WHAT DO THESE STATISTICS TELL US ABOUT OUR LEADERS AND THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA?

Number of registered voters in Texas without a photo I.D: More than 600,000.

Number of alleged cases of voter fraud in Texas in the last two general elections: Four. (Cartoon ADG 4-2-12)

Number of private U.S. citizens killed in terrorist attacks in 2010: 15.

Number killed by falling televisions: 16. (“Harper’s Index” August 2012)
A knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry depend upon an open democracy.

In addition to elections, for democracy to function well, information must be free and transparent and not controlled to create fear through secrecy and militarism, the enforcers of totalitarianism.

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Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:


Fear of immigrants, foreigners, others by Dick Bennett

During times of crisis, doubt, and fear, people and governments turn to fundamentalist intolerance
and the persecution of minority groups. We see this cause-effect throughout history. The defeat of the Spanish Armada led to a new Spanish fundamentalism preaching purity and fighting heresy. The Spanish Christian rulers proscribed Islam, but of the Muslims who remained living in Spain, called Moriscos, many continued to practice Islam secretly. And they were increasing in number, giving rise to the fear they might some day become the majority. This perceived threat of demographic change, growing diversity, and loss of power was used by the rulers to expel all Muslims from 1609 to 1614 in a heinous exodus of suffering and death.

Domestic US today looks humane compared to this Spanish example or to the expulsion of the Cherokees in the nineteenth century Trail of Tears, yet similar fears and persecutions persist with similar if not such bloody consequences. Just as the Spaniards had made Islam illegal, now we have designated people seeking a better life illegal immigrants. Part of the anxiety derives from ancient xenophobia, a fear of a counter-identity. Some people fear loss of their jobs by immigrant competition. Apparently the fear has increased, as reflected by the persecution, for in its first four years, Mr. Obama’s administration deported as many illegal immigrants as the administration of George W. Bush did in his two terms.

Some compassionate, tolerant Spanish nobles opposed the discrimination, the arbitrariness, the proscription, and the deportations. One Pedro de Valencia writing in 1606 called for gradual integration through dispersion, mixed marriages, and better living conditions. A few recognized that appropriate incentives would eventually lead the Moriscos to become loyal subjects. Instead the majority with the King chose hideous intolerance and cruelty.

Similarly today, reasonable citizens recommend a generous enlargement of immigrant quotas. Not of all who seek a better life, not as Emma Lazarus wrote in her sonnet, “The New Collosus,” inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, “Give me your tired, your poor, /Your huddled masses.”

But in that spirit we certainly can and should accept significantly more. Many other countries absorb immigrants at a higher rate than the U.S. does once you factor in the size of each nation’s population. Using the measurement of permanent, annual immigrant inflows per overall population, the U.S. in 2009 ranked only 11th out of a selection of 28 advanced industrialized nations, trailing such countries as Australia, Austria, Switzerland, New Zealand, Norway and Ireland. And using United Nations data on the cumulative number of resident immigrants as a share of total population, the U.S. ranks only 25th in the world.

And if Christian US deportation of Christian illegal workers is less brutal than that of the seventeenth-century Spaniards’ expulsion of illegal Muslims, the US deports many more than did ruling Spain. As Professor Daniel Kanstroom has recounted in his book, Aftermath, since 1996, when new, harsher deportation laws went into effect under the Clinton administration, the US has deported millions of noncitizens back to their countries of origin, yet hardly any attention has been paid to what actually happens to deportees. In fact, we have fostered a new diaspora of deportees, many of whom are alone and isolated, with strong ties to their former communities in the United States. The uprooting of settled illegal immigrants especially with families, the separation of spouses and children, have caused immeasurable grief. Kanstroom (also author of the definitive history of US deportation, Deportation Nation) criticizes the current deportation system of the United States and especially deportation’s aftermath: the actual effects on individuals, families, U.S. communities, and the countries that must process and repatriate ever-increasing numbers of U.S. deportees. Few know, he writes, that once deportees have been expelled to places like Guatemala, Cambodia, Haiti, and El Salvador, many face severe hardship, persecution and,
in extreme instances, even death.

In his letter to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (Feb. 20, 2013), Stephen Clark appeals to US clergy to speak out in support of “the worldwide persecution of Christians.” He offers no evidence (but the newspaper restricts contributors to 250 words, or one page), but I join him in deploiring any persecution, which has plagued some religions for hundreds of years, including Christianity.

Mr. Clark also states that “the persecution is especially severe in North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt, and Afghanistan.” If so, I denounce them for it as I do US Christian bigotry against other faiths, as in the expulsion of millions of undocumented people since 1996, mainly Hispanics but also Muslims and others. Note the sub-title of Anouar Majid’s book: *We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades Against Muslims and Other Minorities.* After the death of Jesus, his followers were nonviolent. But by 420 Christianity was beginning to persecute heresies. By 436, Christianity had been so transformed that only Christians could serve in the Roman legions, and nonviolence was a heresy to be persecuted. Then Islam arose and moved westward, until the Battle of Potiers in 732, when the Christian re-conquest began and the Crusades, and today Mr. Clark perceives Christians as the victims and calls upon Christian pastors to take action.

Had he ended there, no great intensification of the ancient hatred and bloodshed of the re-conquest would have been suggested. But he ends his letter with a quotation from pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer warning Germans during WWII that “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless.” By that quotation, possibly unintentionally he insinuates that not only are five Islamic countries and one communist country guilty of “severe” persecution of Christians (no details given), but that they are “evil” comparable to Hitler. Two of the countries are among the “Axis of Evil,” President Bush’s war cry, you are either with us or against us.

Such association and call for action can lead only to continued distrust and conflict. The last century witnessed endless fear, bitterness, and folly, resulting in the deaths and impoverishment of millions and grievous damage to the environment. Now in the twenty-first century, let us reject hatred and aggression, discrimination and persecution.

REFERENCES

Majid, Anouar. *We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades Against Muslims and Other Minorities.* 2009.


Terrah Baker, Free Weekly

361 words

Thank you for “Truths from Terrah” and your suspicion of the power of fear and fearmongers over your personal choices. “I want to live in a society where my fears are based on reality, and not agendas of politicians or corporations. . . .” (8-23-12). Fear also directs our foreign policies.

Unfortunately, US imperialism and militarism thrive on fear of manufactured threats and enemies: the Westward movement against the “savages,” against the Mexicans, and then across the Pacific (Hawaii, Guam, Philippines, Okinawa, South Korea, Australia, Jeju Island to contain first the Japanese and then the Chinese); and Cold War, Drug Wars, War on Terrorism: over 50 illegal, unnecessary invasions and interventions since WWII, now over a thousand bases abroad in a hundred countries. The Empire feeds on threat and fear, powerful suppressors of resistance.

Through the nine Unified Combatant Commands of the United States Armed Forces--Africom the latest--the Pentagon has planned the planet for domination, according to a New York Times story about Central America, “to confront emerging threats while it draws on hard lessons learned from a decade of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq.” (i.e., killing people resisting invasion and occupation by a foreign power).

Who and where are these enemies, according to Army chief of Staff Ray Odierno interviewed by Charlie Rose on CBS (6-15-12)? “Well, that’s the thing. . . .It could be a state, it could be a nation state, it could be insurgents, it could be nonstate actors, it could be terrorists, it could be a combination of all of those, frankly. . . .and it’s translating into potential future military operations that we might have to conduct.” For the Pentagon our “enemies” are now possibly everywhere and everybody.

So, Ms. Baker, as you say about medical marijuana, speak up people. The actual hard lessons learned are the benefits of marijuana contrasted to alcohol, and the benefits of bringing our soldiers home instead of killing more tens of thousands of innocent civilians and thousands of our soldiers. For more information: jbennet@uark.edu; Blog: It's the War Department, http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/; Newsletters: http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/, see Index; and attend the Book Forum on US Empire, September 21, 2012 at OMNI.

Dick Bennett
DONAHUE’S FILM BODY OF WAR

Dear Dick,

I’m very pleased to be partnering with The Peace Alliance for a Fall campaign around a film I produced and co-directed entitled Body of War.

I hope you will join us by hosting a movie watching party to get the word out about this important story of a political rush to war and the tragic consequences for one young man.

Tomas Young, 25 years old, was paralyzed from a bullet to his spine - wounded after serving in Iraq for less than a week. Body of War is in part Tomas's moving coming home story as he evolves into a new person, coming to terms with his disability and finding his own unique and passionate voice against the war.

The film also takes a bold political review of the build-up and rush to war. It spotlights President Bush's perfect campaign of fear and shows a fear-filled Congress whose members actually read aloud the White House talking points — word for word. A shallow debate and political vote
ensued that killed thousands of Iraq citizens and over four thousand Americans.  
"A blotch on the Congress and the Executive that will live forever."
- Senator Robert Byrd

This film shows the danger of political complacency and puts a human face on the consequences.
I hope you will join us to show this film and use it as an opportunity to urge people to take actions that can help avert future wars.
Maybe you will show this film in your home. Or maybe you’ll rent a theater in your community, or show it at a local church, synagogue or university. Our young draft age youth especially need to see this movie.

Learn more and sign-up to host a movie party here.
We hope you will join with us. Each of us needs to stand and take action for smarter alternatives to war and violent conflict.


**A State of Terror**

**By ANATOL LIEVEN, February 18, 2007 [REVIEW OF MUELLER]**

It is a common experience for journalists covering low-intensity conflicts to see masses of civilians running from the mere rumor of far-off attacks. They flee in motor vehicles driven at high speed down narrow, overcrowded roads, often at night without lights for fear of enemy fire. The result is a death rate from accidents that often dwarfs the losses from enemy action. Yet despite the wrecks littering the sides of the roads, nothing will persuade the drivers that they are making a false calculation of risk. They think they know how to drive. They do
not understand the relative risks of war.

OVERBLOWN

How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them.


Related
First Chapter: ‘Overblown’ (February 18, 2007)

Readers’ Opinions
Forum: Book News and Reviews

In this important book, John Mueller dares to raise this issue with regard to the United States: whether the entire response to 9/11 — not just the war in Iraq, but the “war on terror” itself, and the monstrous security bureaucracy it has spawned — is, in his word, “overblown.” He suggests that 9/11 was probably a one-time event that cannot be repeated; that the threat from domestic terrorist groups in the United States is almost nonexistent; and that the administration, politicians, security bureaucracy and news media have whipped the American population into a state of terror over terrorism that is simply not justified by the facts.

In his words: “Which is the greater threat: terrorism, or our reaction against it? ...
A threat that is real but likely to prove to be of limited scope has been massively, perhaps even fancifully, inflated to produce widespread and unjustified anxiety. This process has then led to wasteful, even self-parodic expenditures and policy overreactions.”

As Mueller explains in “Overblown,” fear of flying after 9/11 led to increases in long-distance driving that probably killed far more people in accidents than died on the four hijacked planes on 9/11. More Americans have now been killed in Iraq than were killed on the day of the attacks, while the number of Iraqi and Afghan deaths exceeds the 9/11 figure by orders of magnitude.

Mueller points to the pathetic results of domestic antiterrorism efforts compared with the rhetoric accompanying them. In six years, with the exception of the 9/11 conspiracy itself, no serious terrorist cell on American soil has in fact been identified, and no serious terrorist attack has occurred in the country itself. Mueller, a professor of political science at Ohio State University and the author of several books on international affairs, admits that tightened immigration security may have been partly responsible for the failure of international terrorists to penetrate the United States, but he suggests that the notoriously porous character of the Mexican border would have given them ample opportunities had they really been determined to exploit them.

A good deal of the domestic war on terror does indeed provide material for merciless fun — like the 80,000 potential terrorist targets in the United States listed by the Department of Homeland Security, including the Weeki Wachee Springs water park in Florida. Except of course, as Mueller observes, none of this is a joke in terms of money. Domestic security has proved a magnificent porkfest for a great range of beneficiaries, some of them even more unlikely than Weeki Wachee Springs. The expense in taxpayers’ dollars, in turn, pales beside the damage caused by sometimes illegal antiterrorism measures to the Constitution and to America’s prestige in the world.

Mueller looks to history to demonstrate a tradition of American overreaction to vastly overblown domestic and international threats. These included the supposed threat from German-Americans during the First World War and Japanese-Americans during the Second, and of course from American Communists during the McCarthy era and beyond.

Internationally, Mueller correctly notes episodes like the — entirely artificial — “missile gap,” exploited by John F. Kennedy and the Democrats to win the 1960 elections; and to the belief that the fall of South Vietnam to Communism would inevitably lead to the fall of countries across Asia. He talks of the tendency of the American establishment, all too often backed by the news media, to pick “devils du jour” like Sukarno of Indonesia (remember him?), and build them up into great Hitlerian menaces to American interests and well-being, when in many cases these were tinpot figures barely capable of controlling their own countries.
We know from the historical examples Mueller cites that there is a great deal to this picture. And if we had doubts about the capacity of today’s Americans to behave in the same way, the campaign for war with Iraq should certainly have dispelled them. So Mueller’s critique is in general accurate, timely and necessary.

Unfortunately, he partly spoils his case by a lack of realism, and by a failure to relate American behavior to that of other countries. A particularly drastic example of these failings is in his discussion of America’s response to Pearl Harbor, an attack he compares to 9/11. He suggests that the United States had alternatives to all-out war with Japan after Pearl Harbor, and should have adopted a limited strategy of military containment and harassment. But the recommendation is absurd. The result of such a strategy would have been a victory by Japan and its long-term hegemony over most of Asia.

A better argument would be to say that in the cases of both Pearl Harbor and 9/11, an all-out response was absolutely inevitable — just as it would have been by any major state capable of fighting back. But after Pearl Harbor, the United States fought imperial Japan, and — following Hitler’s declaration of war — Nazi Germany. It did not veer off to confront other states completely unconnected to the attack.

This is the mystery that Mueller’s book does not fully address: The fact that the Bush administration’s response to 9/11 has not been an all-out struggle against the perpetrators. On the contrary, Osama bin Laden and his chief lieutenants were allowed to slip away and are still at large. The high command of the Taliban was also permitted to escape, and is now engaged in a ferocious counteroffensive. One critical reason for this was that within weeks of the Taliban’s overthrow, the Bush administration, with the support of much of America’s political class and news media, was already diverting troops and attention toward planning the war with Iraq.

If, God forbid, Islamist terrorists do succeed in launching another major attack on the United States, then Mueller will be accused of having underplayed the danger. There is something to this. He is, in my view, too complacent both about the inexorable spread of the technologies of mass destruction and the spread of extremist ideologies, especially among the Muslims of Europe. These threats need to be taken extremely seriously. Where Mueller is quite right, however, is in arguing that all too many of the responses to terrorism adopted by the Bush administration have ranged from the pointless to the disastrous.

Anatol Lieven is a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation and the co-author, with John Hulsman, of “Ethical Realism: A Vision for America’s
US NATIONAL SECURITY STATE FEARMONGERING

“100% Scared, National Security Complex Grows On Terrorism Fears” Tom Engelhardt, TomDispatch

Excerpt: "The National Security Complex has, in fact, grown fat by relentlessly pursuing the promise of making the country totally secure from terrorism, even as life grows ever less secure for so many Americans when it comes to jobs, homes, finances, and other crucial matters. It is on this pledge of protection that the Complex has managed to extort the tidal flow of funds that have allowed it to bloat to monumental proportions, end up with a yearly national security budget of more than $1.2 trillion, find itself encased in a cocoon of self-protective secrecy, and be 100% assured that its officials will never be brought to justice for any potential crimes they may commit in their ‘war’ on terrorism."


ISLAMOPHOBIA


PHARMACEUTICALS

Drug Companies Increase Profits by Creating Fear of Diseases

David Wallechinsky, AllGov, Dec. 14, 2011, RSN

"Aggressive and creative marketing has permitted drug manufacturers to convince millions of people they have a problem that requires treatment and medication. Depression has been the poster child of this successful selling of ailments, and served as a catchall diagnosis for everything from sadness to anger to fear to remorse. But like any trend that has marketing to thank for its existence, depression became passe. So nowadays the big drug companies have been telling as many people as possible that they have adult ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). The industry even took out billboards to spread the news of the disease by lighting up Times Square with questions for consumers about lack of focus and over-agitation."

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:  
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/  
For a knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry as the foundation for change. Many of these newsletters report on aspects of US social control, of which the construction of fear is an important weapon.

**All We Have to Fear: Psychiatry's Transformation of Natural Anxieties into Mental Disorders**

Allan V. Horwitz, PhD and Jerome C. Wakefield, DSW, PhD

*Hardcover, 320 pages*

**Description**

Thirty years ago, it was estimated that less than five percent of the population had an anxiety disorder. Today, some estimates are over fifty percent, a tenfold increase. Is this dramatic rise evidence of a real medical epidemic?

In *All We Have to Fear*, Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield argue that psychiatry itself has largely generated this "epidemic" by inflating many natural fears into psychiatric disorders, leading to the over-diagnosis of anxiety disorders and the over-prescription of anxiety-reducing drugs. American psychiatry currently identifies disordered anxiety as irrational anxiety disproportionate to a real threat. Horwitz and Wakefield argue, to the contrary, that it can be a perfectly normal part of our nature to fear things that are not at all dangerous--from heights to negative judgments by others to scenes that remind us of past
threats (as in some forms of PTSD). Indeed, this book argues strongly against the tendency to call any distressing condition a "mental disorder." To counter this trend, the authors provide an innovative and nuanced way to distinguish between anxiety conditions that are psychiatric disorders and likely require medical treatment and those that are not—the latter including anxieties that seem irrational but are the natural products of evolution. The authors show that many commonly diagnosed "irrational" fears—such as a fear of snakes, strangers, or social evaluation—have evolved over time in response to situations that posed serious risks to humans in the past, but are no longer dangerous today.

Drawing on a wide range of disciplines including psychiatry, evolutionary psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history, the book illuminates the nature of anxiety in America, making a major contribution to our understanding of mental health.

Features

- Offers a fundamental, yet constructive, critique of psychiatric diagnostic criteria while at the same time recognizing the existence of genuine mental disorders
- Uniquely combines perspectives from a wide range of disciplines that include psychiatry, evolutionary psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history
- Avoids both the sweeping dismissal of psychiatry found in many current attacks on definitions of mental disorder and the widespread acceptance of calling any distressing condition as a "mental disorder"
- Appeals to academics, clinicians, and the lay reader

Reviews

"Finally, a book about anxiety disorders that is based on a deep understanding of normal anxiety! I wish every mental health clinician would read it. Its spectacularly clear prose reveals the landscape of normal anxiety like an airplane's radar reveals the ground beneath the fog." — Randolph M. Nesse, MD, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

"The area of anxiety disorders has needed a thorough review and a shake-up for a long time. In this bold and thought-provoking work, Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield have relied mainly on the insights from the evolutionary theory to provide a critical and powerful analysis of the modern concept of anxiety disorders. Regardless of whether or to what extent one agrees with them, their book rightly challenges the prevailing notions and is likely to perturb current thinking about fear, anxiety and anxiety disorders. It will certainly add more substance to much-needed discussions and debates about the nature of these conditions, psychiatric diagnoses, and an often-imperceptible boundary between normality and psychopathology." — Vladan Starcevic, MD, PHD, Department of Psychiatry, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Australia

"does an excellent job at explaining the history and calling into question the present state of anxiety diagnosing." San Francisco Book Review

"The most intriguing aspect, though, is the authors' discussion of how anxiety and social judgments can and have been so easily intertwined and what the implications might be from labeling and medicating anxieties instead of seeking to alter their underlying causes." San Francisco Book Review.

"In their new book, Horwitz and Wakefield offer the same incisive analysis that they brought to psychiatry's medicalization of sadness in their first book, The Loss of Sadness, to explain the reasons for the soaring prevalence of anxiety disorders over the past 20 years, namely that psychiatry has been mislabeling normal anxiety and fear reactions as disorder... Most importantly, they bring their analysis to bear on the actual definitions of anxiety disorders that are enshrined in the American Psychiatric Association's manual of mental disorders, pointing out the various weaknesses and flaws with regard to construction of definitions of anxiety disorders that effectively delineate normal anxiety and fear from abnormal anxiety and fear." — Michael B. First, MD, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University, New York, NY
"does an excellent job at explaining the history and calling into question the present state of anxiety diagnosing." *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing*

"Horwitz and Wakefield manage to make a strong case for the prosecution" *LA Review of Books*

"This book presents some excellent arguments about the overdiagnosis of anxiety disorders and the pathologizing of normal anxiety states...There certainly has been an explosion of the diagnosis of anxiety and depression and a concurrent massive increase in the use of medications such as the SSRIs - and the authors explore that thoroughly in the second section. They propose a harmful dysfunction (HD) model of diagnosis that incorporates both the degree of harm and degree of dysfunction that has some potential. Overall this book is worth the read for anyone in interested in mental health, particularly as it relates to the diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders." -- Brett C. Plyler, M.D., Northwestern Memorial Hospital, *Doody's*

"The most intriguing aspect is the authors' discussion of how anxiety and social judgments can and have been so easily intertwined and what the implications might be from labeling and medicating anxieties instead of seeking to alter their underlying causes... it does an excellent job at explaining the history and calling into question the present state of anxiety diagnosing." -- Evelyn McDonald, *Sacramento Book Review*

Also reviewed by Simon Wessely in *The Lancet*

"As a non-specialist in anxiety disorders, I found this book informative and illuminating...I would recommend it to any psychiatrist as a provocative survey of this difficult area." -- Philip Timms, *The British Journal of Psychiatry*

About the Author(s)

**Allan V. Horwitz** is Board of Governors Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University. His books include *The Social Control of Mental Illness* and *Creating Mental Illness*. He is the recipient of the Pearlin Award for lifetime Achievement in the Sociology of Mental Health from the American Sociological Association.

**Jerome C. Wakefield** is University Professor, Professor of Social Work, and Professor of Psychiatry at New York University. He is the author, with Allan V. Horwitz, of *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder*--named Best Psychology Book of 2007 by the Association of American Publishers.