Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Contents of # 4
Make the Rich Pay Their Proper Share
Clergy Arrested Protesting Budget
Obama Wants Progressive Budget?
Obama's Environmental Record
Obama vs. Core Dem Party Principles
Sweet Times for Billionnaires
Wall Street in the Saddle and Ride, Ride: Frank Rich
Untransparency (2 articles):
   FBI Whistleblowers
   Blacklist the San Francisco Chronicle?
Obama and Bradley Manning
   Ann Wright
   Glenn Greenwald

Contents of #5
Prosecute Obama and Bush
The Bush/Obama Presidency
Wang: Renditions and Secrecy Continue
Turley: Obama and Civil Liberties
Obama and Drones
Cornel West: Obama and MLKJr
Obam vs.EPA: Ozone Pollution
Obama and Ron Paul

Contents of #6
Rabbi Lerner, Iran, Ad in New York Times, and Obama
Nader: Obama’s Cave-in
Cockburn: Obama vs. Habeas Corpus
Wendell Griffin Badly Disappointed
Hedges: Suing Obama Over Habeas Corpus
Petition to the President
Hastings: Afghan War
Navy Seals
Pollitt: Ron Paul and Obama
Corn: Obama’s New Vigor
Wednesday, March 7

Today, our ad saying "No" to a first strike (preemptive attack) by either Israel or the U.S. on Iran, appeared in the New York Times (in the National Edition it is on page A19).

The media has distorted what has been going on between Obama and Netanyahu, representing it as Obama standing up to Netanyahu and being a hero for peace. But actually what happened is that Obama legitimated a first strike and preemptive attack on Iran, arguing with Netanyahu about the timing of such an attack, seeking to allow coercive economic sanctions to work first, but stating explicitly that Israel should not be constrained in any way to follow what it decides to be in its best national interest in regard to a strike on Iran. That's why AIPAC gave him a standing ovation when Obama addressed them a few days ago.

Obama has now fully embraced the militarist position of George W. Bush who argued that it was legitimate for the U.S. to take a preemptive attack on Iraq based on the suspicion that they had nuclear weapons, just as Obama two months ago gave the green light to legislation that allows the US to imprison for life without a trial U.S. citizens the government suspects to be cooperating in some way with terrorists, and just as he has taken the lead in developing drone technology aimed at civilians (which Pentagon militarists say may soon be used inside the U.S.). The media ignores this significant tilt toward militarism in the policies and rhetoric of Obama, and its potential for building even more support for the right wing policies that were once considered extremist in US politics. In so doing, Obama has set a lasting precedent that can be cited by other countries in the future should China, Russia or India ever get to the point where they have sufficient military advances to use the strategy of preemptive attacks against Israel or even the U.S. The ethical foundation for this has been set by Obama's AIPAC speech and his green light to Israel to attack Iran should they feel the need to do so. His caution of restraint is only about the timing, not about the legitimacy of first strike or preemptive attack.

The media has blocked this position out of public discourse. Our own attempt and the attempt of other peace groups to raise this issue through op-eds and public statements has been totally ignored. That's why we had to buy the ad in the NY Times, and why we now need to continue this campaign against preemptive strikes by taking similar ads in Israeli and US media. We need your help (and your understanding that we will make these points but may frame some of the sentences differently to make the ad feel up to date by the time we've raised enough money to publish it in Israel and in US media).

Would you help us do that by donating for this ongoing media campaign
at www.tikkun.org/iran, or at least by adding your name to the 2,700 people who signed the ad by the morning of March 7. You do NOT have to donate to add your name, though the donations will help us spread this message beyond the NY Times! . . .

www.tikkun.org/iran

So, THANK YOU for helping us take the leadership in this struggle for the ethical and spiritual well-being of the U.S. and Israel. As we say in the ad: we need our leaders to "break the cycles of violence that have physically, ethically and spiritually wounded the human race for so much of its history." And yet, as we say in the ad after affirming "a strategy of generosity" as depicted in our Global Marshall Plan (have you downloaded the full version of it at www.spiritualprogressives.org/GMP and read it through?), "We offer this in a spirit of humility, knowing that no one can be sure of what is going to happen in the future, but certain that what has happened in the past with the domination approach to the world's problems has often led to worse disasters than whatever it was designed to forestall."

Warm regards and blessings,
Rabbi Michael Lerner

web: www.tikkun.org
email: info@spiritualprogressives.org

Copyright © 2010 Tikkun® / Network of Spiritual Progressives®.
2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200
Berkeley, CA 94704
510-644-1200 Fax 510-644-1255

Ralph Nader, “Obama and the Art of the Cave-In”
Reader Supported News, Jan. 4, 2012
Nader writes: "Putting themselves on the defensive, while dialing business lobbyists for the same campaign dollars as the Republicans, the Obama crowd, of course, could not advance what they promised the American people."
READ MORE
http://www.readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/9276-obama-and-the-art-of-the-cave-in
He Signed It on the Dotted Line
by Alexander Cockburn, Battleground Blog, January 10, 2012 (similar essay in The Nation 1-23-12 with title “The Man Who Shot Habeas Corpus”)

America changed as the New Year stumbled across the threshold, but the big shift didn’t get much press, which is easy to understand. Can there be a deader news day than a New Year’s Eve that falls on a weekend? Besides, alive or dead, habeas corpus has never been a topic to set news editors on fire.

The change came with the whisper of Barack Obama’s pen, as he signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act, the annual ratification of military Keynesianism — $662 billion this time — which has been our national policy since World War II bailed out the New Deal.

Sacrificial offerings to the Pentagon aren’t news. But this time, snugly ensconced in the NDAA, came ratification by legal statute of the exposure of U.S. citizens to arbitrary arrest without subsequent benefit of counsel and to possible torture and imprisonment sine die. Goodbye, habeas corpus. I wrote about this here before Obama signed the bill, but when a president tears up the Constitution the topic is worth revisiting.

We’re talking about citizens within the borders of the United States, not sitting in a hotel or out driving in some foreign land. In the latter case, as the late Anwar al-Awlaki’s incineration in Yemen bore witness a few months ago, that the well-being or summary demise of a U.S. citizen is contingent upon a secret determination of the president as to whether the aforementioned citizen is waging a war of terror on the United States. If the answer is in the affirmative, the citizen can be killed on the president’s say-so without further ado.

We’re also most emphatically not talking about non-U.S. citizens or possibly even legal residents (though I’d urge green card holders to file for citizenship ASAP). Non-citizens get thrown in the Supermax without a prayer of having a lawyer. Under the terms of the NDAA, a suspect’s seizure by the military is a “requirement” if the suspect is deemed to have been “substantially supporting” al-Qaida, the Taliban or “associated forces.”

By the military? Until Dec. 31, the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 limited the powers of local governments and law enforcement agencies from using federal military personnel to enforce the laws of the land. No longer. The NDAA renders the Posse Comitatus Act a dead letter.

Connoisseurs of subversion and anti-terror laws well know that “associated forces” can mean anything. See, for example, one of the definitions of “enemy combatants” minted after 2001: “associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners, including any person who has committed a belligerent act or has directly supported such hostilities in aid of such enemy forces.” Like those memory pillows I saw on discount in Macy’s on New Year’s Day, the phrase “directly supported” will adjust itself to the whim of any ingenious prosecutor.

Obama issued a signing statement simultaneous with passing the act into law. Theoretically, he’s against signing statements. In 2008 he said, “I taught the Constitution for 10 years, I
believe in the Constitution, and I will obey the Constitution of the United States. We’re not going to use signing statements as a way of doing an end-run around Congress.”

Actually, whatever Obama may have taught, a signing statement, whether issued by Bush or Obama, doesn’t have the force of law. Obama’s Dec. 31 signing statement was designed to soothe the liberal vote, as the president expressed “serious reservations with certain provisions that regulate the detention, interrogation and prosecution of suspected terrorists” and insisted that, by golly, he will never “authorize the indefinite military detention without trial of American citizens.”

This pious language was part of a diligent White House campaign to suggest that (a) there is nothing in the act to perturb citizens, but (b) anything perturbing is entirely the fault of Congress, and (c) Obama solemnly swears that so long as he is president he’ll never OK anything bad, whatever the NDAA might be construed as authorizing, and anyway (d) there’s nothing new about the detention provisions because they merely reiterate those of the Authorization for Use of Military Force, signed by Bush in 2001.

To take the last point first, the NDAA expands the 2001 law and codifies ample new powers, plus new prohibitions regarding any possible removal of prisoners in Guantánamo. As for Congress, its performance was lamentable, but as Senator Carl Levin, one of the bill’s co-sponsors, has convincingly inferred, the real reason the White House threatened a veto was because the bill, as then drafted, might have limited what the executive branch deems its present powers of indefinite detention without trial.

Amid the mutual buck-passing, what Congress and the White House connived at, beating back all obstructive amendments, was the framing of cunningly vague language about the dirty work afoot. Jonathan Turley, a great champion of constitutional rights and civil liberties, puts the trickery in a nutshell: “The exemption for American citizens from the mandatory detention requirement … is the screening language for the next section … which offers no exemption for American citizens from the authorization to use the military to indefinitely detain people without charge or trial” (emphasis in the original).

That’s the heart of the matter. And in ambiguity we can see certainty: The writ of habeas corpus can now be voided at the whim of a president, whether it be Obama reversing himself on the personal pledges in his signing statement or any successor, as can the Sixth Amendment’s right to counsel.

One day, perhaps soon, the Supreme Court will rule on the act’s constitutionality. For now, as ACLU director Anthony Romero said after the signing, Obama “will forever be known as the president who signed indefinite detention without charge or trial into law.” America is an empire on which the sun never sets, and so, appropriately, the statute applies across the planetary “battlefield” that constitutes the Great War on Terror.
Ark's Court of Appeals. He is currently a Circuit Court Judge serving in Little Rock. He is also an ordained minister.)

The Night You Became Indefinitely Detainable Wendell Griffen
Posted: Wednesday, January 4, 2012 6:31 am

On New Year's Eve 2011, while you and I were anticipating the end of the year, President Barack Obama signed a law that makes U.S. citizens subject to indefinite detention by military authorities on suspicion of being terrorists.


But the measure enacted by Congress and submitted to Obama contains provisions that allow the executive branch (meaning the president) to determine whether to order a U.S. citizen detained indefinitely by military authorities on suspicion of being a terrorist. If you think that smacks of tyranny, you're right.

If you think Obama is smart enough to know better than to sign such a measure, you're right.
If you hoped Obama would demonstrate the fortitude to carry out his publicized threat to veto the legislation if this offensive provision wasn't removed, you're badly disappointed. Count me among the badly disappointed people who know tyranny when we see it.

Rest of story click here

http://www.ethicsdaily.com/the-night-you-became-indefinitely-detainable-cms-19051

Why I’m Suing Barack Obama  Posted on Jan 16, 2012

By Chris Hedges,

Attorneys Carl J. Mayer and Bruce I. Afran filed a complaint Friday in the Southern U.S. District Court in New York City on my behalf as a plaintiff against Barack Obama and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to challenge the legality of the Authorization for Use of Military Force as embedded in the latest version of the National Defense Authorization Act, signed by the president Dec. 31. The act authorizes the military in Title X, Subtitle D, entitled “Counter-Terrorism,” for the first time in more than 200 years, to carry out domestic policing. With this bill, which will take effect March 3, the military can indefinitely detain without trial any U.S. citizen deemed to be a terrorist or an accessory to terrorism. And suspects can be shipped by the military to our offshore penal colony in Guantanamo Bay and kept there until “the end of hostilities.” It is a catastrophic blow to civil liberties. MORE

http://readersupportednews.org/off-site-opinion-section/123-123/9471-focus-why-im-suing-barack-obama
PETITION TO PRESIDENT OBAMA TO RESTORE RESPECT FOR EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW

The DEM Party and GOP have important differences, and I am glad to vote Democrat when my alternative is Republican. But our Party can be better, and we must not give up trying to improve it.

Lawbreaking was a major harm done to our country by Pres. Bush, by which the rich and powerful too often escaped prosecution for felonies while the poor and weak were subjected to increasing punishment, and an equally harmful failure of Pres. Obama is his continuation, and in some cases his increase, of legal inequality. Both presidents systematically have broken the rule of law, the bedrock of our aspirations toward fairness and our true light to the world.

At last we have a book that sets forth the crimes committed by the ruling establishment and the refusal to prosecute by that establishment: With Liberty and Justice for Some: How the Law Is Used to Destroy Equality and Protect the Powerful by Glenn Greenwald. He writes: “America’s political and business establishment presided over a series of extraordinary crimes that brought the United States political disgrace and financial ruin: the creation of a global torture regime; the systematic plundering by Wall Street...; the serial obstruction of justice by high-ranking political officials; the fraudulent home
foreclosures by the nation’s largest banks. Yet in almost every instance, the perpetrators were shielded from any legal consequences.”

Candidate Obama “placed the restoration of the rule of law at the heart of his campaign, promising to reverse the culture of lawlessness in Washington.” He “repeatedly accused the Bush administration of breaking the law,” for example, condemning waterboarding and other illegal torture practices.” He won as the candidate who would restore the rule of law. But soon after being elected president he abandoned and even renounced his commitment to the rule of law and, Greenwald writes, blocked “all investigations of the Bush administration” and began a “champion of elite immunity.”

He claimed his reversal was a necessary response to inevitable deadlock in Congress. But he encountered deadlock anyway, and disgraced himself as a constitutional scholar and our nation as one that practiced equality before the law, including government officials and corporate CEO’s at the highest levels.

I believe President Obama should return to his (our) campaign promises regarding the equal application of justice of the last election. I believe that would return the Party and the campaign to the vigor and victory we enjoyed in 2008. We would stand again consistently on the bedrock of the founding fathers, of Jefferson (the essence of the US that “the poorest laborer stood on equal ground with the wealthiest millionaire”) and even of Hamilton (that the president had to be “subordinate to the laws”).

But my beliefs, or rather hopes, aside, I suspect we all feel uneasy about the President’s reversal from his (our)
campaign, and will join me in asking him to again affirm
law's equality for rich and poor, for Presidents and privates
(and generals), and to practice it. And it seems obvious
that nobody but Democrats can induce him to make that
change. Let us be a beginning. So I invite you to sign the
following private letter among Democrats to President
Obama.

Dear President Barack Obama:
We members of the Democratic Party in NW Arkansas
request you to return to your 2008 campaign promise to
govern by law, to respect the equality of all citizens under
law, to prosecute the rich and powerful with the same vigor
the nation prosecutes the poor and weak, who now fill the
jails and prisons with over two million prisoners. We are
Democrats because we want a Party clearly distinguished
from Republicans. Let us together affirm and practice the
aspiration that in law inequality is intolerable.

Thank you,

“McChrystal, Petraeus and Afghanistan, the Inside Story” by
Michael Hastings, Rolling Stone, January 8, 2012, RSN
Intro: "In April 2010, Rolling Stone contributing editor Michael
Hastings spent a month with Gen. Stanley McChrystal in Europe and
Afghanistan, reporting on a profile of the supreme commander of all
NATO forces in what had become America's longest-running war. To
Hastings' astonishment, McChrystal and staff had plenty to say about
the White House and its handling of the war - none of it
complimentary, much of it contemptuous, and almost all of it on the
record."
READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/309-
13/9334-focus-mccrystal-petraeus-and-afghanistan-the-inside-
story

Navy SEALs: Obama's Secret Army
Katha Pollitt, “Ron Paul, Take Two”  
*January 18, 2012*  |  This article appeared in the February 6, 2012 edition of The Nation.

I was unfair to Glenn Greenwald in my last column (“Ron Paul's Strange Bedfellows”). He did not call for progressives to abandon Obama for Paul because Obama supports nondefensive wars, drone attacks, high levels of military spending and the assassination of US citizens; has failed to close Guantánamo; signed the National Defense Appropriations Act (NDAA), which provides for the indefinite detention without trial of terrorism suspects who are US citizens; and vigorously prosecutes the “war on drugs.” Greenwald pointed out that Paul was the only candidate who is raising these issues, which were so crucial to progressives during the Bush years. That’s true; it’s also true that they will certainly not get attention on the campaign trail once Romney is the crowned candidate. We had a polite and mutually respectful discussion of Paul’s candidacy at Bloggingheads.tv.

**About the Author**

*Katha Pollitt*

Katha Pollitt is well known for her wit and her keen sense of both the ridiculous and the sublime. Her "Subject to...

**Also by the Author**

*Ron Paul's Strange Bedfellows* (Conservatives and the American Right, Presidential Campaigns and Elections, The Left) He’s against most of what we’re for. What is it with progressive mancrushes on right-wing Republicans?

---

Katha Pollitt  
93 comments  
Glenn Greenwald Obama Ron Paul

One thing Glenn and I agree on: Obama’s ban on torture aside, he has been a huge disappointment to anyone who was hoping that his election would mean an end to the violation of the civil liberties, due-process rights and human rights of detainees in the “war on
terror.” His refusal to prosecute the architects of torture in the previous administration may have been politically astute (we on the left tend to forget that Obama was elected with plenty of votes from Republicans, independents and conservative Democrats who liked his rhetoric of bipartisanship and national unification). But it has meant that those policies were never confronted, debated and decisively rejected, and the people who put them in place and carried them out were never called to account. Lynndie England went to prison; John Yoo is teaching law at the University of California, Berkeley.

As David Cole wrote in The Nation recently, Bush has been gone for three years. Having signed the NDAA, however reluctantly, Obama now owns those policies, if not the sadistic triumphalism that was the characteristic note of the Bush era, and so do we all. People are even willing to give the government license to kill its own citizens: Anwar al-Awlaki was an American, and his assassination was widely applauded. Paul is one of the few nationally prominent people to have criticized it (along with the assassination of Osama bin Laden). That the president can now order the assassination of US citizens anywhere in the world has become part of the national wallpaper. It’s the way we live now.

These are important issues, and I’m glad Glenn follows them so energetically—and I’m glad someone, even if it’s Ron Paul, is talking them up in the campaign. But let’s not go crazy here. They are not the only issues. It makes no sense for progressive pundits who have devoted their lives to defending the welfare state, progressive taxation, labor unions and the federal government’s ability to protect citizens from abuses at the state level to heap praise on Paul, who vigorously opposes all those things as part of his Ayn Randian anti-government, every-man-is-an-island worldview. It is a fact that most of these pundit fans are white men (not all of them, obviously, as has been pointed out by literal-minded readers), as are (again not
Paul’s supporters. There are probably numerous reasons for this, but in my opinion, one of them is that some of the areas in which Ron Paul is truly awful are just not politically central to them. (Note by contrast feminist civil libertarian Wendy Kaminer’s carefully parsed discussion of Paul in *The Atlantic.*) You can’t praise Paul’s stance on “civil liberties” as pure and uncompromising if you see reproductive rights as a civil liberty. You can’t celebrate Paul for bemoaning the effect of the drug war on black America without noting that criminalizing abortion would put a different set of black people into the criminal justice system—not low-level drug users and dealers but ordinary women, mostly mothers. To those who say abortion rights are safe so Paul’s position doesn’t matter, I would suggest a brush-up on recent state developments. We are much closer to criminalizing abortion in the South and Midwest than we are to legalizing crack and heroin anywhere in the United States. And to those who say segregation is a dead letter, I’d say it’s not at all fantastic to see popular libertarianism tipping the balance in favor of allowing landlords, hoteliers, restaurant owners and such to exclude people on racial grounds. Informally, it already happens.

Basically, I’m bewildered by progressives who embrace Paul. It’s as if there has to be a male leader, someone “uncompromising” and “pure” and “principled” to romanticize, and since obviously that can’t be a Democrat (sellouts! wimps!), the eye of the pundit wanders right. With Occupy Wall Street still animating the national conversation, this seems like exactly the wrong time to befriend the nation’s major proselytizer for “Austrian economics.”

It’s not only that the messenger discredits the message—Paul’s wacky statements are not ancient history; just recently he told an evangelical gathering in South Carolina that the gold standard is mandated by the Bible. It’s that the message itself discredits the message. There has to be a better way to argue for diminishing America’s huge global military footprint than by
connecting it to an isolationism so extreme it would mean quitting the United Nations and abolishing foreign aid, and a better way to protect civil liberties than by opposing them to civil rights. Positions don’t exist in isolation, either from who is advocating them or who is listening. Context is all. And the extreme-right, anti-government libertarian context is bad news for the left. As I said before, Paul is a reactionary crank, and by branding with his name positions that plenty of progressives take, we inadvertently strengthen the case against ourselves.

Katha Pollitt
January 18, 2012 | This article appeared in the February 6, 2012 edition of The Nation.

David Corn, “Obama Unbound,” Mother Jones (March/April 2012). In 2011 Republicans have finally put the fight back in the president.