015 (Oner Taspiner, the Brookings Institution); double by 2020 (Don Melvin, the Associated Press); and be 20 percent of the continent by 2050 (Esther Pan, Council on Foreign Relations). Republican presidential hopeful Rick Santorum told Sarah Posner of Religion Dispatches: “The number I heard is every 32 years the population, the European population of Europe will be reduced by 50 percent. That’s how bad their birthrates are. This is in many respects a dying continent from the standpoint of European-Europeans.”

This is nonsense. The projections are way off. While Muslims in Europe do have higher birthrates than non-Muslims, their birthrates are falling. A Pew Forum study, published in January 2011, forecast an increase of Muslims in European population from 6 percent in 2010 to 8 percent in 2030.

The Norwegian terrorist Breivik feared a Muslim takeover. But Muslims make up 3 percent of Norway. Black Americans have a greater presence in Alaska.

But even if these predictions were true, so what? There’s nothing to say Europe has to remain Christian or majority-white.

Nor do immigrants struggle to integrate. In Britain, Asian Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus all marry outside of their own groups at the same rates as whites. For most ethnic minorities in Britain, roughly half or more of their friends are white. Only 20 percent of those born in Britain have friends only from their own group. According to a Pew Research Center survey, the principal concerns of Muslims in France, Germany and Spain are unemployment and Islamic extremism.

In most of Europe the official politics of multiculturalism that the likes of Breivik and more mainstream politicians rail against—a liberal, state-led policy of encouraging and supporting cultural difference at the expense of national cohesion—is an absolute fiction. Last year German chancellor Angela Merkel claimed the “multikulti” experiment had failed. Earlier this year, British Prime Minister David Cameron said the same thing. The truth is that neither country ever tried such an experiment. “We never had a policy of multiculturalism,” explains Mekonnen Mesghena, head of migration and intercultural management at the Heinrich Böll Foundation. “We had a policy of denial: denial of immigration and of diversity. Now it’s like we are waking up from a long trance.”

The real object of their ire is the existence of “other”—meaning non-white—cultures and races in Europe: the fact of “other” cultures, not the promotion of them. The single greatest obstacle to integration in most of Europe is not Islam or multiculturalism but racism and the economic and academic disadvantage that comes with it.

And, finally, Muslims are nowhere near the greatest terrorist threat. According to Europol, between 2006 and 2008 only .4 percent of terrorist plots (including attempts and fully executed attacks) in Europe were from Islamists. The lion’s share (85 percent) were related to separatism. That doesn’t mean there isn’t a problem. But it’s not on the scale or of the nature that those first out of the gate on Friday claimed it was. Put bluntly, if you have to assume anything when a bomb goes off in Europe, think region, not religion.

But there are some in Europe who are struggling to cope with the changes taking place—who are
failing to integrate into changing societies and who harbor deep-seated resentments against their fellow citizens. That is a sizeable and growing section of the white population so alienated that it has once again made fascism a mainstream ideology on the continent.

In Germany the bestselling book since the Second World War by former Bundesbank board member Thilo Sarrazin blames inbreeding among Turks and Kurds for “congenital disabilities” and argues that immigrants from the Middle East are a “genetic minus” for the country. “But the subject is usually hushed up,” he wrote. “Perish the thought that genetic factors could be partially responsible for the failure of parts of the Turkish populations in the German school system.”

A poll published in the national magazine Focus in September 2010 showed 31 percent of respondents agreeing that Germany is “becoming dumber” because of immigrants; 62 percent said Sarrazin’s comments were “justified”. In Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Italy, hard-right nationalist and anti-immigrant parties regularly receive more than 10 percent of the vote. In Finland it is 19 percent; in Norway it is 22 percent; in Switzerland, 29 percent. In Italy and Austria they have been in government; in Switzerland, where the anti-immigrant Swiss People’s Party is the largest party, they still are.

Breivik was from a particularly vile strain of that trend. But he did not come from nowhere. And the anxieties that produced him are growing. Fascists prey on economic deprivation and uncertainty, democratic deficits cause by European Union membership and issues of sovereignty related to globalization. Far right forces in Greece, for example, are currently enjoying a vigorous revival. When scapegoats are needed they provide them. When solutions are demanded they are scarce.

Jewish Peace News editors:
Joel Beinin, Racheli Gai, et al.
Jewish Peace News archive and blog: http://jewishpeacenews.blogspot.com

“Seeing 'Islamic Terror' in Norway: Learning no lessons from Oklahoma City mistakes” from fair@fair.org; http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=4359 7/25/11

Right-wing terror suspect Anders Behring Breivik reportedly killed 76 people in Norway on Friday, by all accounts driven by far-right anti-immigrant politics and fervent Islamophobia. But many early media accounts assumed that the perpetrator of the attacks was Muslim.

On news of the first round of attacks--the bombs in Oslo--CNN's Tom Lister (7/22/11) didn't know who did it, but knew they were Muslims: "It could be a whole range of groups. But the point is that Al-Qaeda is not so much an organization now. It's more a spirit for these people. It's a mobilizing factor." And he speculated confidently about their motives:

You've only got to look at the target--prime minister's office, the headquarters of the major newspaper group next door. Why would that be relevant? Because the Norwegian newspapers republished the cartoons of Prophet Mohammad that caused such offense in the Muslim world.... That is an issue that still rankles amongst Islamist militants the world over.

CNN terrorism analyst Paul Cruickshank (7/22/11) took to the airwaves to declare that "Norway has been in Al-Qaeda's crosshairs for quite some time." He added that the bombing "bears all the hallmarks of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization at the moment," before adding, almost as an afterthought, that
On Fox News Channel's O'Reilly Factor (7/22/11), guest host Laura Ingraham declared, "Deadly terror attacks in Norway, in what appears to be the work, once again, of Muslim extremists." Even after Norwegian authorities arrested Breivik, former Bush administration U.N. Ambassador John Bolton was in disbelief. "There is a kind of political correctness that comes up when these tragic events occur," he explained on Fox's On the Record (7/22/11). "This kind of behavior is very un-Norwegian. The speculation that it is part of right-wing extremism, I think that has less of a foundation at this point than the concern that there's a broader political threat here."

Earlier in the day on Fox (7/22/11), Bolton had explained that "the odds of it coming from someone other than a native Norwegian are extremely high." While he admitted there was no evidence, Bolton concluded that "it sure looks like Islamic terrorism," adding that "there is a substantial immigrant population from the Middle East in particular in Norway."

An early Wall Street Journal editorial (7/22/11) dwelled on the "explanations furnished by jihadist groups to justify their periodic slaughters," before concluding that because of Norway's commitment to tolerance and freedom, "Norwegians have now been made to pay a terrible price."

Once the alleged perpetrator's identity did not conform to the Journal's prejudice, the editorial was modified, but it continued to argue that Al-Qaeda was an inspiration: "Coordinated terrorist attacks are an Al-Qaeda signature. But copycats with different agendas are surely capable of duplicating its methods."

Many pundits and outlets had to scramble to justify their ideological presumptions in the wake of the unexpected suspect. Washington Post blogger Jennifer Rubin (7/22/11) had called the Norwegian violence "a sobering reminder for those who think it's too expensive to wage a war against jihadists," citing Thomas Joscelyn of the Weekly Standard's assertion that "in all likelihood the attack was launched by part of the jihadist hydra." In a follow-up post (7/23/11), Rubin insisted that even though she was wrong, she was right, because "there are many more jihadists than blond Norwegians out to kill Americans, and we should keep our eye on the systemic and far more potent threats that stem from an ideological war with the West."

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat (7/25/11) likewise argued that we should respond to the horror in Norway by paying more attention to the alleged perpetrator's point of view:

On the big picture, Europe's cultural conservatives are right: Mass immigration really has left the Continent more divided than enriched, Islam and liberal democracy have not yet proven natural bedfellows and the dream of a postnational, postpatriotic European Union governed by a benevolent ruling elite looks more like a folly every day.... Conservatives on both sides of the Atlantic have an obligation to acknowledge that Anders Behring Breivik is a distinctively right-wing kind of monster. But they also have an obligation to the realities that this monster’s terrible atrocity threatens to obscure.

The New York Times' July 23 report explained that while early speculation about Muslim terrorists was incorrect, there was ample reason for concern that terrorists might be responsible. In 2004 and again in 2008, the No. 2 leader of Al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahri, who took over after the death of Osama bin Laden,
threatened Norway because of its support of the American-led NATO military operation in Afghanistan.

Of course, anyone who kills scores of civilians for political motives is a "terrorist"; the language of the Times, though, suggested that a "terrorist" would have to be Islamic.

The Times went on:

Terrorism specialists said that even if the authorities ultimately ruled out Islamic terrorism as the cause of Friday’s assaults, other kinds of groups or individuals were mimicking Al-Qaeda’s brutality and multiple attacks.

"If it does turn out to be someone with more political motivations, it shows these groups are learning from what they see from Al-Qaeda," said Brian Fishman, a counterterrorism researcher at the New America Foundation in Washington.

It is unclear why any of Breivik's actions would be considered connected in any way to terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda, which certainly did not invent the idea of brutal mass murder. But the Times was able to turn up another expert the following day who saw an Islamist inspiration for Islamophobic terrorism (7/24/11):

Thomas Hegghammer, a terrorism specialist at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, said the manifesto bears an eerie resemblance to those of Osama bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda leaders, though from a Christian rather than a Muslim point of view. Like Mr. Breivik’s manuscript, the major Qaeda declarations have detailed accounts of the Crusades, a pronounced sense of historical grievance and calls for apocalyptic warfare to defeat the religious and cultural enemy.

"It seems to be an attempt to mirror Al-Qaeda, exactly in reverse," Mr. Hegghammer said.

To the paper's credit, the Times' Scott Shane wrote a strong second-day piece (7/25/11) documenting the influence of Islamophobic bloggers on Breivik's manifesto:

His manifesto, which denounced Norwegian politicians as failing to defend the country from Islamic influence, quoted Robert Spencer, who operates the Jihad Watch website, 64 times, and cited other Western writers who shared his view that Muslim immigrants pose a grave danger to Western culture.... Mr. Breivik frequently cited another blog, Atlas Shrugs, and recommended the Gates of Vienna among websites.

(Spencer was one of the anti-Muslim pundits profiled in FAIR's 2008 report, "Meet the Smearcasters: Islamophobia's Dirty Dozen.")

Shane's piece noted that the document, rather than being an Al-Qaeda "mirror," actually copied large sections of Ted Kaczynski's 1995 Unabomber manifesto, "in which the Norwegian substituted 'multiculturalists' or 'cultural Marxists' for Mr. Kaczynski’s 'leftists' and made other small wording changes."

It is not new for media to jump to the conclusion that Muslims are responsible for any given terrorist attack; the same thing was widespread after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombings (Extra!, 7-8/95). "It has
every single earmark of the Islamic car-bombers of the Middle East," syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer (Chicago Tribune, 4/21/95) asserted. "Whatever we are doing to destroy Mideast terrorism, the chief terrorist threat against Americans, has not been working," wrote New York Times columnist A.M. Rosenthal (4/21/95). "Knowing that the car bomb indicates Middle Eastern terrorists at work, it's safe to assume that their goal is to promote free-floating fear," editorialized the New York Post (4/20/95). It is unfortunate that so many outlets have failed to learn any practical lessons from such mistakes--or question the beliefs that drive them.

END TERRORISM NEWSLETTER #4