WHO TELLS THE STORY?

“. . .the dominant interpretation of the past often enjoys its status not because of its superior historical accuracy but because of its proponents’ social power.” Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (p. 276).

THE CHINA THREAT

“Percentage of Americans who say China ‘can’t be trusted: 68.’ (“Harper’s Index” January 2013). Where do you think that fear came from? US encirclement of China would not happen without the majority of people first having been persuaded by the warriors to believe China was an enemy, just as with Vietnam and the “Axis of Evil.” --Dick

Nos. 1 & 2 at end

Contents #3, Nov. 25, 2012

Dick: Jeju Island

Obama Focuses on Asia-Pacific
Burns on Panetta: Transferring Forces to China “Threat”
Letman (via Global Nework and VFP): Hawaii, Head of PACOM
US Fear of Chinese Port Management
Andre Vltchek, Oceania, Western Imperialism S. Pacific

Contents #4  Encircling China, Pacific Resistance
LaFebre, Expansion 1860-1898
Dick: Progress to Pacific
Dick: General Custer
Lind: Hawaii
Bardsley: US Troops to Australia: China
Paik and Mander: Pacific Blowback
   Middleton, Australian Military Connections
   US and NZ: Waihopai Spybase
   Vandenberg Air Force Base
   Canada Joins the Pivot
   Star Wars and China
   USPACCOM

Contents #5  March 27, 2013
RESISTANCE
Gagnon: Oppose US/SK War Games
Public Citizen: Stop Trans-Pacific Partnership: Contact Your Congressman
Garate: Resistance to US Military Bases in S. Korea
Kalikasan People’s Resistance to US Military Destruction of Environment in the Philippines
HISTORY
San Juan: African-Americans in Philippine Revolution, David Fagen
The US Westward Movement: Puritan Aggression from Plymouth Across the Continent and the Pacific

This passage from Alfred Cave’s *The Pequot War* connects the dots of US westward expansion that included the enormous theft from Mexico of the Southwest US and California and the spoils of the Spanish-American War and WWII:

“The Pequot War was not waged in response to tangible acts of aggression. It cannot be understood as a rational response to a real threat to English security. It was, however, the expression of an assumption central to Puritan Indian policy. Puritan magistrates were persuaded that from time to time violent reprisals against recalcitrant savages would be necessary to make the frontier safe for the people of God. The campaign against the Pequots was driven by the same assumption that had impelled Plymouth to massacre Indians suspected of plotting against them at Wessagusett in 1623. The incineration of Pequots at Fort Mystic served the same symbolic purpose as the impalement of Wituwamet’s head on Plymouth’s blockhouse. Both were intended to intimidate potential enemies and to remind the Saints that they lived in daily peril of massacre at the hands of Satan's minions” (168).

Just change a few words and the passage applies amazingly well to the Cold War and the
War on Terror, the permanent war that has ravaged the planet. From the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, partly to intimidate the Soviet Union, to the drone assassinations, US leaders have pumped the public with fear of attack to justify some fifty US invasions and interventions against “evil” nations since 1945.

One of our greatest critics of US war-making, former Senator J. William Fulbright, understood this disastrous, corrosive combination of paranoia and arrogance. In *The Arrogance of Power*, Fulbright wrote: “...the Puritan way of thought—harsh, ascetic, intolerant, promising salvation for the few but damnation for the many—became a major intellectual force in American life. It introduced a discordant element into a society bred in the English heritage of toleration, moderation, and experimentalism” (250). Out of the Puritan tradition came zealous US nationalism and exceptionalism, Sovietphobia, anti-communism, anti-Islam, anti-terrorism, the “Axis of Evil,” and utter blindness to the humanity of “enemies.”

--Dick

EVAN TAYLOR, EURASIA: CROSSROADS OF EMPIRE

The New Crossroads of Empire  [US westward expansion meets Chinese. –Dick]

By Evan Taylor
April 2013

[CHINA] Railroads build empires. Beijing is building a new one. China, now a world-class producer of high-speed rail technology, is in the middle of a transportation boom unprecedented in history as 5,800 miles of domestic high-speed rail lines have been built since 2008, at a cost of $640 billion. Three months ago, just in time for the Chinese New Year, the Ministry of Railways celebrated the opening of their longest route yet, running 1,200 miles between Beijing and Guangzhou, the historic trading center on China’s southeast coast. In the annual spectacle of movement that was the most recent Chinese New Year passengers celebrated the upcoming year of the snake by slithering along the world’s longest high-speed railway at speeds of over 200 miles per hour (“China Opens Longest High-Speed Rail Line,” Keith Bradshar, New York Times, December 26, 2012). The overland journey from Beijing to Guangzhou, the great route from the mountains to the heartland, now takes only eight hours.

But equally as important is Beijing’s use of high-speed rail as a tool of foreign policy, a part of its 20-year strategy to Go West and build connections across the Eurasian continent. In last month’s issue of Z, I touched on the recent growth in relations between China and Turkey, where Chinese companies are in the process of building a railroad across Turkey’s east-west breadth, connecting Asia to Europe at 200 mph. But where Turkey is the future, the start of Beijing’s empire to the west has already been built.

The idea of a railroad has always been the dream for connecting global markets going on two centuries now. The Trans-Siberian railway, the original Eurasian land bridge from Moscow to the Sea of Japan, was a two-decade project completed by the Russian Tsars in 1916. In the U.S., railroads settled the west and, when they reached the Pacific, the U.S. moved across the ocean and became an imperial power. But now the American century is over and China is taking its turn at the game. Working with Deutsche
Bahn—the German national railway company and largest rail company in the world—as well as RZD, a subsidiary of Russian railways, Beijing has for four years now, been operating the “Second Eurasian Land Bridge,” as author F. William Engdahl calls it, direct freight rail service from Germany to China (F. William Engdahl, “China’s Land Bridge to Turkey Creates New Eurasian Geopolitical Potentials,” April 28, 2012).

In October 2008, Norbert Bensel, a top board manager at DB Schenker, the logistics subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn that manages the service, aptly described the new process of industry that was taking place. “The introduction of the regular timetable and fixed departure times,” he stated, will create “a new link in our global network” and “a new level of quality in the trans-continental exchange of goods” (“Trans-Eurasia Express to Launch next year,” Railway Gazette, October 6, 2008). Heady words, and ones that speak of a great imaginary market coming to life.

Bensel was speaking at the commercial launch of what was then called the Trans-Eurasia expressway, a twice a week, 20-day freight shipping line from Beijing to the German ports of Hamburg, Duisburg, and Nuremburg. Describing itself as the first regular rail transportation service between Europe and Asia, the line runs from Germany through Poland and Belarus to Russia. >From there, it can either go across the continent on the Trans-Siberian to Manzhouli, on China’s Northeast border, or south through Kazakhstan to Western China.

By October 2011, DB Schenker had the service running five days a week and a number of major companies had bought into the route. Auto manufacturers like BMW, Audi, and Volkswagen now ship parts overland from their German manufacturing plants to their Chinese assembly plants, and computer companies like HP and Acer ship from their Chinese factories to the European market. Since 2011, HP has shipped over four million notebook computers from Chongqing to Germany (“The Silk Railroad of China-Europe Trade,” Bloomberg Business Week, December 20, 2012).

**Beijing is also developing a factory economy in Western China.** Whereas the Southeast coast had been the major growth market for Chinese factory development in the past, industry is now moving inland and to the west. Chongqing, in Sichuan province, has become a factory boomtown. During World War II, Chiang Kai-Shek’s government fled to Chongqing, so remote that the Japanese couldn’t get there. And now, with a municipal population over 13 million, it is “the world’s biggest city” as Time Magazine put it in 2005 (“China: the world’s largest city,” April 18, 2005; “Xinjiang to set up two special economic zones in 2011,” Peoples Daily, February 14, 2011). Two years ago, Beijing created two new Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the free-market economic-framework that has fueled the factory growth along the coast. But the new SEZs are to be far from the coast—in fact, as far from the coast as possible—located in Kashgar on the far western border of Xinjiang. Beijing plans to invest billions of dollars into the area and provide regulatory and tax breaks as well, aiming to attract domestic and international investment. Frederick Jackson Turner is not in China, and for the first time since Xinjiang was conquered in the late 18th century it is being industrially developed as a global trading hub.

**Oil and Gas Pipelines**
The other half of Beijing’s Go West strategy is creating overland energy corridors, namely oil and gas pipelines from Iran and the Caspian region. The developments started in 1997, when Kazakhstan and China agreed to a “project of the century,” with China promising to invest nearly $11 billion in Kazakhstan’s oil infrastructure and pipelines. Progress, however, was slow and it took until 2003 for China to begin making waves in Kazakh oil, when the Chinese National Petroleum Company bought 100 percent of the shares in the Northern Buzachi fields from a Chevron-Saudi consortium.

Since then, Beijing has worked steadily to acquire more production companies in the field, working with Kazakh state owned companies like KazMunaiGaz. According to the estimates of Kazakh government researcher Konstantin Syroezhkin, by 2012: “China’s share in oil production in Kazakhstan amounts to around 25-27 percent and in gas production to 13-15 percent. Of course, these figures are far from those with which the Kazakhstani opposition and some deputies ‘frighten’ the Kazakhstaniis (40 percent), but they are quite considerable, particularly if we keep in mind the areas Chinese companies are operating in the country and the fact that the oil and gas sector is the basis of Kazakhstan’s economy and the main contributor of revenue to the budget.”

In order to transport the oil to China, a Western Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline was also agreed to in 2003. Within a year construction on the first phase had begun, and by 2005 a pipeline to the Kazakh-Chinese border was complete, at a cost of over $800 million. In July 2006, a mark of great geopolitical significance was reached, as an oil refinery in the city of Dushanzi, located halfway between the border and Xinjiang’s capital of Urumqi, received China’s first-ever overland imports of oil. Construction began on the second phase of the Kazakh pipeline in 2009, and again within 2 years the project was complete. Throughput of the overall pipeline network, which started at 10 million tons of crude oil per year, was expected to reach 20 million tons in 2012 and 50 million tons in 2020.

A second pipeline, for transporting natural gas, has also been constructed, running from fields in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to Khorgos, at the southern end of the Kazakh-Chinese border. The first stage of this pipeline, built over two years and finished in 2009, runs from the Uzbek-Kazakh border through Shykment to Khorgos. With a throughput capacity of 40 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas, the pipeline covered a distance of 1,333 km, and came at a cost of $7.5 billion. A second phase within Kazakhstan has been planned as well, running from the Caspian Sea to Shykment.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have also worked closely with the Chinese on energy deals. The China-Uzbekistan relationship was solidified in 2005, when the Uzbek President visited Beijing and signed agreements for the Chinese government to invest in Uzbek energy resources. By 2010, the Uzbek section of the Central Asia-China gas pipeline was complete, and agreements had been signed to export 10 bcm per year of Uzbek gas to China, with plans to increase this by 25 bcm. This figure, however, is
a drop in the oil drum compared to imports from Turkmenistan. Beijing has agreements with Turkmenistan to import upwards of 40 bcm of gas per year, and at dirt-cheap prices, making China by far the largest investor in Turkmenistan’s gas sector.

A 2009 meeting in the remote Turkmeni desert symbolized the new petroleum reality in Central Asia, with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Uzbek President Islam Karimov and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev all convening with their Turkmeni colleague to inaugurate the new gas pipeline. “The whole world is watching us right now,” Hu stated. And one can be sure that Washington was watching when the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov (for real) visited Beijing in November 2011 and agreed to increase gas exports to China by 25 bcm per year. Soon, the total gas trade between the two states will be 65 bcm per year, half of China’s total gas consumption.

[USA]While China is building her industrial connection to the west, the U.S. has been establishing its own attempt at a trans-continental transport network as well. Known as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) and operated by the Pentagon’s Transportation Command, it has been pieced together since 2009 to supply troops, weapons, and supplies for the war effort in Afghanistan.

One main path starts in the Latvian port of Riga, on the Baltic Sea. From there it travels by rail through Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to Termez on the Afghan border. Another path starts in the Georgia’s Black Sea port of Poti and runs across the Caucasus to Baku, on the Caspian Sea. It then goes through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and meets up with the first path in Termez. Sounds like a log jam? It is. The NDN is not an efficient method of transport—“to Afghanistan, on the slow train”—as CNN put it. As of November 2011, the rail trip from the Riga to Afghanistan takes about 10 days. This seems to be a best-case scenario, however, as many reports have stated that it can take up to 35 days for goods to cross the Uzbek-Afghan border due to myriad problems related to congestion and corruption. This touches on the larger problem of the network, namely that it requires the consent of the corrupt and dictatorial governments of the region.

Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan

Consider the case of Uzbekistan, the most populous state in Central Asia and one ruled with an iron fist by Islam Karimov since 1989. Karimov is of the Saddam Hussein mold of dictator, a former Soviet secret policeman obsessed with power and violence, famous for boiling prisoners alive. Like Iraq, Uzbekistan is flush with resources—gas, copper, uranium, and gold. After gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, Karimov played Washington’s imperial expansion game, signing up for NATO military training programs like the Partnership for Peace. Then, after 9/11, it took Uzbekistan barely one month to agree to host a U.S. military base at Khanabad airport. Within a week of the base opening in October 2001, more than 60 planes had dropped off supplies and 1,200 soldiers were on the
ground, primarily light infantry troops from Fort Drum’s tenth mountain division, the first U.S. soldiers to ever be deployed to former Soviet territory.

Months later, Kyrgyzstan followed suit, and allowed the U.S. military to use the Manas International Airport, located on the outskirts of the capital city of Bishkek. Within months, Air Force engineers had built a 30-acre compound at Manas, the equivalent of 6 city blocks, to house 3,000 personnel. Located 7,000 miles away from Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida, Manas is less than 300 miles from the Chinese border.

Here, it is worth quoting at length from a remarkable article, “Footprints in Steppes of Central Asia,” by Vernon Loeb and published in the February 9, 2002 edition of the Washington Post: “In a remote corner of Central Asia in a country that didn’t even exist a decade ago, the U.S. Air Force is building a base that within months will be home to 3,000 personnel and nearly two dozen American and allied aircraft. While the intensity of the war in Afghanistan has slowed, the base going up outside Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, tells a much different story. It embodies what senior U.S. defense officials say is a major commitment to maintain not just air operations over Afghanistan for the foreseeable future but also a robust military presence in the region well after the war.”

Just how long the United States plans to remain is anyone’s guess. Senior military officials say they have no plans for a permanent American presence. But if the construction here at Manas International Airport is any indication, the Pentagon, rather than searching for an exit strategy for Afghanistan, is focusing on the opposite: establishing a foothold. “America will have a continuing interest and presence in Central Asia of a kind that we could not have dreamed of before,” Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the House International Relations Committee on Wednesday….”

**U.S. Presence in Central Asia**

All told, more than 50,000 U.S. military personnel now live and work on ships and bases stretching from Turkey to Oman and eastward to the Manas airport, 19 miles outside of Bishkek and 300 miles from the Chinese border. “The imperial perimeter is expanding into Central Asia,” Thomas Donnelly, deputy executive director of the Project for the New American Century, wrote in a recent e-mail circulated among leading military analysts.

The full article is an amazing read on the bellicose optimism of American policymakers in the wake
of September 11. Central Asia had been conquered, the war in Afghanistan would soon be over, and Iraq was next in line. But in a sign of the peril that expanding your “imperial perimeter” brings, relations with Uzbekistan soon turned sour. In the summer of 2005, after Karimov’s security forces massacred hundreds of protesters in the city of Andijon, U.S. and other international officials began making calls for a judicial inquiry. Angered at this, and distrustful of the U.S. due to the recent “color revolutions” Washington had sponsored in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, Karimov kicked the Pentagon out of Khanabad.

With the growing importance of the Northern Distribution Network, the U.S. has been crawling back to Karimov in order for him to open up his borders for U.S. military transit. In late 2011, Washington lifted the last of the arms-sales restrictions placed on Uzbekistan following the Andijon incident. More importantly, after an official visit to the Uzbek capital of Tashkent in November, Army Lt. General James L. Brooks stated that transferring leftover or old U.S. military equipment from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan was one of the key points of discussion. “I think that there are ways that the excess equipment could benefit both countries, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, with the excess of U.S. equipment from the war,” he was quoted as saying.

Although it is ethically troublesome for the U.S. to kowtow to such an oppressive government, it is simply a sign of the times. Pentagon aid to NDN states, authorized in the yearly Defense Authorization Act, has increased from $1.2 billion in 2008 to $1.6 billion in 2010 and $1.69 billion in 2011. Uzbekistan, as the hub of the NDN operations, receives the lion’s share of these funds. In fact, in 2010 the U.S. added sweeping new language to section 1233 of the annual Defense Authorization Bill, setting the stage for untempered military aid to the region. Now, “key cooperating nations,” working in support of the war effort would be given “specialized training,” “supplies,” and “specialized equipment.” Moreover, it was all to be a gift, provided on a “non-reimbursable basis.” Trucks, spare parts, weapons, night-vision goggles; it is all being provided by Washington (and London), easier to leave behind than ship out. With the U.S.-led forces planning to retreat from Afghanistan after realizing that the country cannot be occupied, the dictators and autocrats have the upper hand and are demanding the world. The U.S. is enabling region-wide corruption for the purpose of propping up a corrupt Karzai government in Afghanistan.

New Silk Road

Disregarding the logistical and ethical problems, the entire effort is not a sustainable plan, as it is a fact that the U.S. will soon remove all its “combat” soldiers from Afghanistan. What Washington hopes to maintain is a Status of Forces Agreement and a small permanent base of some 20,000 “non-combat” soldiers; whether the Afghans will allow this is a different story. But regardless, why develop such an extensive military supply network? For the U.S. State Department, the NDN is the first step in creating what they term a “New Silk Road,” with Afghanistan serving as the heart of a Pentagon controlled Eurasian network. In November 2012, Dennise Mathieu, a former Ambassador to Nigeria
and top State Department advisor to Transportation Command, laid out the U.S. strategy: “Eventually, with continued cooperation, they will be able to go all the way from China into Europe…. You will have a whole new economic network, built upon the foundation of this military logistics supply network.”

Hilariously, the State Department is also still pining for the famed TAPI pipeline, connecting Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Dreamed up in the 1990s, TAPI has approached the territory of conspiratorial legend—the great pipeline behind the invasion of Afghanistan—except for the fact that the State Department is still talking about it. But as the war continues into its 12th year, construction on the pipeline has still not begun. In the meantime, Turkmenistan found its energy patron in China. Highlighted here is the true difference between U.S. and Chinese foreign policy. While China has embraced industrial development, the U.S. has focused exclusively on the sword. Just read the above quote from Ambassador Mathieu again. The Pentagon military network will be the foundation of a new Eurasia? It is laughable, but the same idea has driven U.S. policy around the globe, from Columbia to Iraq to the Philippines.

**China’s Going West Policy**

China’s current policy of Going West and expanding their economic influence into western Eurasia—Central Asia, the Middle East, and eventually Western Europe—is rooted in Beijing’s keen reading of the last 20 years of history. Economically, they watched the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the reality of Western-backed free-market “shock therapy” being imposed on a nation of 150 million, and decided a different path was needed. Beijing wants stability, not shock.

Militarily, they watched the U.S. follow the Cheney plan of imperial expansion and privatization, fighting wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, all at a huge cost to the U.S. economic balance sheet and public support. In contrast, China’s military still does not have any overt foreign bases. In 2009, when a Chinese official suggested that the People’s Liberation Army was thinking of building their first overseas military base, in the Red Sea area, the idea was quickly denied and no base was ever constructed.

Currently, Beijing seems to be happy letting U.S. soldiers protect China’s foreign investments, which more and more is the effective purpose of the American military. China is now the largest investor in the Iraqi oil sector, as well as making the largest investment in the history of Afghanistan, a $7 billion Copper Mine contract. In Central Asia and the energy rich Caspian Basin, which U.S. strategists have tried to control since the George H.W. Bush Administration, China has built oil and gas pipelines to their Western province of Xinjiang. The arid mountains of Uzbekistan, where the China-Central Asia gas pipeline intersects with NATO’s supply route for the Afghanistan War, are the new crossroads of empire. While Washington strategists dream about ending the war by turning the supply route into a Pentagon-designed “New Silk Road” in the region, Beijing has built their own “New Silk Road.” As Zbigniew Brzezinski feared, the vassals are now independent and the “barbarians” have come together, resulting in an economic conquering of Eurasia.

Turkey is the newest and perhaps largest key to this new political order. To put it bluntly, if China can steal Ankara from under NATO’s nose, they will have won the geopolitical Great Game. The “Pan-Turkic world” dreamed up as a NATO sword striking into China will have instead been flipped into a new silk road for the benefit of a China dominated Asia. Herein lies the failure of U.S. post-cold war global strategy, what the Pentagon calls an attempt at “Full Spectrum Dominance.” After spending the last two decades pouring money into militarizing Central Asia, the U.S. is now seeing their influence slip away as China rushes in with industrial development. And now Turkey, a NATO member since the
beginning of the Cold War, could go the same way.

The last 40 years of U.S. foreign policy have been devoted to gaining hegemony over the Middle East and Southwest Asia. U.S. leaders have made this an entirely military project, fighting multiple wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan and constructing hundreds upon hundreds of military bases and installations. But within a decade, China implemented an economic strategy and trumped the U.S. attempt. Political leaders across Eurasia are beginning to disregard the longstanding U.S. policy of gunboat diplomacy—using arms sales and military threats to control international economic and geopolitical policies.

The guns are still there, but the resources and industrial infrastructure is being developed and controlled by China. To go back to the beginning, here is the reasoning behind the CFR’s thesis that the U.S. needs a “new strategic partnership” with Turkey. Sitting in New York City and Washington, they see a Turkey that is having it both ways, forging an independent path using both the American military machine and the Chinese economic model. Now the question becomes whether the CFR and its associated think-tank warriors will tolerate this independence or if they want Ankara exclusively to themselves. For it is not as if Turkey is spurning U.S. military advances. In terms of NATO, Syria, and Missile Defense, Turkey has been a willing partner in American warmaking. However, it may be that this is not enough. A battle of grand strategy is taking place in the heartland of the world and the U.S. plans seem to be falling to pieces.

Whether the Chinese people are benefitting from these developments is a different question altogether and one that cannot be fully examined in this space. Corruption and scandals have plagued the upper levels of the Chinese Communist Party as of late and top leaders have been exposed as amassing giant fortunes. In 2011, Liu Zhijun, railroad minister for 8 years, was dramatically fired from his post, accused of netting $152 million in bribes. One wonders if China’s high-speed railroad boom will be a repeat of the Gilded Age, the famous phrase used in 1873 by Mark Twain to describe the veneer of conspicuous wealth associated with the U.S. westward expansion. However, perhaps there is also somewhere in China, someone willing to work for radical change and reform in the face of moneyed industrialization. Will the Communist Party allow them to speak? With such vast geopolitical shifts occurring, the moment is ripe for action on both sides of the equation. As fast as freight and oil crosses the continent, people and ideas can move faster. And while a move away from war and militarization in favor of industrialization should be applauded, there is no joy in seeing one form of imperialism replaced by another.

Evan Taylor is a student at American University and a graduate of Marlboro College. Part one of this article can be found in the March issue of Z Magazine.
Except during the sixties when the Filipino-American War of 1899-1902 was referred to as “the first Vietnam,” the death of 1.4 million Filipinos has been usually accounted for as either collateral damage or victims of insurrection against the imperial authority of the United States. The first Filipino scholar to make a thorough documentation of the carnage is the late Luzviminda Francisco in her contribution to *The Philippines: The End of An Illusion* (London, 1973).

This fact is not even mentioned in the tiny paragraph or so in most U.S. history textbooks. Stanley Karnow’s *In Our Image* (1989), the acclaimed history of this intervention, quotes the figure of 200,000 Filipinos killed in outright fighting. Among historians, only Howard Zinn and Gabriel Kolko have dwelt on the “genocidal” character of the catastrophe. Kolko, in his magisterial *Main Currents in Modern American History* (1976), reflects on the context of the mass murder: “Violence reached a crescendo against the Indian after the Civil War and found a yet bloodier manifestation during the protracted conquest of the Philippines from 1898 until well into the next decade, when anywhere from 200,000 to 600,000 Filipinos were killed in an orgy of racist slaughter that evoked much congratulation and approval....” Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States* (1980) cites 300,000 Filipinos killed in Batangas alone, while William Pomeroy’s *American Neo-Colonialism* (1970) cites 600,000 Filipinos dead in Luzon alone by 1902. The actual figure of 1.4 million covers the period from 1899 to 1905 when resistance by the Filipino revolutionary forces mutated from outright combat in battle to guerilla skirmishes; it doesn’t include the thousands of Moros (Filipino Muslims) killed in the first two decades of U.S. colonial domination.

The first Philippine Republic led by Emilio Aguinaldo, which had already waged a successful war against the Spanish colonizers, mounted a determined nationwide opposition against U.S. invading forces. It continued for two more decades after Aguinaldo’s capture in 1901. Several provinces resisted to the point where the U.S. had to employ scorched-earth tactics, and hamletting or “reconcentration” to quarantine the populace from the guerillas, resulting in widespread torture, disease, and mass starvation. In *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (2003), Prof. Gavan McCormack argues that the outright counterguerrilla operations launched by the U.S. against the Filipinos, an integral part of its violent pacification program, constitutes genocide. He refers to Jean Paul Sartre’s contention that as in Vietnam, “the only anti-guerilla strategy which will be effective is the destruction of the people, in other words, the civilians, women and children.” That is what happened in the Philippines in the first half of the bloody twentieth century.

As defined by the UN 1948 “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,” genocide means acts “committed with intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” It is clear that the U.S. colonial conquest of the Philippines deliberately sought to destroy the national sovereignty of the Filipinos. The intent of the U.S. perpetrators included the dissolution of the ethnic identity of the Filipinos manifest in the rhetoric, policies, and disciplinary regimes enunciated and executed by legislators, politicians, military personnel, and other apparatuses. The original
proponents of the UN document on genocide conceived of genocide as including acts or policies aimed at “preventing the preservation or development” of “racial, national, linguistic, religious, or political groups.” That would include “all forms of propaganda tending by their systematic and hateful character to provoke genocide, or tending to make it appear as a necessary, legitimate, or excusable act.” What the UN had in mind, namely, genocide as cultural or social death of targeted groups, was purged from the final document due to the political interests of the nation-states that then dominated the world body.

What was deleted in the original draft of the UN document are practices considered genocidal in their collective effect. Some of them were carried out in the Philippines by the United States from 1899 up to 1946 when the country was finally granted formal independence. As with the American Indians, U.S. colonization involved, among others, the “destruction of the specific character of a persecuted group by forced transfer of children, forced exile, prohibition of the use of the national language, destruction of books, documents, monuments, and objects of historical, artistic or religious value.” The goal of all colonialism is the cultural and social death of the conquered natives, in effect, genocide.

In a recent article, “Genocide and America” (New York Review of Books, March 14, 2002), Samantha Power observes that US officials “had genuine difficulty distinguishing the deliberate massacre of civilians from the casualties incurred in conventional conflict.” It is precisely the blurring of this distinction in colonial wars through racializing discourses and practices that proves how genocide cannot be fully grasped without analyzing the way the victimizer (the colonizing state power) categorizes the victims (target populations) in totalizing and naturalizing modes unique perhaps to the civilizational drives of modernity. Within the modern period, in particular, the messianic impulse to genocide springs from the imperative of capital accumulation—the imperative to reduce humans to commodified labor-power, to saleable goods/services. U.S. “primitive accumulation” began with the early colonies in New England and Virginia, and culminated in the 19th century with the conquest and annexation of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam, Hawaii, and the Philippines. With the historical background of the U.S. campaigns against the American Indians in particular, and the treatment of African slaves and Chicanos in general, there is a need for future scholars and researchers to concretize this idea of genocide (as byproduct of imperial expansion) by exemplary illustrations from the U.S. colonial adventure in the Philippines.

What happened in 1899-1903 is bound to be repeated with the increased U.S. intervention in the Philippines (declared “the second front” in the “war against terrorism”) unless U.S. citizens protest. Hundreds of U.S. Special Forces are at present deployed throughout the islands presumably against “terrorist” Muslim insurgents and the left-wing New People’s Army. Both groups have been fighting for basic democratic rights for more than five decades now, since the Philippines gained nominal independence from the U.S. in 1946. There is unfortunately abysmal ignorance about continued U.S. involvement in this former Asian colony—except, perhaps, during the 1986 “People Power” revolt against the Marcos “martial law” regime universally condemned for stark human-rights violations.
As attested to by UNESCO and human rights monitors, the situation has worsened since then with hundreds of killings of journalists, lawyers, women activists, and union organizers. The current crisis of the Arroyo regime, ridden with corruption and exposed for blatant vote rigging, is renewing alarm signals for Washington, foreboding a repeat of mass urban uprisings sure to threaten the comprador agents of global capital that abet the misery of millions—10 million of 80 Filipinos work as domestics and contract workers abroad—caused by World Bank, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund policies imposed on a neocolonial government.

The revolutionary upsurge in the Philippines against the Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986) stirred up dogmatic Cold War complacency. With the inauguration of a new stage in academic Cultural Studies in the nineties, the historical reality of U.S. imperialism (the genocide of Native Americans is replayed in the subjugation of the inhabitants of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Cuba) is finally being excavated and re-appraised. But this is, of course, a phenomenon brought about by a confluence of multifarious events, among them: the demise of the Soviet Union as a challenger to U.S. hegemony; the sublation of the Sixties in both Fukuyama’s “end of history” and the interminable “culture wars,” the Palestinian intifadas; the Zapatista revolt against NAFTA; the heralding of current anti-terrorism by the Gulf War; and the fabled “clash of civilizations.” Despite these changes, the old frames of intelligibility have not been modified or reconfigured to understand how nationalist revolutions in the colonized territories cannot be confused with the nationalist patriotism of the dominant or hegemonic metropoles, or how the mode of U.S. imperial rule in the twentieth century differs in form and content from those of the British or French in the nineteenth century.

Despite inroads of critical theory here and there, the received consensus of a progressive modernizing influence from the advanced industrial Western powers remains deeply entrenched here and in the Philippines. Even postcolonial and postmodern thinkers commit the mistake of censuring the decolonizing projects of the subalternized peoples because these projects (in the superior gaze of these thinkers) have been damaged, or are bound to become perverted into despotic postcolonial regimes, like those in Ghana, Algeria, Vietnam, the Philippines, and elsewhere. The only alternative, it seems, is to give assent to the process of globalization under the aegis of the World Bank/IMF/WTO, and hope for a kind of “benevolent assimilation.”

What remains to be carefully considered, above all, is the historical specificity or singularity of each of these projects of national liberation, their class composition, historical roots, programs, ideological tendencies, and political agendas within the context of colonial/imperial domination. It is not possible to pronounce summary judgments on the character and fate of nationalist movements in the peripheral formations without focusing on the complex manifold relations between colonizer and colonized, the dialectical interaction between their forces as well as others caught in the conflict. Otherwise, the result would be a
disingenuous ethical utopianism such as that found in U.S. postnationalist and postcolonialist discourse which, in the final analysis, functions as an apology for the ascendancy of the transnational corporate powers embedded in the nation-states of the North, and for the hegemonic rule of the only remaining superpower claiming to act in the name of freedom and democracy.

The case of the national-democratic struggle in the Philippines may be taken as an example of one historic singularity. Because of the historical specificity of the Philippines’ emergence as a dependent nation-state controlled by the United States in the twentieth century, nationalism as a mass movement has always been defined by events of anti-imperialist rebellion. U.S. conquest entailed long and sustained violent suppression of the Filipino revolutionary forces for decades.

The central founding “event” (as the philosopher Alain Badiou would define the term) is the 1896 revolution against Spain and its sequel, the Filipino-American war of 1899-1902, and the Moro resistance up to 1914 against U.S. colonization. Another political sequence of events is the Sakdal uprising in the thirties during the Commonwealth period followed by the Huk uprising in the forties and fifties—a sequence that is renewed in the First Quarter Storm of 1970 against the neocolonial state. While the feudal oligarchy and the comprador class under U.S. patronage utilized elements of the nationalist tradition formed in 1896-1898 as their ideological weapon for establishing moral-intellectual leadership, their attempts have never been successful. Propped by the Pentagon-supported military, the Arroyo administration today, for example, uses the U.S. slogan of democracy against terrorism and the fantasies of the neoliberal free market to legitimize its continued exploitation of workers, peasants, women and ethnic minorities.

Following a long and tested tradition of grassroots mobilization, Filipino nationalism has always remained centered on the peasantry’s demand for land closely tied to the popular-democratic demand for equality and genuine sovereignty.

For over a century now, U.S.-backed developmentalism and modernization have utterly failed in the Philippines. The resistance against globalized capital and its neoliberal extortions is spearheaded today by a national-democratic mass movement of various ideological persuasions. There is also a durable Marxist-led insurgency that seeks to articulate the “unfinished revolution” of 1896 in its demand for national independence against U.S. control and social justice for the majority of citizens (80 million) ten percent of whom are now migrant workers abroad. Meanwhile, the Muslim community in the southern part of the Philippines initiated its armed struggle for self-determination during the Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986) and continues today as a broadly based movement for autonomy, despite the Islamic ideology of its teacher-militants.
Recalling the genocidal U.S. campaigns cited above, BangsaMoro nationalism cannot forget its Muslim singularity which is universalized in the principles of equality, justice, and the right to self-determination. In the wake of past defeats of peasant revolts, the Filipino culture of nationalism constantly renews its anti-imperialist vocation by mobilizing new forces (women and church people in the sixties, and the indigenous or ethnic minorities in the seventies and eighties). It is organically embedded in emancipatory social and political movements whose origin evokes in part the Enlightenment narrative of sovereignty as mediated by third-world nationalist movements (Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, Mao) but whose sites of actualization are the local events of mass insurgency against continued U.S. hegemony.

The Philippines as an “imagined” and actually experienced ensemble of communities, or multiplicities in motion, remains in the process of being constructed primarily through modes of political and social resistance against corporate transnationalism (or globalization, in the trendy parlance) and its technologically mediated ideologies, fashioning thereby the appropriate cultural forms of dissent, resistance, and subversion worthy of its people’s history and its collective vision.

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Revised version of my piece that came out in countercurrents.org

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Sent: Thursday, July 4, 2013 11:37 AM
Subject: [New post] FREE ALL FILIPINA POLITICAL PRISONERS!

philcsc posted: "U.S. GLOBAL CAPITALISM’S HUMANITARIAN BLESSING : TORTURE OF WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE PHILIPPINES by E. SAN JUAN, Jr. Philippines Cultural Studies Center, USA Listed early this year by the UK ECONOMIST as an upcoming Asian Tiger with 6-7% G"
New post on THE PHILIPPINES MATRIX PROJECT

FREE ALL FILIPINA POLITICAL PRISONERS!
by philcsc

U.S. GLOBAL CAPITALISM’S HUMANITARIAN BLESSING : TORTURE OF WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

by E. SAN JUAN, Jr.
Philippines Cultural Studies Center, USA

Listed early this year by the UK ECONOMIST as an upcoming Asian Tiger with 6-7% GDP growth, the Philippines (with half of its hundred million citizens subsisting on less than $2 a day) is more renowned as a haven of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf than for its minerals or its bountiful supply of advertised Filipina brides and maids for the world market. A recent chic staging of Imelda Marcos’ fabled extravagance in New York City may cover up the nightmare of the Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986) for the elite or the gore of the 2009 Ampatuan massacre.

But the everyday reality of human misery and plotted killings cannot be eluded.

Dan Brown featured Manila as the "gate of hell" in his novel Inferno. Are we in for a super-Halloween treat? What often pops up between the cracks of commodified trivia are the detritus and stigmata of U.S. intervention in the ongoing civil war. Prominent are the thousands of unresolved extra-judicial killings, torture and abuse of political prisoners, warrantless detentions, enforced disappearances or kidnappings of dissenters by government security forces mainly funded by Washington. We are confronted with a "culture of impunity" that recalls the bloody rule of Somoza in Nicaragua, Pinochet in Chile, and the ruthless generals of Brazil and Argentina in the years when Ronald Reagan and Bush patronized the Cold War services of Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.

A classic colony of the United States from 1898 to 1946, the Philippines remains a semi-feudal neocolony ruled by holdover oligarchs led today by President Benigno Aquino III. Resisting the U.S. behemoth in 1899-1913 Filipino-American War, 1.4 million Filipinos perished in the name of U.S. "Manifest Destiny." Since then the Philippines has functioned as a strategic springboard for projecting U.S. power throughout the Asian-Pacific region. This
has become more crucial with the recent Asian “pivot” of U.S. military resources amid territorial disputes among China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines.

State terrorism thrives in the Philippines. Tutored and subsidized by Washington-Pentagon, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) are the two state agencies tasked with pursuing a U.S.-designed Counterinsurgency Plan (now named ”Oplan Bayanihan”) against the Communist-led New People's Army (NPA) guerillas and other revolutionary groups led by the National Democratic Front. They are aided by government-established "force multipliers" such as Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVO), police auxiliary units, and the notorious Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), whose members double as agents of local warlords. Scrapping peace-talks with the insurgents while astutely temporizing with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerillas (with U.S. and Malaysian mediators), Aquino's coercive surveillance and enforcement apparatus obeys the privatization-deregulation policy/ideology of finance capital, resulting in severe unemployment, rampant corruption, widespread poverty and brutal repression.

U.S. imperial hegemony manifests itself in the unlimited use of Philippine territory by U.S warships and military through the Visiting Forces Agreement and other treaties. This has allowed hundreds of U.S. Special Forces, CIA and clandestine agencies to operate in helping the AFP-PNP counterinsurgency plan--such as bombing and strafing communities of peasants and indigenous communities that are protesting mining by foreign corporations. From 2001 to 2010, the U.S. provided over $507 million military assistance (report by Jerry Esplanada, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 31 Oct 2011). Part of this grant was spent in civic action projects reminiscent of the U.S.-CIA schemes during the anti-Huk pacification campaign under Ramon Magsaysay's presidency.

An observer of recent elections in the Philippines, Australian law professor Gill Boehringer addresses the "culture of impunity" and provides a background for the dehumanization of the regime's critics: "The Philippines is following the typical neo-liberal program whereby inequality worsens, hunger and poverty continue at high rates, citizens are driven overseas so their family may have better income while unemployment, under-employment and child labor remain significant problems... In a country with a a semi-feudal political-economic system generating a huge gap between rich and the masa [masses], the former will fight in every way possible to maintain the structure of social, political and economic relations--including relations of coercion, violence and state-corporate terror--which have made the Philippines a paradise for the wealthy and purgatory for the rest" (Karapatan Interview, 30 June 2013).

To keep the country underdeveloped, secure for investments by predatory multinational corporations, and safe from strikes and political dissent, the U.S. supports a tiny group of political dynasties and their retinue whose victory in periodic "democratic" elections, such as
the one last May, guarantees the perpetuation of a society polarized into an impoverished majority and a privileged minority. Violence and a corrupt, inefficient court system underwrite the maintenance of a business-as-usual status quo for profit-making and legitimization of torture, kidnappings, assassinations, and other State crimes against citizens.

Since the 1986 fall of the Marcos dictatorship and its destruction of constitutional process and civil liberties, the volume and scope of human rights violations have jumped to staggering proportions. In 2011, for instance, Amnesty International stated: "More than 200 cases of enforced disappearances recorded in the last decade remained unresolved, as did at least 305 cases of extrajudicial execution (with some estimates ranging as high as 1,200). Almost no perpetrators of these crimes have been brought to justice" (Bulatlat, 20 May 2011).

The U.S. State Department's Country Report on Human Rights in the Philippines for 2011 also confirmed the persistence of "arbitrary, unlawful, and extrajudicial killings by national, provincial, and local government agents," including "prisoner/detainee torture and abuse by security forces, violence and harassment against leftist and human rights activists by local security forces, disappearances, warrantless arrests, lengthy pretrial detentions, overcrowded and inadequate prison conditions," and so on (U.S. State Dept., Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2011). The Human Rights Watch also affirmed that "hundreds of leftist politicians and political activists, journalists, and outspoken clergy have been killed or abducted since 2011" (World Report 2011).

The highly credible NGO human rights monitor Karapatan documented the human-rights record of Aquino from July 2010 to April 30, 2013: 142 victims of extrajudicial killings, 164 cases of frustrated killing, 16 victims of enforced disappearances (Press Statement, 29 June 2013). High profile cases of the killing of Father Pops Tenorio, Dutch volunteer Willem Geertman, botanist Leonardo Co, and environmentalists Gerry Ortega remain unresolved. Military officials like ex-General Jovito Palparan, Major Baliaga, and others linked by the courts to the kidnapping of Jonas Burgos, Sherley Cadapan and Karen Empeno remain at large. Karapatan chairperson Marie Hilao-Enriquez noted that the victims of State terror are "those who challenge inequality and oppression," those who were displaced by logging and transnational mining companies, and those branded as sympathizers of the NPA by the counterinsurgency program Oplan Bayanihan which, to date, has yielded 137 extra-judicial murders and thousands of detained suspects (Press Statements, 16 January 2013; 29 June 2013).

Women stand out as the prime victims of the Aquino regime and patriarchal authority in general. They are discriminated and inferiorized by virtue of gender, caste, class and ethnicity (on women as caste, see Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Outlaw Woman, 2002). In 2011, half of the 78 political detainees arrested by the Aquino regime were women. Since 2001,
153 women were targeted by extrajudicial assassins sponsored by the AFP-PNP. The Center for Women's Research observed that women political prisoners suffer twice the violence experienced by men; they "are more vulnerable to intimidation, sexual harassment and abuse, as well as torture." Former political prisoner Angie Ipong and the women members of the Morong 43 [health-care workers arrested by Arroyo's military in 2009] can attest to this" (Bulatlat 15 December 2011). The sixty-year old Ipong was arrested in March 2005 without warrant, blindfolded, and physically abused without relief for several days. After six years of obscene subjugation in different military stockades, Ipong was released by a regional trial court which dismissed the charges of double murder, double frustrated murder, and arson charges against her (see her personal testimony, A Red Rose for Andrea, 2012). Ipong's case epitomizes the systematic degradation of women of all ages in Aquino's tropical paradise of U.S. military ports, minerals, and versatile domestics.

As of December 31, 2012, there are 33 women political prisoners (of the total of 430) in the Philippines. Twelve are elderly, 45 are sick, and one is a minor. A significant number belong to ethnic or indigenous communities. They languish in jail branded as "enemies of the state," charged with rebellion and all kinds of fabricated criminal charges. They suffer all kinds of torture, in particular sexual abuse and rape, perpetrated by their military and police captors. Many of them are human rights defenders or activists involved in advocacy for national sovereignty and genuine economic development for the poor and marginalized. Because they work for the deprived sectors of peasants, workers, urban poor, youth, and indigenous communities, they are accused of being supporters of the communists (the NPA is labelled a "terrorist" organization like the Abu Sayyaf, following U.S. State Dept. doctrine) to justify their illegal arrest and continuing detention in horrible quarters.

This article reveals only a tip of the monstrous iceberg of cruel and inhumane punishment inflicted on women by the neocolonial order. Because of space limitations, I can only select the following cases and urge everyone committed to justice and human dignity to demand their immediate release and indemnification for unspeakable afflictions suffered over the years.

1. Vanessa de los Reyes, 27 years old, critically wounded in an encounter with the military in Davao Oriental in May 2011; subjected to heavy interrogation, now under hospital arrest due to a spinal surgery resulting in body paralysis.

2. Maricon Montajes, 21 years old, a film student at the University of the Philippines; a photographer documenting peasant life; arrested in Batangas in June 2010; wounded by military gunfire; interrogated and abused.

3. Charity Dino, 31 years old, a teacher and volunteer organizer of a peasant organization in Batangas. Detained for two weeks by the military, she was beaten up and subjected to electric shocks. She writes: "Worse, they undressed me and laughed at my nakedness and
humiliation The torture was a nightmare... I was deprived of due process and condemned despite the lack of evidence. Working with the farmers is now a criminal act. In jail, political prisoners are considered criminals. We are in detention cells with inmates charged with common crimes. This is part of the government's modus operandi to hide political prisoners so they may claim that there are no political prisoners in the country today" (New Brunswick Media Coop, Canada; <http://nbmediacoop.org/2013/05/16/cupe-members-send-letters/>)

4. Jovelyn Tawaay, 26 years old, accused of being a NPA guerilla; member of the Manobo tribe from Surigao Sur; charged with rebellion; forced to admit her guilt and convicted to suffer in jail for 12-14 years.

5. Lucy Canda, 46 years old, also from Surigao Sur and convicted for being an NPA member, sentenced to 12-14 years in jail.

6. Catherine Cacdac, 31 years old, Compostela Valley, Mindanao; abducted and kept for three months in military stockades; tortured for being an NPA member.

7. Virgie Ursalino Baao, 25 years old, a farmer from Tayabas, Quezon; abducted by the military, detained and severely tortured; accused of being an NPA member.

8. Gemma Carag, 39 years old, peasant organizer and educator from the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, Laguna; tortured for several days by the AFP and PNP in Sariaya, Quezon; accused of being an NPA member.

9. Rhea Pareja, age unknown, volunteer teacher for the Adult Literacy Program of her sorority Kappa Epsilon in Mulanay, Quezon; tortured severely by paramilitary forces connected to the AFP and PNP; charged as an NPA member.

10. Miguela Ocampo Peniero, 46 years old, farmer and community health worker; accused of being an NPA commander.

11. Evelyn Legaspo Cabela, 53 years old, member of an organization of urban poor, Kadamay; arrested in Bae, Laguna, by the PNP, subjected to abusive interrogation and physical abuse; accused of illegal possession of firearms.

12. Pastora Latagan Darang, 34 years old, member of Kadamay. Arrested and tortured by AFP-PNP and accused of murder, illegal possession of explosives.

13. Jenny Canlas Cabangon, 27 years old, from San Pedro, Laguna; abusively interrogated by the AFP; accused of murder and illegal possession of firearms and explosives. After 4 years in jail, the court dismissed one murder charge, leaving two more murder charges for which she remains at Camp Bagong Diwa.

14. Marissa Espidido Caluscusin, 27 years old, from Antipolo City; arrested by the AFP-PNP for being a suspected NPA member, together with researchers for the peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front.

15. Moreta Alegre, 65 years old, farmer, the oldest woman political prisoner, from Sagay, Negros Oriental; sentenced (with her husband and son) to life imprisonment for alleged murder of one of the bodyguards of a local landlord; protested landgrabbing.

For the situation of other women political prisoners, please consult the websites of KARAPATAN and SELDA. Everyday, warrantless arrests and torture of activists are
occurring as living conditions deteriorate. With the extra-judicial killing last March 4 of Cristina Morales Jose, a leader of Barug Katawhan (People Rise Up!), an organization of the survivors of the typhoon Pablo in Davao Oriental, it is probable that instead of crowding the filthy prisons and detention centers, the Aquino regime is resorting to outright extermination of protest leaders. If that is the case, it is urgent to appeal to international bodies.

The Cold War phenomenon of the "National Security State" seems to have morphed into the regime's not so subtle fascist maneuver. Practically kept a secret from the public is Joint Order No. 14-2012 of the Department of National Defense and Department of the Interior and Local Government which lists the names of wanted communist leaders, allocating four hundred sixty-six million eighty-thousand pesos (P466,088,000) as reward money for their capture. A bonanza for bureaucrats and officials of the AFP-PNP! Under this order, Estelita Tacalan, a 60-year old peasant organizer and rural health worker in Misamis Oriental was kidnapped by AFP-PNP agents on April 27. On May 7, the PNP announced that they have detained Tacalan for being listed in the Joint Order, and charged her with murder and arson (Karapatan Press Statement, 10 May 2013). Countless arrests and detentions have been made pursuant to this Order.

Women have proven to be the most vulnerable victim of such authoritarian measures, based on the history of torture and sexual abuse of political prisoners from the Marcos dictatorship to the Arroyo and Aquino regimes. In effect, the system has criminalized the radical anti-imperialist activism of women. As Catherine MacKinnon observed, these practices of sexual and reproductive abuse "occur not only in wartime but also on a daily basis in one form or another in every country in the world....widely permitted as the liberties of their perpetrators, understood as excesses of passion or spoils of victory, legally rationalized or officially winked at or formally condoned" ("Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace," On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993, New York, p. 87). In the Philippines, they are not legally rationalized or formally condoned by a regime that professes to abide by the UN Charter of Human Rights and all the other international covenants prohibiting the violations of human rights. But just the same, they are violated every day under the humanitarian flag of global free-market democracy, liberty and justice for all.--###

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philcsc | July 4, 2013 at 3:37 pm | Tags: Anti-imperialism, anticolonialism, capitalism, colonialism, feminism, human rights
Fackler reports: "Iron Fist is one of the latest signs that Japan's anxiety about China's insistent claims over disputed islands as well as North Korea's escalating nuclear threats are pushing Japanese leaders to shift further away from the nation's postwar pacifism."

NEW FILM, THE GHOSTS OF JEJU, Purchased by OMNI
Hello James,
Got your email from Bruce Gagnon. First, your copy of The Ghosts of Jeju will be in tomorrow's mail.
I visited the website and am very impressed with the work you folks are doing. I hope that you will have an opportunity to screen the film with as many as possible, especially the students. The real history of the U.S. is something that has never been taught.
Thanks for purchasing the film, and please do provide me with feedback on how it is received.
Regis Tremblay
209 River Rd
Woolwich, ME 04579
207-400-4362
"I refuse to live in a country like this, and I'm not leaving"
Michael Moore
REPORTING JEJU ISLAND IN THE NUCLEAR RESISTER 2012-2013.
Edited by Jack and Felice Cohen-Joppa. nukeresister@igc.org, 520-323-8697.


1. 24/7 construction met with 24/7 resistance on Jeju Island « The ...
   www.nukeresister.org/.../247-construction-met-with-247-resistance-on-je...
   Oct 29, 2012 – 24/7 construction met with 24/7 resistance on Jeju Island. Posted on October ... Construction of the controversial navy base on Jeju Island, South Korea, is accelerating. In the last week, ... Support the Nuclear Resister · Links ...

2. Inside & Out « The Nuclear Resister
   www.nukeresister.org/inside-out/
   Write a note of support to these imprisoned anti-nuclear and anti-war activists ... (Obstruction of business of military port contractors, Jeju, South Korea) ... road leading into the site of a naval base under construction on Jeju Island, South Korea.

3. Arrests, jailings, injuries and other repression on Jeju Island as ...
   www.nukeresister.org/.../arrests-jailings-injuries-and-other-repression-on...
   May 13, 2013 – Arrests, jailings, injuries and other repression on Jeju Island as resistance to the naval base under construction ... Jeju Prison, 161 Ora 2-dong, Jeju City, Jeju, Korea ... It is a nuclear war. .... Support the Nuclear Resister · Links ...

4. ~ from Jeju Prison, by Kim Young-Jae « The Nuclear Resister
   www.nukeresister.org/2013/05/17/from-jeju-prison-by-kim-young-jae/
   May 17, 2013 – from Jeju Prison, by Kim Young-Jae ... the site of a naval base under construction on Jeju Island, South Korea. ... Support the Nuclear Resister ...
5. *The Nuclear Resister*
www.nukeresister.org/

The Nuclear Resister networks the anti-nuclear and anti-war resistance .... leading into the site of a naval base under construction on Jeju Island, South Korea.

6. *Busted on Jeju Island « The Nuclear Resister*
www.nukeresister.org/2012/02/26/busted-on-jeju-island/

Busted on Jeju Island. Posted on February 26, 2012. from Bruce Gagnon, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. Ten international ...

7. *E-bulletin May 2013 « The Nuclear Resister*
www.nukeresister.org/2013/05/31/e-bulletin-may-2013/

May 31, 2013 – Arrests, jailings, injuries on Jeju Island ... anti-nuclear and anti-war activists on the Nuclear Resister blog, as well as prisoners' writings.

8. *More arrests on Jeju Island; support calls and emails needed « The *
www.nukeresister.org/.../more-arrests-on-jeju-island-support-calls-and-e...

Nov 8, 2011 – More arrests on Jeju Island; support calls and emails needed ... In other related news from South Korea, 40 Catholic priests in Seoul have begun a hunger strike in protest at what they call a ... Support the Nuclear Resister ...

SOUTHEAST ASIA: SINGAPORE

“Obama Lauds Ties with Singapore.” *ADG (4-3-13).*

“President Barack Obama on Tuesday thanked Singapore for its military cooperation as the U.S. prepares to rotate ships through the city state to boost its presence in the Asia-Pacific. Obama met with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, the third Asian leader to visit the White House this year. . . .

“Singapore is a close defense and economic partner of the U.S. . . . part of the Obama administration’s ‘pivot’ to the Asia-Pacific region as the U.S. disengages itself from a decade of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.” [Dick: After the more than two decades of stupid, greedy, unnecessary, genocidal depredations in the ME (from the first Iraq War and decade-long blockade to the present), can we hope our leaders will be any less harmful in the Asia-Pacific region?]

Here's a partial summary of the opening paragraphs: The recent increase of US military and economic expansion and pressure in the Pacific and East Asia (e.g., Afghan troops to Australia in the south, Jeju Island naval base expansion in the north) began with Hillary Clinton’s article “America's Pacific Century,” followed by the Pentagon’s new strategic identification of the Persian Gulf and the Pacific region as the US’s two priorities. US hegemony in the Pacific is as old as the 1850s and Sec’t. Of State Seward’s argument to prepare to replace Britain as the dominant power, continuing through the Spanish-American War when the US seized Guam and the Philippines and annexed Hawai’i to provide coal for US merchant and war ships. These foundations of US westward empire multiplied following WWII and the conquest of the Japanese empire, when the Pacific became an “American Lake,” and hundreds of bases were established in Japan, Korea, Australia, the Marshall Islands, and other Pacific nations, forming a bastion to “contain” communism and supply bases to fight the Korean and Vietnam wars.

What can we do to prevent catastrophic Asian and Pacific wars? First, all in the peace movement must become well-informed about the projection of US power in the Pacific and Asia and use every means at our disposal as teachers and citizens to educate others. Second, we must link with campaigns in solidarity with our peace, justice, and ecology partners across Asia and the Pacific. Contact: Working Group for Peace and Demilitarization in Asia and the Pacific (www.asiapacificinitiative.org). --Dick

Gerson calls the peace movement to resist US military intensification in the Pacific and East Asia. Here are a few more Gerson sources from Google July 1, 2013.


Lead conference organizer and AFSC staffer Joseph Gerson said, “We need to pivot the peace movement in the same way that the US is pivoting resources to ...


Sep 13, 2012 – The Obama administration's military "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific region is... the U.S. peace movement must begin challenging the pivot and its consequences.... Joseph Gerson directs the Peace and Economic Security Program ...

3. SAVE THE DATE - Challenging the Pivot | Facebook https://www.facebook.com/events/330969116945698/

Challenging the Pivot: The U.S., China, & Alternatives to Asia-Pacific ... Joseph Gerson, who has worked closely with Asian and Pacific peace movement for many ...Meet Jason and Joseph and other area peace activists at a special reception ...
4. [Countering Washington's Pivot and the New Asia-Pacific Arms Race](www.zcommunications.org) › ZMag › Joseph Gerson

To understand the Obama pivot, it may be helpful to know what and how ..... build a U.S. peace movement capable of challenging the pivot and U.S. Asia-Pacific ...Joseph Gerson is currently AFSC Disarmament Coordinator and Director of the ...

5. [Challenging the Pivot: The U.S., China ...](act-ma/pipermail/act-ma_act-ma.org/2012/005444.html)

Mar 13, 2012 – [act-ma] 3/13 'Challenging the Pivot: The U.S., China, & Alternatives to... Tower and Joseph Gerson > > Hosted by American Friends Service Committee, ...who has worked closely with Asian and Pacific peace movement for ...

6. [Challenging the Pivot - United for Justice with Peace](justicewithpeace.org/node/3433)

Mar 11, 2012 – Join Jason Tower and Joseph Gerson for a public forum about ... who has worked closely with Asian and Pacific peace movements for many ...


Challenging the Pivot: United States, China and Alternatives to Asia-Pacific ... JOSEPH GERSON co-sponsored by AFSC, Massachusetts Peace Action and UFJP. ...GERSON, who has worked closely with Asian and Pacific peace movements ...

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**Why the TransPacific Partnership is a Scary Big (Trade) Deal**  [The actual title is: “The Biggest Trade Deal You’ve Never Heard of.” --Dick]

A super-sized NAFTA, the TPP gives foreign corporations privileges that can override domestic laws on environmental health and citizens’ rights. Here’s why we shouldn’t let it pass without a fight.

by **Kristen Beifus.** YES! Summer 2013

NHK Broadcasting, Japan’s equivalent of the BBC, contacted me last month, wanting a
statement on the American public’s reaction to the TransPacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations.

A super-sized NAFTA, the TransPacific Partnership is a free-trade agreement whereby countries give foreign corporations rights and privileges to encourage investment and global business. The TPP was a major issue during Japan’s recent national elections, when thousands took to the streets in protest. It was hard for the Japanese journalist to believe me when I explained that there is little awareness of the TPP here in the United States, because our media has hardly covered the subject.

The corporate powers granted in the TPP can override domestic laws on environmental health and safety, and labor and citizens’ rights. Not only that, but multinationals can claim that those domestic laws hamper free trade and sue member countries for millions of dollars. The TPP is in many ways an attempt to revive the stalled expansion of the World Trade Organization.

At present, the TPP talks include 12 Pacific Rim countries: Canada, the United States, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and, most recently, Japan. Thailand and the Philippines have expressed interest, and other countries would be allowed to join the TPP at any time.

Although trade deals have potentially huge effects on the economy, environment, and food sovereignty of communities throughout these 12 countries, the TPP negotiations are being held in secret between unelected government officials and representatives from more than 600 of the world’s most powerful corporations. The United States has plenty of interests clamoring for the trade advantages of the TPP, while developing countries like Vietnam see the TPP as an opportunity for economic development.

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But the AFL-CIO, one of the few non-corporate and nongovernmental entities that have access to the text of the agreements, does not support the TPP in its current form because of implications for labor and human rights.

The talks are scheduled to finish by October of this year. Meanwhile, negotiators are lobbying Congress to grant “Fast Track” authority for the TPP. That would mean Congress couldn’t revise the agreements and could only vote “yes” or “no” to the United States joining the TPP.

Leaked documents show how extensive the reach of the TPP would be. It is shaping up as a corporate takeover of public policy that would impact safe food, sustainable jobs, clean water
and air, access to life-saving medicines, education, even our very democracy. After 20 years under NAFTA we know the likely impacts for people and the environment.

Can a "Dracula Strategy" Bring the TPP Into the Sunlight?

A highly secretive trade agreement aims to penalize countries that protect workers, consumers, and the environment. Luckily, the growing opposition goes beyond the usual trade justice suspects.

In March, Citizens Trade Campaign organized a letter to Congress signed by 400 U.S. organizations outlining expectations for public involvement and calling for an end to Fast Track. It was signed by, among others, the Sierra Club, Doctors Without Borders, Public Citizen, the National Family Farm Coalition, and state trade justice groups including my organization, the Washington Fair Trade Coalition. Polls show the majority of Americans believe that offshoring jobs and NAFTA-style free trade deals have hurt the U.S. economy, so it’s likely that Americans would be opposed to the TPP too—if they knew more about it.

The next round of TPP talks will be held May 15–24 in Lima, Peru. An International Day of Action Against the TPP is set for May 11, International Fair Trade Day. TPPx-Border, a network of groups in the United States, Canada, and Mexico resisting the TPP, is organizing actions throughout the month of May and beyond, including webinars with Peruvian activists, a TPP action camp, and local community events. Visit TPPxBorder.org to find out how the TPP will impact you—and then take to the streets!

Kristen Beifus wrote this article for Love and the Apocalypse, the Summer 2013 issue of YES! Magazine. Kristen is Executive Director of the Washington Fair Trade Coalition, which is dedicated to creating an equitable global trading system.
The West’s War Against African Development Continues
by DAN GLAZEBROOK,

Africa’s classic depiction in the mainstream media, as a giant basketcase full of endless war, famine and helpless children creates an illusion of a continent utterly dependent on Western handouts. In fact, the precise opposite is true – it is the West that is reliant on African handouts. These handouts come in many and varied forms. They include illicit flows of resources, the profits of which invariably find their way into the West’s banking sector via strings of tax havens (as thoroughly documented in Nicholas Shaxson’s *Poisoned Wells*).

Another is the mechanism of debt-extortion whereby banks lend money to military rulers (often helped to power by Western governments, such as the Congo’s former President Mobutu), who then keep the money for themselves (often in a private account with the lending bank), leaving the country paying exorbitant interest on an exponentially growing debt. Recent research by Leonce Ndikumana and James K Boyce found that up to 80 cents in every borrowed dollar fled the borrower nation in ‘capital flight’ within a year, never having been invested in the country at all; whilst meanwhile $20billion per year is drained from Africa in ‘debt servicing’ on these, essentially fraudulent, ‘loans’.

Another form of handout would be through the looting of minerals. Countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo are ravaged by armed militias who steal the country’s resources and sell them at sub-market prices to Western companies, with most of these militias run by neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi who are in turn sponsored by the West, as regularly highlighted in UN reports. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, are the pitifully low prices paid both for African raw materials and for the labour that mines, grows or picks them, which effectively amount to an African subsidy for Western living standards and corporate profits.

This is the role for which Africa has been ascribed by the masters of the Western capitalist economy: a supplier of cheap resources and cheap labour. And keeping this labour, and these resources, cheap depends primarily on one thing: ensuring that Africa remains underdeveloped and impoverished. If it were to become more prosperous, wages would rise; if it were to become more technologically developed, it would be able to add value to its raw materials through the manufacturing process before exporting them, forcing up the prices paid. Meanwhile, extracting stolen oil and minerals depends on keeping African states weak and divided. The Democratic Republic of Congo, for example – whose mines produce tens of billions of mineral resources each year – were only, in one recent financial year, able to collect a paltry $32million in tax revenues from mining due to the proxy war waged against that country by Western-backed militias.

The African Union, established in 2002 was a threat to all of this: a more integrated, more unified African continent would be harder to exploit. Of special concern to Western strategic planners are the financial and military aspects of African unification. On a financial level, plans for an African Central Bank (to issue a single African currency, the gold-backed dinar)
would greatly threaten the ability of the US, Britain and France to exploit the continent. Were all African trade to be conducted using the gold-backed dinar, this would mean Western countries would effectively have to pay in gold for African resources, rather than, as currently, paying in sterling, francs or dollars which can be printed virtually out of thin air. The other two proposed AU financial institutions – the African Investment Bank and the African Monetary Fund – could fatally undermine the ability of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund to manipulate the economic policies of African countries through their monopoly of finance. As Jean Paul Pougala has pointed out, the African Monetary Fund, with its planned startup capital of $42billion, “is expected to totally supplant the African activities of the International Monetary Fund which, with only US$25 billion, was able to bring an entire continent to its knees and make it swallow questionable privatisation like forcing African countries to move from public to private monopolies.”

Along with these potentially threatening financial developments come moves on the military front. The 2004 AU Summit in Sirte, Libya, agreed on a Common African Defence and Security Charter, including an article stipulating that “any attack against an African country is considered as an attack against the Continent as a whole”, mirroring the Charter of NATO itself. This was followed up in 2010 by the creation of an African Standby Force, with a mandate to uphold and implement the Charter. Clearly, if NATO was going to make any attempt to reverse African unity by force, time was running out.

Yet the creation of the African Standby Force represented not only a threat, but also an opportunity. Whilst there was certainly the possibility of the ASF becoming a genuine force for independence, resisting neocolonialism and defending Africa against imperialist aggression, there was also the possibility that, handled in the right way, and under a different leadership, the force could become the opposite – a proxy force for continued neocolonial subjugation under a Western chain of command. The stakes were – and are – clearly very high.

Meanwhile, the West had already been building up its own military preparations for Africa. Its economic decline, coupled with the rise of China, meant that it was increasingly unable to continue to rely on economic blackmail and financial manipulation alone in order to keep the continent subordinated and weak. Comprehending clearly that this meant it would be increasingly forced into military action to maintain its domination, a US white paper published in 2002 by the African Oil Policy Initiative Group recommended “A new and vigorous focus on US military cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa, to include design of a sub-unified command structure which could produce significant dividends in the protection of US investments”. This structure came into existence in 2008, under the name of AFRICOM. The costs – economic, military and political – of direct intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, however – with the costs of the Iraq war alone estimated at over three trillion dollars - meant that AFRICOM was supposed to primarily rely on local troops to do the fighting and dying. AFRICOM was to be the body which coordinated the subordination of African armies under a Western chain of command; which turned, in other words, African armies into Western proxies.
The biggest obstacle to this plan was the African Union itself, which categorically rejected any US military presence on African soil in 2008 – forcing AFRICOM to house its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, a humiliating about turn after President Bush had already publicly announced his intention to set up the HQ in Africa itself. Worse was to come in 2009, when Colonel Gaddafi – the continent’s staunchest advocate of anti-imperialist policies – was elected Chairman of the AU. Under his leadership, Libya had already become the biggest financial donor to the African Union, and he was now proposing a fast-track process of African integration, including a single African army, currency and passport.

His fate is clearly now a matter of public record. After mounting an invasion of his country based on a pack of lies worse than those told about Iraq, NATO reduced Libya to a devastated failed state and facilitated its leader’s torture and execution, thus taking out their number one opponent. For a time, it appeared as though the African Union had been tamed. Three of its members – Nigeria, Gabon and South Africa – had voted in favour of military intervention at the UN Security Council, and its new chairman – Jean Ping – was quick to recognize the new Libyan government imposed by NATO, and to downplay and denigrate his predecessor’s achievements. Indeed, he even forbade the African Union assembly from observing a minute’s silence for Gaddafi after his murder.

However, this did not last. The South Africans, in particular, quickly came to regret their support for the intervention, with both President Zuma and Thabo Mbeki making searing criticisms of NATO in the months that followed. Zuma argued – correctly – that NATO had acted illegally by blocking the ceasefire and negotiations that had been called for by the UN resolution, had been brokered by the AU, and had been agreed to by Gaddafi. Mbeki went much further and argued that the UN Security Council, by ignoring the AU’s proposals, were treating “the peoples of Africa with absolute contempt” and that “the Western powers have enhanced their appetite to intervene on our Continent, including through armed force, to ensure the protection of their interests, regardless of our views as Africans”. A senior diplomat in the South African Foreign Ministry’s Department of International Relations said that “most SADC [Southern African Development Community] states, particularly South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, Tanzania, Namibia and Zambia which played a key role in the Southern African liberation struggle, were not happy with the way Jean Ping handled the Libyan bombing by NATO jets”. In July 2012, Ping was forced out and replaced – with the support of 37 African states – by Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma: former South African Foreign Minister, Thabo Mbeki’s “right hand woman” – and clearly not a member of Ping’s capitulationist camp. The African Union was once again under the control of forces committed to genuine independence.

However, Gaddafi’s execution had not only taken out a powerful member of the African Union, but also the lynchpin of regional security in the Sahel – Sahara region. Using a careful mixture of force, ideological challenge and negotiation, Gaddafi’s Libya was at the head of a transnational security system that had prevented Salafist militias gaining a foothold, as recognized by US Ambassador Christopher Stevens in 2008: “The Government of Libya has aggressively pursued operations to disrupt foreign fighter flows, including more stringent
monitoring of air/land ports of entry, and blunt the ideological appeal of radical Islam...Libya cooperates with neighbouring states in the Sahara and Sahel region to stem foreign fighter flows and travel of transnational terrorists. Muammar Gaddafi recently brokered a widely-publicised agreement with Tuareg tribal leaders from Libya, Chad, Niger, Mali and Algeria in which they would abandon separatist aspirations and smuggling (of weapons and transnational extremists) in exchange for development assistance and financial support...our assessment is that the flow of foreign fighters from Libya to Iraq and the reverse flow of veterans to Libya has diminished due to the Government of Libya’s cooperation with other states...”

MORE  http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/02/15/the-wests-war-against-african-development-continues/  [I read this article in Z Magazine (April 2013) entitled The African Union, Algeria and Mali. –Dick]