“The question, patently, is not whether we are willing to socialize but what. ‘The socialization of death,’ says Michael Harrington, ‘is, thus far at least, much more generally popular than the socialization of life.’ The military have become ardent and dangerous competitors for power in American society.” J. William Fulbright, *The Crippled Giant* (1972, 253).
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US EMPIRE MYTHS OUR TROOPS DIE FOR By Dick Bennett

Myths of US Innocence and Freedom

In its editorial of March 23, 2011, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* repeated the old imperial lie: “But of course America doesn’t have to do anything—right, wrong, or in-between—to be the target of protest. Our very existence is a standing provocation to the tyrannies of the world. It’s been that way since we first proclaimed that all men are created equal. . . .So no one should be surprised to hear any protesters-for-hire in the Mid-east start chanting ‘Death to America!’ . . . Maybe chanting ‘Death to America!’ is just an old habit. By now it may be custom—a tradition!—when any two or three gather together in an Islamic country.”

Little of this is true. And its sweeping anti-Islamic message is a call to kill. Who cried “Death to America!” in the nineteenth century? Not the Muslims or anybody except the British in 1812 and the Filipinos at the end of the century. Our Statue of Liberty welcomed the oppressed of the world, and they came, and still wish to come, including Muslims. Not our “very existence” has inspired enemies, but our many invasions and interventions, the tens of thousands of innocent people we have killed. Before us the cry was “Death to the Romans.” And then “Death to the British!” “Death to all the imperial tyrannies.” So “Death to the USA” from Hawaiians, Iranians, Guatemalans, El Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, Vietnamese, Afghans, Iraqis and all the many victims of US aggression.

Neither is the second myth true. Our youth continue to join the military and die in combat, our leaders continue to foment wars, and our wars continue hardly without cessation for a hundred years partly because our troops are said to be defending our freedom. That’s a cruel falsehood to the dead and wounded soldiers and their grieving families, since the freedoms have been diminishing in direct correlation to the increase and continuation of our wars. You remember the Cold War and McCarthyism, including the 1950 Internal Security Act, the 1951 Supreme Court *Dennis* decision, the 1964 Communist Control Act. But you might have forgotten President Reagan’s assaults on our freedoms—McCarthyism’s extension: the gag rule for public officials, Executive Order 12356 increasing the secrecy classification, increased use of the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and the McCarran-Walter Act, to mention only the most infamous. Nor perhaps do you recall President Clinton’s 1996 counterterrorism bill: a special court for secret evidence to deport noncitizens accused of association with groups listed as “terrorist”; Executive Branch power to criminalize fundraising for lawful activities conducted by organizations labeled “terrorist”; repealing the Edwards amendment, which prohibited the FBI from opening investigations based on First Amendment activities; resurrecting the discredited ideological visa denial provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act to
bar aliens based on their associations rather than their acts; and especially: creating a new federal crime of terrorism, carving further exceptions in the time-honored posse comitatus law barring the U.S. military from civilian law enforcement, expanding use of pre-trial detention, and loosening the rules governing federal wiretaps.

I have not mentioned the intrusions into library privacy, and I assume you do remember the Patriot Act and other intensifications of all of these restrictions on our freedom that occurred under Bush II’s administration post-9/11 and continue under Obama.

So long as the myths continue of enemies who hate us for our freedom, democracy, and affluence (‘our very existence’?), US imperial interventions will continue, our troops will futilely die, and our treasure wasted. But we are not helpless; we are not powerless. We can contribute to an end of US wars of conquest and of domestic repression (McCarthyism abroad and at home) by refuting these myths. Knowledge, reason, evidence can produce changes for the better. Let us therefore not be silent.

At end see a brief list of some of the scholarship exposing the lies compiled in 2012.

AlterNet / By Nicolas J.S. Davies

The Price of America Having the Greatest Military in the World? It's Destroying the Country
A giant military doesn't make the American people safer.

October 21, 2013 |

The idea of U.S. "national security" seems inextricably entangled with the notion of "military supremacy." Over the past 15 years, this has served to rationalize the most expensive unilateral military build-up in history. But there is no evidence that having the most expensive and destructive military forces makes Americans safer than people in other countries, nor that restoring a more balanced military posture would leave us vulnerable to dangers we are currently protected from. Many countries with smaller military forces do a better job of protecting their people by avoiding the hostility that is generated by U.S. imperialism, aggression and other war crimes.

Now, successful diplomacy over Syria's chemical weapons has demonstrated that diplomacy within the framework of international law can be a more effective way of dealing with problems than the illegal threat or use of military force. Our government claims that its threat of force led to
the success of diplomacy in Syria, but that's not really what happened. It was only when the sleeping giant of American democracy awoke from its long slumber and pried the cruise missiles from our leaders' trigger fingers that they grudgingly accepted "diplomacy as a last resort." For once in a very long while, our political system worked the way it's supposed to: the public made its views clear to our representatives in Congress, and they listened. We saved our leaders from the consequences of their own criminality, and their efforts to sell a propaganda narrative that turns that on its head is a sad reflection on their disdain for democracy and the rule of law.

For most of our history, Americans never dreamt of global military supremacy. At the turn of the 20th century, even as the U.S. waged a genocidal war that probably killed a million Filipinos, American diplomats played key roles in the Hague Peace Conferences and the establishment of international courts, eager to adapt American concepts of democracy and justice to the international arena to develop alternatives to war and militarism.

In response to the horrors of the First World War, an international social movement demanded the abolition of war. In 1928, the U.S. government responded by negotiating the Kellogg-Briand Pact, named for U.S. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg, in which all major powers renounced "war as an instrument of national policy." The treaty failed to prevent the Second World War, but it provided the legal basis for the convictions of German leaders at Nuremberg for the crime of aggression. And it is still in force, supported by subsequent treaties like the UN Charter and conventions against genocide, torture and other war crimes, under which senior U.S. officials must also eventually face justice.

The allied defeat of Germany and Japan in the Second World War was not the result of American military supremacy, but of an alliance across ideological lines with imperial Britain and the communist Soviet Union, based on mutual trust, vigorous diplomacy and the recognition of a common existential threat. Most Americans believed at the time that the war would lead to a renewed international commitment to peace and disarmament, not to an American bid for military supremacy.

American, British and Soviet leaders agreed that their common interests required what Roosevelt called "a permanent structure of peace" after the war, through the United Nations and continued great power diplomacy. The prohibition against the threat or use of force is a key provision of the
UN Charter. But Roosevelt's death deprived America of his vision and personal diplomatic skills just as the complexities of the post-war world began to rear their head.

Truman mistrusted the Soviets and never shared Roosevelt's commitment to work with them in a spirit of mutual respect. He quickly fell under the influence of hawkish advisers like his Chief of Staff Admiral Leahy, Ambassador Harriman and Navy Secretary Forrestal, and he condemned the Russians harshly at every turn during negotiations on the contours of the post-war world. Truman embraced Churchill's self-fulfilling declaration of an "iron curtain" across Europe and his dark view of America's wartime ally as a potential aggressor in the mold of Nazi Germany.

What emboldened the former Senator from Missouri to squander the fruits of Roosevelt's astute diplomacy? In great part, it was "the bomb." The U.S. monopoly on atomic weapons in the late 1940s gave rise to a newly aggressive posture in U.S. foreign policy, including desperate calls to destroy the Soviet Union in a massive nuclear holocaust before it could develop its own nuclear deterrent.

Fortunately for all of us, wiser heads prevailed and a nuclear war was avoided. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and wartime American and British military leaders warned that attacking the U.S.S.R. would unleash an even more terrible war than the one the world had just survived. U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Eisenhower made an early venture into politics with a speech in St. Louis, saying, "I decry loose and sometimes gloating talk about the high degree of security implicit in a weapon that might destroy millions overnight… Those who measure security solely in terms of offensive capacity distort its meaning and mislead those who pay them heed."

Many Americans accepted their government's claims that bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki had shortened the war with Japan and saved American lives, but the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that, "Japan would have surrendered, even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated." In fact, Japan's vital supply lines were cut and it was already suing for peace. The main sticking point was the continued rule of Emperor Hirohito, which the allies eventually conceded in any case. American leaders from former President Hoover to future President Eisenhower to military intelligence chief General Carter Clarke all opposed using the bomb as barbaric and unnecessary.
But America's monopoly on nuclear weapons transformed U.S. foreign policy after the war. Even though our leaders have never found any practical way to realize the mirage of omnipotence conjured up by these weapons, they gave them a false sense of ultimate power in a fluid and uncertain post-war world. Cooperation with the Soviets was no longer imperative, because, in the last resort, we had the bomb and they did not.

The U.S. and U.K. could not prevent most of the countries of Eastern Europe from falling into the Soviet political and economic orbit once they were liberated by the Red Army and communist resistance forces, any more than the Russians could bring their communist allies to power in Western-occupied France, Italy or Greece. But the U.S. nuclear monopoly encouraged Truman to take a hard line. The Truman Doctrine committed the U.S. to militarily oppose Soviet influence across the globe in a long ideological struggle.

As the Soviets developed their own nuclear arsenal, the U.S. invested trillions of dollars and vast human resources in an unrestrained technological arms race. American warplanes and tanks generally proved superior to Soviet ones in proxy wars around the world, but this was irrelevant to the outcome of guerrilla wars, where the AK-47 became the weapon of choice and a symbol of popular resistance to Western imperialism. Meanwhile Germany and Japan, excluded and freed from the tyranny of military production, invested all their resources in civilian technology and soon produced better cars and home electronics than either of the "superpowers."

The almost unbelievable record of American militarism since 1945 is that, despite the most sustained and expensive military build-up in the history of the world and the tragic annihilation of millions of people, the United States has not won a single major war. After overreaching in Korea, bringing China into the war and devastating North and South Korea, it was forced to settle for a ceasefire on the original border. At least 3 million Vietnamese and 57,000 Americans paid with their lives for the folly of the American War in Vietnam. Proxy and covert wars in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and other parts of South-East Asia have been just as bloody but no more successful. America's only real military successes have been limited campaigns to restore friendly regimes in three small strategic outposts: Grenada; Panama; and Kuwait.

Surveying the ruins of U.S. policy at the end of the American War in Vietnam, Richard Barnet put
his finger on the irony of America's unique place in world history. He wrote, "at the very moment the number one nation has perfected the science of killing, it has become an impractical instrument of political domination."

But the lessons of Vietnam were gradually eroded by a revival of U.S. militarism. George Bush Senior played a critical role as Director of the CIA (1976-7) and the Council on Foreign Relations (1977-9) and then as Vice President and President. After covert wars in Angola, Afghanistan and Central America, and invasions of Grenada and Panama, Bush refused Iraq's offers to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait in 1991 and instead ordered the massacre of at least 25,000 Iraqi soldiers and civilians. Bush rejoiced, "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all!"

The fall of the U.S.S.R. was a critical factor in U.S. military expansion in the Middle East. As Pentagon adviser Michael Mandelbaum said in 1991, "For the first time in 40 years we can conduct military operations in the Middle East without worrying about triggering World War III." The "peace dividend" Americans expected at the end of the Cold War was trumped by a "power dividend," as policy-makers exploited the fall of the Soviet Union to project U.S. military power around the world. New interventionist doctrines of "reassurance", "humanitarian intervention", "responsibility to protect", "information warfare" and "preemption" have served as political cover for violating the UN Charter's prohibition on the threat or use of force, culminating in the travesty of Barack Obama's speech justifying war as he accepted the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize.

Since Vietnam, we have spent at least another $17 trillion on war and preparations for war - our entire national debt - and killed millions more of our fellow human beings. Watching General Giap's funeral in Hanoi as I write this today, I have to ask, "What have we learned?" Our generals have learned how to wage war in other countries with fewer American casualties by using disproportionate violence that kills more civilians than combatants. This has made war less painful for Americans, but it only underlines its futility and barbarism. No American general of this generation will be buried with the outpouring of genuine public gratitude and grief we just saw in Hanoi.

Now we have spent 12 years at war in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Somalia (along with covert operations across the entire globe, from Sweden to the Philippines to Colombia). We have brought death, injury, devastation and chaos to hundreds of
millions more people, with no end in sight as the "Long War" keeps spreading from country to country. Nowhere have our leaders achieved their original stated intentions to reduce terrorism, prevent weapons proliferation or establish democracy. Their increasingly desperate rationalizations for a murderous, out-of-control policy, repeated ad nauseam by a craven corporate propaganda system, can barely disguise their humiliation.

Like Americans in the late 1940s who were desperate to destroy the U.S.S.R. in a "preemptive" nuclear war, some Americans today may still not understand why our military supremacy cannot bring us political power over enemies with fewer resources and inferior weapons. But, as Eisenhower and other American war leaders understood only too well, the use of force is a blunt and brutal instrument, and more powerful weapons are only more powerful, not magical. The use of force is always destructive, not constructive, and being killed or maimed by shrapnel and high explosives is no cleaner or kinder because missiles are more expensive or more sophisticated. Political power is something quite different, requiring popular support and legitimacy and policies that actually solve problems.

So military supremacy is not a trump card to achieve political objectives; the use of force is inherently destructive; and war nearly always causes more problems than it solves. Killing people to save them from an oppressive government is an absurdity, and "regime change" is generally a euphemism for "regime destruction," with no ability to ensure that what comes after will be better, especially once the violence and chaos of war are added to the problems that led to it in the first place.

Norwegian General Robert Mood led the UN monitors sent to Syria to oversee the failed ceasefire in 2012. A year later, amid calls for Western military intervention, he reflected, "It is fairly easy to use the military tool, because, when you launch the military tool in classical interventions, something will happen and there will be results. The problem is that the results are almost all the time different than the political results you were aiming for when you decided to launch it. So the other position, arguing that it is not the role of the international community, neither coalitions of the willing nor the UN Security Council for that matter, to change governments inside a country, is also a position that should be respected…"

Threatening the use of force while hoping not to have to use it may seem like a less painful way
for our leaders to impose their will on other countries, but in practice this doesn't work very well either. It forces both sides into positions from which neither can afford to back down, putting the credibility of our military supremacy on the line over every crisis around the world. This has turned manufactured disputes over non-existent weapons into a choice between war and political humiliation for American leaders, as we saw with Iraq and, incredibly, are now going through all over again with Iran. There is great wisdom in the UN Charter's prohibition on the threat as well as on the use of force, because the one leads so predictably to the other.

Despite nearly bankrupting our country, military supremacy remains an expensive national ego-trip in search of a constructive purpose. Countries that are not cursed with military supremacy have to settle their differences by other means, notably by diplomacy within the rule of international law. As we have found out over Syria, this is not by any means a worse option, and it offers us a way forward to life after militarism.

The victory of democracy in America's debate over Syria is a small but significant step in the right direction. Organizing and public outrage transformed formerly passive public opposition to war and militarism into effective action to prevent U.S. aggression. Now we must tap into the same combination of public sentiment and effective political organizing to actually bring peace to Syria, to restore civilized relations with Iran and to finally turn the tide on the largest, most wasteful and dangerous unilateral military build-up in the history of the world. This could be an important turning point, but that will be up to us.

Nicolas J. S. Davies is author of Blood On Our Hands: The American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq. He wrote the chapter on "Obama At War" for the just released book, Grading the 44th President: A Report Card on Barack Obama's First Term as a Progressive Lea
According to a global survey of 66,000 people conducted across 68 countries by the Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research (WINMR) and Gallup International at the end of 2013, Earth’s people see the United States as the most significant threat to peace on the planet. The U.S. was voted top threat by a wide margin, receiving 24 percent of the vote. Pakistan was a distant second with 8 percent, followed by China (6 percent). Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, and North Korea tied for 4th place at 4 percent. Among U.S.-allied countries, Greece and Turkey (45 percent each), Pakistan (44 percent) and Mexico (about 37 percent) believed the U.S. is the greatest threat to peace.

This poll was met with deafening silence across the dominant U.S. corporate and so-called mainstream media. It did not receive a single mention in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, the Chicago Tribune, or the Los Angeles Times. It was not considered worthy of reportage on the nightly news at NBC, CBS, ABC, or PBS. It barely registered in the U.S. mass media, receiving at most short and dismissive treatment on the margins of serious news and commentary.

Typical of that dismissal was an International Business Times headline that questioned the validity and/or rationality of the finding. “In Gallup Poll,” the headline read, “Leading Threat to World Peace is…America?” The implication was clear in the IBR article that the world’s opinion was absurd (IBT, January 2, 2014)

Editors at the right-wing New York Post responded with literally world-weary disgust at those who just “don’t like the U.S.,” even after Barack Obama became president. Noting a 2006 Gallup poll in which world citizens said that “Washington [w]as a bigger threat to world peace than Teheran” (a self-evidently ridiculous belief as far as the Post was concerned), those editors commented that, “In 2008, President Obama would…campaign about how Bush’s policies had harmed America’s standing in the world, at one point suggesting that attitudes in the Muslim world would be transformed simply by his election.

“It hasn’t turned out that way, as these Gallup numbers suggest. Maybe we’d do better to accept the real message of all these global surveys: There are many people in this world who don’t like the U.S. and will regard us as a threat no matter who’s president” (New York Post, January 5, 2014).
For any serious and honest observer of U.S. foreign policy and the international scene today and for many decades, the United States’ longstanding and persistent (“even” under Obama) status as the leading menace to peace in the world’s eyes should be anything but surprising. The U.S., after all, accounts for nearly half the world’s military spending. It maintains more than 1,000 military installations across more than 100 “sovereign” nations spread across every continent.

The Obama administration deploys Special Operations forces in 75 to 100 countries (up from 60 at the end of the George W. Bush administration) and conducts regular lethal drone attacks against officially designated terrorists (and a much larger number of innocent civilians) in the Middle East, Southwest Asia and Africa. It maintains a massive global surveillance program dedicated to the elimination of privacy on Earth—a program that has spied even on the personal cell phones of European heads of state, including Germany’s Angela Merkel. As *Der Spiegel*, Germany’s leading newspaper noted in 1997: “Never before in modern history has a country dominated the earth as totally as the United States does today…. America is now the Schwarzenegger of international politics: showing off muscles, obtrusive, intimidating…. The Americans, in the absence of limits put to them by anybody or anything, act as if they own a kind of blank check.”

An “Aerial Traffic Jam” Above a “One-Sided Slaughter” (Iraq, 1991)

Perhaps *Der Spiegel*’s editors were thinking of U.S. conduct in Iraq when they penned those lines. They may have reflected on the “Highway of Death,” when U.S. forces massacred tens of thousands of surrendered Iraqi troops retreating from Kuwait on February 26 and 27, 1991. The Lebanese-American journalist Joyce Chediac testified that: “U.S. planes trapped the long convoys by disabling vehicles in the front, and at the rear, and then pounded the resulting
traffic jams for hours. ‘It was like shooting fish in a barrel,’ said one U.S. pilot. On the sixty miles of coastal highway, Iraqi military units sit in gruesome repose, scorched skeletons of vehicles and men alike, black and awful under the sun...for 60 miles every vehicle was strafed or bombed, every windshield is shattered, every tank is burned, every truck is riddled with shell fragments. No survivors are known or likely.... ‘Even in Vietnam I didn’t see anything like this. It’s pathetic,’ said Major Bob Nugent, an Army intelligence officer.... U.S. pilots took whatever bombs happened to be close to the flight deck, from cluster bombs to 500 pound bombs.... U.S. forces continued to drop bombs on the convoys until all humans were killed. So many jets swarmed over the inland road that it created an aerial traffic jam, and combat air controllers feared midair collisions.... The victims were not offering resistance...it was simply a one-sided massacre of tens of thousands of people who had no ability to fight back or defend." (Ramsey Clark et al., War Crimes: A Report on United States War Crimes Against Iraq to the Commission of Inquiry for the International War Crimes Tribunal, testimony of Joyce Chediac).

Less than a year after his forces inflicted this unthinkable carnage, U.S. President George H.W. Bush proclaimed that, “A world once divided into two armed camps now recognizes one sole and pre-eminent power, the United States of America. And they regard this with no dread. For the world trusts us with power, and the world is right. They trust us to be fair and restrained. They trust us to be on the side of decency. They trust us to do what’s right” (Blum, Rogue State).

No Cruelty Too Great

The mass-murderous “turkey-shoot” conducted by the forces of “decency” in 1991 was consistent with the United States’ long record of savage imperial violence. That history stretches from the bloody extermination of the nation’s original inhabitants (the long Native American holocaust of 1607-1890) through the racist butchering of tens of thousands of Filipinos between 1899 and 1902 (when U.S. soldiers engaged in the slaughter wrote home to friends and relatives about how they had vowed to fight “until the niggers are killed off like Indians”), the arch-criminal and unnecessary atom-bombing of Japan, and the U.S. “crucifixion of Southeast Asia” (Noam Chomsky’s term for a U.S. policy that liquidated more than 4 million Indochinese—regularly labeled “gooks” and other racist names by U.S. troops —between 1962 and 1975).

Perhaps Der Spiegel’s editors were also reflecting on economic sanctions and U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright. Five years after “the Highway of Death,” Albright told CBS News’ Leslie Stahl that the death of half a million Iraqi children due to U.S.-imposed economic sanctions was a “price...worth paying” for the advancement of inherently noble U.S. goals. “The United States,” Secretary Albright explained three years later, “is good. We try to do our best everywhere.”
This, too, was nothing new. As Chomsky noted in 1992, reflecting on U.S. efforts to maximize suffering in Vietnam by blocking economic and humanitarian assistance to the nation it had devastated after the Vietnam War ended: “No degree of cruelty is too great for Washington sadists. The educated classes know enough to look the other way” (Noam Chomsky, *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*, 1992).

### Sons and Daughters

The imperial sadism has continued into the current millennium. The world’s “Schwarzenegger” since September 11, 2001 has gone off on a rampage, killing, maiming, and displacing millions across the Muslim World as part of its Global War on/of Terror (GWOT).

In a foreign policy speech he gave on the eve of announcing his candidacy for the U.S. presidency in the fall of 2006, then-U.S. Senator Barack Obama had the audacity to say the following in support of his claim that U.S. citizens supported “victory” in Iraq: “The American people have been extraordinarily resolved. They have seen their sons and daughters killed or wounded in the streets of Fallujah” (Barack Obama, “A Way Forward in Iraq,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, November 20, 2006).

It was a spine-chilling selection of locales. Uncle Sam’s 21st century cruelty peaked, perhaps, in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004. The ill-fated city was the site of colossal U.S. war atrocities, crimes including the indiscriminate murder of thousands of civilians, the targeting even of ambulances and hospitals, and the practical leveling of an entire city by the U.S. military in April and November.

By one account: “The U.S. launched two bursts of ferocious assault on the city, in April and November of 2004… [using] devastating firepower from a distance which minimizes U.S.
casualties. In April….military commanders claimed to have precisely targeted…insurgent forces, yet the local hospitals reported that many or most of the casualties were civilians, often women, children, and the elderly…[reflecting an] intention to kill civilians generally…. In November…[U.S.] aerial assault destroyed the only hospital in insurgent territory to ensure that this time no one would be able to document civilian casualties. U.S. forces then went through the city, virtually destroying it. Afterwards, Fallujah looked like the city of Grozny in Chechnya after Putin’s Russian troops had razed it to the ground" (Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* New York, 2005).

U.S. deployment of radioactive ordnance (depleted uranium) in Fallujah also helped create a subsequent epidemic of infant mortality, birth defects, leukemia, and cancer there. But, of course, Fallujah was just one especially graphic episode in a broader arch-criminal invasion that led to the premature deaths of at least one million Iraqi civilians and left Iraq “a disaster zone on a catastrophic scale hard to match in recent memory” (Tom Engelhardt, Tom Dispatch.com, January 17, 2008). According to the respected journalist Nir Rosen in December 2007, “Iraq has been killed…the American occupation has been more disastrous than that of the Mongols who sacked Baghdad in the thirteenth century” (*Current History*, December 2007).

“So You Stuff ’Em in Guantanamo”

Lawrence Wilkerson is a former combat officer and onetime chief of staff to George W. Bush’s Secretary of States Colin Powell. Speaking to investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill, he described a typical Special Forces operation during the occupation of Iraq: “You go in and you get some intelligence…and you say ‘Oh, this is really good actionable intelligence. Here’s ‘Operation Blue Thunder. Go do it.’ And they kill 27, 30, 40 people, whatever, and they capture seven or eight. Then you find out that the intelligence was bad and you killed a bunch of innocent people and you have a bunch of innocent people on your hands, so you stuff ’em in Guantanamo. No one ever knows anything about that….you say, ‘chalk that one up to experience,’ and you go on to the next operation” (J. Scahill, *Dirty Wars: The World is a Battlefield*).

Anyone who thinks U.S. imperial savagery came to some kind of a merciful halt with the ascendency of Barack Obama to the White House is living in a dream world. Obama may have been tasked with winding down Washington’s failed ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but he has drastically expanded the scale, intensity, and scope of the drone war and the presence of Special Forces troops around the world. Obama, as the courageous journalist Allan Nairn noted early on, has kept the giant U.S. imperial “machine set on kill” (Democracy Now!, January 6, 2010).

The tone was set from the start, with Obama signing off on two major drone strikes in Pakistan on his fourth day in office. The first strike “killed between seven and fifteen people, nearly all of them civilians.” The second one “struck the ‘wrong house’ and killed five to eight civilians,” including two children. Less than half a year later, another one of Obama’s
“signature [drone] strikes” targeted a funeral and killed “scores of civilians—estimates ranged between 18 and 55.” By October 2009, Scahill reports, “Obama had already authorized as many drone strikes in ten months as Bush had in his entire eight years in office.”

A military source told Scahill about a standard Special Forces kill operation in the Age of Obama: “If there’s one person they’re going after and there’s thirty-four [other] people in the building, then thirty-five people are going to die.”

An illustrative incident in the U.S. war on/of terror occurred in the first week of May 2009. That’s when U.S. air-strikes killed more 140 civilians in Bola Boluk, a village in western Afghanistan’s Farah Province. Ninety-three of the dead villagers torn apart by U.S. explosives were children. Just 22 were males 18 years or older. As the New York Times reported: “In a phone call played on a loudspeaker on Wednesday to…the Afghan Parliament, the governor of Farah Province, Rohul Amin, said that as many as 130 civilians had been killed, according to a legislator, Mohammad Naim Farahi…. The governor said that the villagers have brought two tractor trailers full of pieces of human bodies to his office to prove the casualties that had occurred…. Everyone was crying…watching that shocking scene.’ Mr. Farahi said he had talked to someone he knew personally who had counted 113 bodies being buried, including…many women and children” (NYT, May 6, 2009).

The initial response of the Obama Pentagon to this horrific incident—one among many mass U.S. aerial civilian killings in Afghanistan and Pakistan beginning in the fall of 2001—was to blame the deaths on “Taliban grenades.” Obama’s Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed “regret” about loss of innocent life, but the Administration refused to issue an apology or to acknowledge U.S. responsibility. By contrast, Obama had just offered a full

The disparity was remarkable: frightening New Yorkers led to a full presidential apology and the discharge of a White House staffer. Killing more than 100 Afghan civilians did not require any apology. Nobody had to be fired. And the Pentagon was permitted to advance preposterous claims about how the civilians perished—stories that were taken seriously by corporate media. The U.S. subsequently conducted a dubious “investigation” of the Bola Boluk slaughter that slashed the civilian body count and blamed the Taliban for putting civilians in the way of U.S. bombs.

“Peace prize? He’s a killer.” Thus spoke a young Pashtun man to an Al Jazeera English reporter on December 10, 2009—the day Obama was given the Nobel Peace Prize. “The man spoke from the village of Armal, where a large crowd gathered around the bodies of twelve people, one family from a single home, all killed by U.S. Special Forces during a late-night raid.”

**Top Threat to Livable Ecology**

The U.S. is not the top menace only to peace on Earth. It is also the leading threat to personal privacy (as has been made clearer than ever by the Snowden revelations), to democracy (the U.S. funds and equips repressive regimes around the world) and to Earth itself—to a livable global natural environment. Regarding climate change, which poses an ever more imminent threat of human extinction, Washington delights now in blaming China. China, the U.S, says, is now the major culprit behind climate change, since its carbon emissions having more than doubled since 2001 and it now spews more carbon into the atmosphere than any other nation.

This is a smokescreen designed to cloak the United States’ primary culpability for the monumental wrong of petro-capitalist-ecocide—a transgression that will dwarf all previous crimes if allowed to run full its exterminist course. The U.S. remains far and away the world’s largest carbon-emitter on a per-capita basis. Individual U.S. citizens generate an average of 20 tons of carbon emission per year, nearly 4 times the rate of the average Chinese citizen. No nation has spewed more accumulated carbon into Earth’s atmosphere in the industrial era than the United States—an historical reality that neither China nor India will breach anytime soon.

No nation has invested more heavily and powerfully in the political, ideological, and military promotion and defense of the at once carbon- and growth- addicted profits system than the United States. The U.S. is headquarters of the corporate carbon-industrial-complex’s giant lobbying and propaganda war on the increasingly dire findings of modern climate science—including those of NASA.
No national government has done more to deep-six increasingly desperate international efforts to reduce global carbon emissions than that of the United States—a record that has continued with depressing vengeance through the supposedly “green” Obama presidency.

And the U.S. investor class leads the world when it comes to global investment in the fossil fuel industry. While most of the world’s new coal plants are being built in China and India, much of the financing comes from Wall Street. Since 2006, for example, J.P. Morgan Chase has invested $17 billion in new coal plant construction abroad. Citbank added $14 billion during the same period (P. Gaspar, International Socialist Review, January 2013). As Sadie Robinson wrote in England’s Socialist Worker, “Simply looking at China’s emissions as a country obscures the role that the West plays in creating them. China’s rising emissions are largely due to the rapid expansion of coal-fired power stations. This is directly linked to the fact that many Western companies have effectively outsourced their emissions to China. They have rushed to open manufacturing plants in China to take advantage of lower operating costs…. And these plants are largely powered by coal…. The West has also played a role in boosting China’s emissions by using it as a cheap source of goods” (Socialist Worker UK, November 24, 2009). A recent Rolling Stone (RS) report is titled “How the U.S. Exports Global Warming” According to RS writer Tim Dickinson, “even as our nation is pivoting toward a more sustainable energy future, America’s oil and coal corporations are racing to position the country as the planet’s dirty-energy dealer—supplying the developing world with cut-rate, high-polluting, climate-damaging fuels. Much like tobacco companies did in the 1990s—when new taxes, regulations and rising consumer awareness undercut domestic demand—Big Carbon is turning to lucrative new markets in booming Asian economies where regulations are looser. Worse, the White House has quietly championed this dirty-energy trade” (RS, February 3, 2014, http://www.rollingstone.com).

All of this is consistent with a finding in a 2007 Pew Global Attitude survey. In 34 of 37 countries where the public was asked “which country has done the most to hurt the world’s environment?,” majorities or pluralities named the United States. That sentiment is certainly no less widespread—and no less accurate—in the Age of Obama than in the Bush-Cheney years. The Obama administration has worked effectively to repeatedly undermine efforts at coordinated global reduction of greenhouse as emissions. “The Obama administration wants to be seen as a climate leader, but there is no source of fossil fuel that it is prepared to leave in the ground,” says Lorne Stockman, research director for Oil Change International. “Coal, gas, refinery products—crude oil is the last frontier on this. You want it? We’re going to export it.”

Eco-cide is no small misdeed in global eyes. “Pollution and environmental” problems were identified in the 2007 Pew poll as the “greatest world danger” (above nuclear proliferation, AIDS and other infectious diseases, religious and ethnic hatred and income inequality) by the public of a large number of nations including Canada, Sweden, Spain, Ukraine, China, and India, 2007 Pew Global Attitude Survey).
Could surveys like the 2013 WINMR-Gallup poll, the 2006 Gallup poll, and the 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Survey help feed a new peace movement in the U.S.? Most ordinary U.S. citizens do not wish the U.S. to be seen as a global bully and threat, indeed a mass murderous menace to global security, freedom, and survival. They are not supporters of war, empire, totalitarianism, and eco-cide.

But for the reality of global opinion indicating widespread, longstanding, legitimate, and continuing fear of, the U.S. to sink in and influence mass U.S. opinion, two obstacles have to be overcome. The first is the refusal of the managers and owners of dominant U.S. mass media to seriously report on the views of people beyond U.S. borders—a reflection of U.S. policymakers’ longstanding indifference to the opinions of those over whom they have exercised power beyond U.S. shores. (Not that those policymakers care much about public opinion inside the U.S., see Paul Street, “No Functioning Democracy,” Z Magazine, September 2013).

The second is the barrier that the nationally narcissistic doctrine of an intrinsically generous and noble America poses to many U.S. citizens’ readiness to accept the notion of the U.S. as any kind of threat to world peace at all, much less the leading threat. Consider the reflections of former New York Times foreign correspondent Stephen Kinzer on the United States’ annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines, its seizure of Puerto Rico, and its overthrow of elected governments in Nicaragua and Honduras during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: “Why did Americans support policies that brought suffering to people in foreign lands? There are two reasons, so intertwined that they became one. The essential reason is that American control of faraway places came to be seen as vital to the material prosperity of the United States. This explanation, however, is wrapped inside another one: the deep-seated belief of most Americans that their country is a force for good in the world. Thus, by extension, even the destructive missions the United States embarks on to impose its authority are tolerable.
“Generations of American political and business leaders have recognized the power of the noble idea of American exceptionalism. When they intervene abroad for selfish or ignoble reasons, they always insist that in the end, their actions will benefit not only the United States but also the citizens of the country in which they are intervening and, by extension, the causes of peace and justice in the world” (Kinzer, *Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change From Hawaii to Iraq*, New York, 2006).

This problem of “American exceptionalism”—the almost religious belief that U.S. goals and behavior are inherently benevolent, well-intentioned, and good for the world—remains deeply entrenched more than a century later. It is a leading reason, along with the scale and conduct of U.S. empire, that the world’s people are correct to identify the United States as leading threat to peace on Earth. Nothing is more dangerous than a sole military Superpower that believes itself beyond moral reproach, as when presidents and presidential candidates say things like this: “We lead the world in battling immediate evils and promoting the ultimate good…. America is the last, best hope of Earth…. America’s larger purpose in the world is to promote the spread of freedom. The American moment has not passed…we will seize that moment, and begin the world anew” (U.S. presidential candidate Barack Obama, April 23, 2007).

“Our security emanates from the justness of our cause; the force of our example; the tempering qualities of humility and restraint” (U.S. President Barack Obama, Inaugural Address, January 20, 2009).

Reading such statements (long standard on the part of U.S. politicians), I am reminded of psychotherapist M. Scott Peck’s observation that “The evil in this world is committed by the… self-righteous who think they are without sin because they are unwilling to suffer the discomfort of significant self-examination…[their] most basic sin is pride —because all sins are reparable except the sin of believing one is without sin…. They are the people of the lie” (M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil*, New York, 1983). How appropriate that the U.S. has retained its status as most dangerous nation in the world’s eyes after the passage from the more openly and clumsily imperialist Bush to the more stealthily imperial, supposedly more peace-oriented Obama.

The world, clearly, is no longer fooled by the great Obama re-branding of the “Schwarzenegger of international politics.” It properly understands the latest post-Bush president elected in the name of “hope” and “change” (watchwords of the 1992 Bill Clinton campaign) to be simply the empire’s latest new-old clothes.

**The Domestic Costs and Benefits of Empire**

Where might the seeds of resistance to the Empire and its malignant doctrine of American
exceptionalism lie within the U.S. today? U.S. peace activists and thinkers should look particularly to the class nature of U.S. imperialism and to the question of who within the domestic power structure of the savagely unequal United States benefits most and pays the most for that imperialism. Stephen Kinzer forgot to add that “the material prosperity of the United States” is generally a nice-sounding euphemism for “the profits of the U.S. economic ruling class.”

As Chomsky noted in 1969, “There are, to be sure, costs of empire that benefit no one: 50,000 American corpses or the deterioration in the strength of the United States economy relative to its industrial rivals. The costs of empire to the imperial society as a whole may be considerable. These costs, however, are social costs, whereas, say, the profits from overseas investment guaranteed by military success are again highly concentrated in certain special segments of the society. The costs of empire are in general distributed over the society as a whole, while its profits revert to a few within” (Chomsky, *For Reasons of State*, Pantheon, 1972).

Chomsky’s point is no less true today when poverty is rife across the U.S. even as leading military investors enjoy unimaginable wealth amidst a “New Gilded Age” in which the 400 richest Americans possess more wealth than the entire bottom half of the U.S. population—150 million U.S. citizens—and the top 1 percent possesses as much as the bottom 90 percent.

Ultimately, however, nobody, not even the rich, can fully escape the horrific consequences of the eco-cidal growth-, waste-, and petroleum-addicted social order that the U.S. empire is sworn to protect: international capitalism. To quote the placards of environmentalists outside recent global climate summits where Obama’s representatives have prevented binding reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions: “There’s No Economy on a Dead Planet” and “There is No Planet B.”

Paul Street is the author of many books, including *The Empire’s New Clothes: Barack Obama in the Real World of Power* (2010) and *They Rule: The 1 Percent vs. Democracy*.


BLUM: : Empire, Communism and Other Threats, Vital US Interests, Domino Dogma
“JFK, RFK, and some myths about US foreign policy”

On April 30, 1964, five months after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, was interviewed by John B. Martin in one of a series of oral history sessions with RFK. Part of the interview appears in the book “JFK Conservative” by Ira Stoll, published three months ago. (pages 192-3)

RFK: The president … had a strong, overwhelming reason for being in Vietnam and that we should win the war in Vietnam.

MARTIN: What was the overwhelming reason?

RFK: Just the loss of all of Southeast Asia if you lost Vietnam. I think everybody was quite clear that the rest of Southeast Asia would fall.

MARTIN: What if it did?

RFK: Just have profound effects as far as our position throughout the world, and our position in a rather vital part of the world. Also it would affect what happened in India, of course, which in turn has an effect on the Middle East. Just as it would have, everybody felt, a very adverse effect. It would have an effect on Indonesia, hundred million population. All of those countries would be affected by the fall of Vietnam to the Communists.

MARTIN: There was never any consideration given to pulling out?

RFK: No.

MARTIN: … The president was convinced that we had to keep, had to stay in there …

RFK: Yes.

MARTIN: … And couldn’t lose it.

RFK: Yes.

These remarks are rather instructive from several points of view:

1. Robert Kennedy contradicts the many people who are convinced that, had he lived, JFK would have brought the US involvement in Vietnam to a fairly prompt end, instead of it continuing for ten more terrible years. The author, Stoll, quotes a few of these people. And these other statements are
just as convincing as RFK’s statements presented here. And if that is not confusing enough, Stoll then quotes RFK himself in 1967 speaking unmistakably in support of the war.

It appears that we’ll never know with any kind of certainty what would have happened if JFK had not been assassinated, but I still go by his Cold War record in concluding that US foreign policy would have continued along its imperial, anti-communist path. In Kennedy’s short time in office the United States unleashed many different types of hostility, from attempts to overthrow governments and suppress political movements to assassination attempts against leaders and actual military combat; with one or more of these occurring in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, British Guiana, Iraq, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Cuba and Brazil.

2. “Just have profound effects as far as our position throughout the world, and our position in a rather vital part of the world.”

Ah yes, a vital part of the world. Has there ever been any part of the world, or any country, that the US has intervened in that was not vital? Vital to American interests? Vital to our national security? Of great strategic importance? Here’s President Carter in his 1980 State of the Union Address: “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America”.

“What a country calls its vital economic interests are not the things which enable its citizens to live, but the things which enable it to make war.” – Simone Weil (1909-1943), French philosopher

3. If the US lost Vietnam “everybody was quite clear that the rest of Southeast Asia would fall.”

As I once wrote:

Thus it was that the worst of Washington’s fears had come to pass: All of Indochina – Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos – had fallen to the Communists. During the initial period of US involvement in Indochina in the 1950s, John Foster Dulles, Dwight Eisenhower and other American officials regularly issued doomsday pronouncements of the type known as the “Domino Theory”, warning that if Indochina should fall, other nations in Asia would topple over as well. In one instance, President Eisenhower listed no less than Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Indonesia amongst the anticipated “falling dominos”.
Such warnings were repeated periodically over the next decade by succeeding administrations and other supporters of US policy in Indochina as a key argument in defense of such policy. The fact that these ominous predictions turned out to have no basis in reality did not deter Washington officialdom from promulgating the same dogma up until the 1990s about almost each new world “trouble-spot”, testimony to their unshakable faith in the existence and inter-workings of the International Communist Conspiracy.
September 29, 2013

Tomgram: Dilip Hiro, The Mystery of Washington's Waning Global Power

Among the curious spectacles of our moment, the strangeness of the Obama presidency hasn’t gotten its full due. After decades in which “the imperial presidency” was increasingly in the spotlight, after two terms of George W. Bush in which a literal cult of executive power -- or to use the term of that moment, “the unitary executive” -- took hold in the White House, and without any obvious diminution in the literal powers of the presidency, Barack Obama has managed to look like a bystander at his own funeral.

If I had to summarize these years, I would say that he entered the phone booth dressed as Superman and came out as Clark Kent. Today, TomDispatch regular Dilip Hiro, author most recently of the invaluable A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Middle East, points out that, as far as Obama’s foreign (and war) policy, it’s almost as if, when the American president speaks, no one in the Greater Middle East -- not even our closest allies or client states -- is listening. And true as it may be for that region, it seems, bizarrely enough, no less true in Washington where the president’s recent attempts to intervene in the Syrian civil war were rejected both by Congress (though without a final vote on the subject) and by the American people via opinion polls.

It should be puzzling just how little power the present executive is actually capable of wielding. He can go to the U.N. or Kansas City and make speeches (that themselves often enough implicitly cast him as a kind of interested observer of his own presidency), but nothing much that he says in Washington seems any longer to be seriously attended to. In the foreign policy arena, he is surrounded by a secretary of defense who ducks for cover, a secretary of state who wanders the world blowing off steam, and a national security advisor and U.N. ambassador who seem like blundering neophytes and whose basic ideological stance (in favor of American -- aka “humanitarian” -- interventions globally) has been rejected in this country by almost any constituency imaginable. Unlike previous presidents, he evidently has no one -- no Brent Scowcroft, Jim Baker, or even Henry Kissinger -- capable of working the corridors of power skillfully or bringing a policy home.

Domestically, who ever heard of a presidency already into its second term that, according to just about all observers, has only one significant achievement -- Obamacare (whatever you think of it) -- and clearly hasn’t a hope in hell of getting a second one? Just as he’s done in Syria, Obama will now be watching relatively helplessly as Republicans in Congress threaten to shut the government down and not raise the debt ceiling -- and whatever happens, who expects him to be the key player in that onrushing spectacle? America’s waning power in the Greater Middle East is more than matched by Obama's waned power in this country. In our lifetime, we’ve never seen a president -- not even the impeached Clinton -- so drained of power or influence. It’s a puzzle wrapped in an enigma swaddled by a pretzel. Go figure. Tom

A World in Which No One Is
Hearts and Minds
A People’s History of Counterinsurgency
EDITED BY HANNAH GURMAN. 2013.

A NEW PRESS PEOPLE’S HISTORY
HOWARD ZINN, SERIES EDITOR

PAPERBACK ORIGINAL: FROM MALAYA AND VIETNAM TO IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, LEADING SCHOLARS AND JOURNALISTS UNRAVEL THE MYTH AND CHALLENGE THE EFFICACY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY

Counterinsurgency is a tactical phoenix, dying only to rise again, ever-ready to win hearts and minds for the American empire. . . . This essential volume makes it possible to understand the past and prepare for the next time the siren song of counterinsurgency is sung.

—MARILYN YOUNG, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

The first book of its kind, Hearts and Minds is a scathing response to the grand narrative of U.S. counterinsurgency, in which warfare is defined not by military might alone but by winning the “hearts and minds” of civilians. Dormant as a tactic since the days of the Vietnam War, in 2006 the U.S. Army drafted a new field manual heralding the resurrection of counterinsurgency as a primary military engagement strategy; counterinsurgency campaigns followed in Iraq and Afghanistan, despite the fact that counterinsurgency had utterly failed to account for the actual lived experiences of the people whose hearts and minds America had sought to win.

Drawing on leading thinkers in the field and using key examples from Malaya, the Philippines,
Vietnam, El Salvador, Iraq, and Afghanistan, *Hearts and Minds* brings a long-overdue focus on the many civilians caught up in these conflicts. Both urgent and timely, this important book challenges the idea of a neat divide between insurgents and the populations from which they emerge—and should be required reading for anyone engaged in the most important contemporary debates over U.S. military policy.

**Hannah Gurman** is an assistant professor at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. She writes on the politics, economics, and culture of U.S. diplomacy and military conflict for *Salon*, the *Huffington Post*, and *Foreign Policy in Focus*, among other publications. She is the author of *The Dissent Papers: The Voices of Diplomats in the Cold War and Beyond*. She lives in New York City.

Contributors:
Karl Hack on Malaya
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Hannah Gurman on Vietnam
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Rick Rowley on Iraq
David Enders on Iraq
Jeremy Kuzmarov on Afghanistan
Jean MacKenzie on Afghanistan

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**The Rise of the Military's Secret Military**

By Nick Turse, *TomDispatch*, Reader Supported News, 08 January 14,

"I think, I don't need to play these stupid games. I know what you're trying to do." With that, Major Matthew Robert Bockholt hung up on me.

More than a month before, I had called U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) with a series of basic questions: In how many countries were U.S. Special Operations Forces deployed in 2013? Are manpower levels set to expand to 72,000 in 2014? Is SOCOM still aiming for growth rates of 3%-5% per year? How many training exercises did the command carry out in 2013? Basic stuff.

And for more than a month, I waited for answers. I called. I left messages. I emailed. I waited some more. I started to get the feeling that Special Operations Command didn't want me to know what its Green Berets and Rangers, Navy SEALs and Delta Force commandos -- the men who operate in the hottest of hotspots and most remote locales around the world -- were doing.

Then, at the last moment, just before my filing deadline, Special Operations Command got back to me with an answer so incongruous, confusing, and contradictory that I was glad I had given up on SOCOM
and tried to figure things out for myself. I started with a blank map that quickly turned into a global pincushion. It didn't take long before every continent but Antarctica was bristling with markers indicating special operations forces' missions, deployments, and interactions with foreign military forces in 2012-2013. With that, the true size and scope of the U.S. military's secret military began to come into focus. It was, to say the least, vast.

A review of open source information reveals that in 2012 and 2013, U.S. Special Operations forces (SOF) were likely deployed to -- or training, advising, or operating with the personnel of -- more than 100 foreign countries. And that's probably an undercount. In 2011, then-SOCOM spokesman Colonel Tim Nye told TomDispatch that Special Operations personnel were annually sent to 120 countries around the world. They were in, that is, about 60% of the nations on the planet. "We're deployed in a number of locations," was as specific as Bockholt would ever get when I talked to him in the waning days of 2013. And when SOCOM did finally get back to me with an eleventh hour answer, the number offered made almost no sense.

Despite the lack of official cooperation, an analysis by TomDispatch reveals SOCOM to be a command on the make with an already sprawling reach. As Special Operations Command chief Admiral William McRaven put it in SOCOM 2020, his blueprint for the future, it has ambitious aspirations to create "a Global SOF network of like-minded interagency allies and partners." In other words, in that future now only six years off, it wants to be everywhere.

The Rise of the Military's Secret Military

Born of a failed 1980 raid to rescue American hostages in Iran (in which eight U.S. service members died), U.S. Special Operations Command was established in 1987. Made up of units from all the service branches, SOCOM is tasked with carrying out Washington's most specialized and secret missions, including assassinations, counterterrorist raids, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, psychological operations, foreign troop training, and weapons of mass destruction counter-proliferation operations.

In the post-9/11 era, the command has grown steadily. With about 33,000 personnel in 2001, it is reportedly on track to reach 72,000 in 2014. (About half this number are called, in the jargon of the trade, "badged operators" -- SEALs, Rangers, Special Operations Aviators, Green Berets -- while the rest are support personnel.) Funding for the command has also jumped exponentially as SOCOM's baseline budget tripled from $2.3 billion to $6.9 billion between 2001 and 2013. If you add in supplemental funding, it had actually more than quadrupled to $10.4 billion.

Not surprisingly, personnel deployments abroad skyrocketed from 4,900 "man-years" -- as the command puts it -- in 2001 to 11,500 in 2013. About 11,000 special operators are now working abroad at any one time and on any given day they are in 70 to 80 countries, though the New York Times reported that, according to statistics provided to them by SOCOM, during one week in March 2013 that number reached 92.

The Global SOF Network

Last year, Admiral McRaven, who previously headed the Joint Special Operations Command, or JSOC-- a clandestine sub-command that specializes in tracking and killing suspected terrorists -- touted his vision for special ops globalization. In a statement to the House Armed Services Committee, he said:

"USSOCOM is enhancing its global network of SOF to support our interagency and international partners in order to gain expanded situational awareness of emerging threats and opportunities. The network enables small, persistent presence in critical locations, and facilitates engagement where necessary or appropriate...."

In translation this means that SOCOM is weaving a complex web of alliances with government agencies at home and militaries abroad to ensure that it's at the center of every conceivable global hotspot and power center. In fact, Special Operations Command has turned the planet into a giant battlefield,
divided into many discrete fronts: the self-explanatory SOCAFRICA; the sub-unified command of U.S. Central Command in the Middle East SOCCENT; the European contingent SOCEUR; SOCKOR, which is devoted strictly to Korea; SORPAC, which covers the rest of the Asia-Pacific region; and SOCSOUTH, which conducts special ops missions in Central and South America and the Caribbean, as well as the globe-trotting JSOC.

Since 2002, SOCOM has also been authorized to create its own Joint Task Forces, a prerogative normally limited to larger combatant commands like CENTCOM. These include Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, 500-600 personnel dedicated to supporting counterterrorist operations by Filipino allies against insurgent groups like Abu Sayyaf.

A similar mouthful of an entity is the NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan, which conducts operations, according to SOCOM, "to enable the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF), and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) to provide the Afghan people a secure and stable environment and to prevent insurgent activities from threatening the authority and sovereignty of GIRoA." Last year, U.S.-allied Afghan President Hamid Karzai had a different assessment of the "U.S. special force stationed in Wardak province," which he accused of "harassing, annoying, torturing, and even murdering innocent people."

According to the latest statistics made available by ISAF, from October 2012 through March 2013, U.S. and allied forces were involved in 1,464 special operations in Afghanistan, including 167 with U.S. or coalition forces in the lead and 85 that were unilateral ISAF operations. U.S. Special Operations forces are also involved in everything from mentoring lightly armed local security forces under the Village Stability Operations initiative to the training of heavily armed and well-equipped elite Afghan forces -- one of whose U.S.-trained officers defected to the insurgency in the fall.

In addition to task forces, there are also Special Operations Command Forward (SOC FWD) elements which, according to the military, "shape and coordinate special operations forces security cooperation and engagement in support of theater special operations command, geographic combatant command, and country team goals and objectives." These light footprint teams -- including SOC FWD Pakistan, SOC FWD Yemen, and SOC FWD Lebanon -- offer training and support to local elite troops in foreign hotspots. In Lebanon, for instance, this has meant counterterrorism training for Lebanese Special Ops forces, as well as assistance to the Lebanese Special Forces School to develop indigenous trainers to mentor other Lebanese military personnel.

SOCOM's reach and global ambitions go further still. TomDispatch's analysis of McRaven's first two full years in command reveals a tremendous number of overseas operations. In places like Somalia and Libya, elite troops have carried out clandestine commando raids. In others, they have used airpower to hunt, target, and kill suspected militants. Elsewhere, they have waged an information war using online propaganda. And almost everywhere they have been at work building up and forging ever-tighter ties with foreign militaries through training missions and exercises.

"A lot of what we will do as we go forward in this force is build partner capacity," McRaven said at the Ronald Reagan Library in November, noting that NATO partners as well as allies in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America "are absolutely essential to how we're doing business."

In March 2013, for example, Navy SEALs conducted joint training exercises with Indonesian frogmen. In April and May, U.S. Special Operations personnel joined members of the Malawi Defense Forces for Exercise Epic Guardian. Over three weeks, 1,000 troops engaged in marksmanship, small unit tactics, close quarters combat training, and other activities across three countries -- Djibouti, Malawi, and the Seychelles.

In May, American special operators took part in Spring Storm, the Estonian military's largest annual
training exercise. That same month, members of the Peruvian and U.S. special operations forces engaged in joint training missions aimed at trading tactics and improving their ability to conduct joint operations. In July, Green Berets from the Army's 20th Special Forces Group spent several weeks in Trinidad and Tobago working with members of that tiny nation's Special Naval Unit and Special Forces Operation Detachment. That Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise, conducted as part of SOCSOUTH's Theater Security Cooperation program, saw the Americans and their local counterparts take part in pistol and rifle instruction and small unit tactical exercises.

In September, according to media reports, U.S. Special Operations forces joined elite troops from the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries -- Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), and Cambodia -- as well as their counterparts from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, China, India, and Russia for a US-Indonesian joint-funded counterterrorism exercise held at a training center in Sentul, West Java.

Tactical training was, however, just part of the story. In March 2013, for example, experts from the Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School hosted a week-long working group with top planners from the Centro de Adiestramiento de las Fuerzas Especiales -- Mexico's Special Warfare Center -- to aid them in developing their own special forces doctrine.

In October, members of the Norwegian Special Operations Forces traveled to SOCOM's state-of-the-art Wargame Center at its headquarters on MacDill Air Force Base in Florida to refine crisis response procedures for hostage rescue operations. "NORSOF and Norwegian civilian leadership regularly participate in national field training exercises focused on a scenario like this," said Norwegian Lieutenant Colonel Petter Hellesen. "What was unique about this exercise was that we were able to gather so many of the Norwegian senior leadership and action officers, civilian and military, in one room with their U.S counterparts."

MacDill is, in fact, fast becoming a worldwide special ops hub, according to a report by the Tampa Tribune. This past fall, SOCOM quietly started up an International Special Operations Forces Coordination Center that provides long-term residencies for senior-level black ops liaisons from around the world. Already, representatives from 10 nations had joined the command with around 24 more slated to come on board in the next 12-18 months, per McRaven's global vision.

In the coming years, more and more interactions between U.S. elite forces and their foreign counterparts will undoubtedly take place in Florida, but most will likely still occur -- as they do today -- overseas. TomDispatch's analysis of official government documents and news releases as well as press reports indicates that U.S. Special Operations forces were reportedly deployed to or involved with the militaries of 106 nations around the world during 2012-2013.

For years, the command has claimed that divulging the names of these countries would upset foreign allies and endanger U.S. personnel. SOCOM's Bockholt insisted to me that merely offering the total number would do the same. "You understand that there is information about our military… that is contradictory to reporting," he told me. "There's certain things we can't release to the public for the safety of our service members both at home and abroad. I'm not sure why you'd be interested in reporting that." [Since most service people say they are fighting to protect US freedom, Turse might have pointed out that the secrecy Bockholt was enforcing contradicted the ostensible purpose of invasion, occupation, and soldier sacrifice. – Dick]

In response, I asked how a mere number could jeopardize the lives of Special Ops personnel, and he responded, "When you work with the partners we work with in the different countries, each country is very
particular." He refused to elaborate further on what this meant or how it pertained to a simple count of
countries. Why SOCOM eventually offered me a number, given these supposed dangers, was never
explained.

Bringing the War Home

This year, Special Operations Command has plans to make major inroads into yet another country --
the United States. The establishment of SOCNORTH in 2014, according to the command, is intended to
help "defend North America by outpacing all threats, maintaining faith with our people, and supporting
them in their times of greatest need." Under the auspices of U.S. Northern Command, SOCNORTH will
have responsibility for the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and portions of the Caribbean.

While Congressional pushback has thus far thwarted Admiral McRaven's efforts to create a SOCOM
satellite headquarters for the more than 300 special operators working in Washington, D.C. (at the cost of
$10 million annually), the command has nonetheless stationed support teams and liaisons all over the
capital in a bid to embed itself ever more deeply inside the Beltway. "I have folks in every agency here in
Washington, D.C. -- from the CIA, to the FBI, to the National Security Agency, to the National Geospatial
Agency, to the Defense Intelligence Agency," McRaven said during a panel discussion at Washington's
Wilson Center in 2013. Referring to the acronyms of the many agencies with which SOCOM has forged
ties, McRaven continued: "If there are three letters, and in some cases four, I have a person there. And they
have had a reciprocal agreement with us. I have somebody in my headquarters at Tampa." Speaking at
Ronald Reagan Library in November, he put the number of agencies where SOCOM is
currently embedded at 38.

"Given the importance of interagency collaboration, USSOCOM is placing greater emphasis on its
presence in the National Capital Region to better support coordination and decision making with
interagency partners. Thus, USSOCOM began to consolidate its presence in the NCR [National Capitol
Region] in early 2012," McRaven told the House Armed Services Committee last year.

One unsung SOCOM partner is U.S. AID, the government agency devoted to providing civilian
foreign aid to countries around the world whose mandate includes the protection of human rights, the
prevention of armed conflicts, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the fostering of "good will
abroad." At a July 2013 conference, Beth Cole, the director of the Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation
at U.S. AID, explained just how her agency was now quietly aiding the military's secret military.

"In Yemen, for example, our mission director has SVTCs [secure video teleconferences] with
SOCOM personnel on a regular basis now. That didn't occur two years ago, three years ago, four years ago,
five years ago," Cole said, according to a transcript of the event. But that was only the start. "My office at
U.S. AID supports SOF pre-deployment training in preparation for missions throughout the globe... I'm
proud that my office and U.S. AID have been providing training support to several hundred Army, Navy,
and Marine Special Operations personnel who have been regularly deploying to Afghanistan, and we will
continue to do that."

Cole noted that, in Afghanistan, U.S. AID personnel were sometimes working hand-in-hand on the
Village Stability Operation initiative with Special Ops forces. In certain areas, she said, "we can dual-hat
some of our field program officers as LNOs [liaison officers] in those Joint Special Operations task forces
and be able to execute the development work that we need to do alongside of the Special Operations
Forces." She even suggested taking a close look at whether this melding of her civilian agency and special
ops might prove to be a model for operations elsewhere in the world...
In remarks before the House Armed Services Committee, Admiral McRaven noted that his Washington operation, the SOCOM NCR, "conducts outreach to academia, non-governmental organizations, industry, and other private sector organizations to get their perspective on complex issues affecting SOF." Speaking at the Wilson Center, he was even more blunt: "[W]e also have liaison officers with industry and with academia... We put some of our best and brightest in some of the academic institutions so we can understand what academia is thinking about."

**SOCOM's Information Warfare**

Not content with a global presence in the physical world, SOCOM has also taken to cyberspace where it operates the Trans Regional Web Initiative, a network of 10 propaganda websites that are run by various combatant commands and made to look like legitimate news outlets. These shadowy sites -- including KhabarSouthAsia.com, Magharebia which targets North Africa, an effort aimed at the Middle East known as Al-Shorfa.com, and another targeting Latin America called Infosurhoy.com -- state only in fine print that they are "sponsored by" the U.S. military.

Last June, the Senate Armed Services Committee called out the Trans Regional Web Initiative for "excessive" costs while stating that the "effectiveness of the websites is questionable and the performance metrics do not justify the expense." In November, SOCOM announced that it was nonetheless seeking to identify industry partners who, under the Initiative, could potentially "develop new websites tailored to foreign audiences."

Just as SOCOM is working to influence audiences abroad, it is also engaged in stringent information control at home -- at least when it comes to me. Major Bockholt made it clear that SOCOM objected to a 2011 article of mine about U.S. Special Operations forces. "Some of that stuff was inconsistent with actual facts," he told me. I asked what exactly was inconsistent. "Some of the stuff you wrote about JSOC… I think I read some information about indiscriminate killing or things like that."

I knew right away just the quote he was undoubtedly referring to -- a mention of the Joint Special Operations Command's overseas kill/capture campaign as "an almost industrial-scale counterterrorism killing machine." Bockholt said that it was indeed "one quote of concern." The only trouble: I didn't say it. It was, as I stated very plainly in the piece, the assessment given by John Nagl, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and former counterinsurgency adviser to now-retired general and former CIA director David Petraeus. . . .

With my deadline looming, I was putting the finishing touches on this article when an email arrived from Mike Janssen of SOCOM Public Affairs. It was -- finally -- a seemingly simple answer to what seemed like an astonishingly straightforward question asked a more than a month before: What was the total number of countries in which Special Operations forces were deployed in 2013? Janssen was concise. His answer: 80.

How, I wondered, could that be? In the midst of McRaven's Global SOF network initiative, could SOCOM have scaled back their deployments from 120 in 2011 to just 80 last year? And if Special Operations forces were deployed in 92 nations during just one week in 2013, according to official statistics provided to the New York Times, how could they have been present in 12 fewer countries for the entire year? And why, in his March 2013 posture statement to the House Armed Services Committee, would Admiral McRaven mention "annual deployments to over 100 countries?" With minutes to spare, I called Mike Janssen for a clarification. "I don't have any information on that," he told me and asked me to submit my question in writing -- precisely what I had done more than a month before in an effort to get a timely response to this straightforward and essential question.

Today, Special Operations Command finds itself at a crossroads. It is attempting to influence populations overseas, while at home trying to keep Americans in the dark about its activities; expanding its reach, impact, and influence, while working to remain deep in the shadows; conducting operations all over the globe, while professing only to be operating in "a number of locations"; claiming worldwide deployments have markedly dropped in the last year,
when evidence suggests otherwise.

"I know what you're trying to do," Bockholt said cryptically before he hung up on me -- as if the continuing questions of a reporter trying to get answers to basic information after a month of waiting were beyond the pale. In the meantime, whatever Special Operations Command is trying to do globally and at home, Bockholt and others at SOCOM are working to keep it as secret as possible.


--Dick

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From: Toni Menninger <toni.menninger@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, Sep 10, 2013 at 9:26 AM
Subject: George Monbiot
To: David Druding <daviddruding@gmail.com>

Obama’s Rogue State: The US calls on other nations to abide by the treaties it violates.
By George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 9th September 2013


[See OMNI’s US Lawlessness Newsletter.]

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GEORGE MONBIOT

• Articles
The US calls on other nations to abide by the treaties it violates.

By George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 9th September 2013

You could almost pity these people. **For 67 years successive US governments have resisted calls to reform the UN Security Council. They’ve defended a system which grants five nations a veto over world affairs, reducing all others to impotent spectators.** They have abused the powers and trust with which they have been vested. They have collaborated with the other four permanent members (the UK, Russia, China and France) in a colonial carve-up, through which these nations can pursue their own corrupt interests at the expense of peace and global justice(1).

**Eighty-three times the US has exercised its veto(2).** On 42 of these occasions it has done so to prevent Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians from being censured(3). On the last occasion, 130 nations supported the resolution, but Obama spiked it(4). Though veto powers have been used less often since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the US has exercised them 14 times since then (in 13 cases to shield Israel), while Russia has used them 9 times(5). Increasingly the permanent members have used the threat of a veto to prevent a resolution from being discussed. They have bullied the rest of the world into silence.

Through this tyrannical dispensation – created at a time when other nations were either
broken or voiceless – the great warmongers of the past 60 years remain responsible for global peace. The biggest weapons traders are tasked with global disarmament. Those who trample international law control the administration of justice(6).

But now, as the veto powers of two permanent members (Russia and China) obstruct its attempt to pour petrol onto another Middle Eastern fire, the United States suddenly decides that the system is illegitimate. “If”, Mr Obama says, “we end up using the UN Security Council not as a means of enforcing international norms and international law, but rather as a barrier … then I think people, rightly, are going to be pretty skeptical about the system”(7). Well, yes.

Never has Obama, or his predecessors, attempted a serious reform of this system. Never have they sought to replace a corrupt global oligarchy with a democratic body. Never do they lament this injustice – until they object to the outcome. The same goes for every aspect of global governance.

Barack Obama warned last week that Syria’s use of poisoned gas “threatens to unravel the international norm against chemical weapons embraced by 189 nations”(8). Unravelling the international norm is the the US president’s job.

[US chemical weapons.]

In 1997, the United States agreed to decommission the 31,000 tonnes of sarin, VX, mustard gas and other agents it possessed within 10 years. In 2007 it requested the maximum extension of the deadline permitted by the Chemical Weapons Convention: five years. Again it failed to keep its promise(9), and in 2012 it claimed they would be gone by 2021(10). Was the world’s richest nation unable to complete this task on time? Or just unwilling? Russia has now urged Syria to place its chemical weapons under international control(11). Perhaps it should press the US to do the same.

In 1998, the Clinton administration pushed a law through Congress that forbade international weapons inspectors from taking samples of chemicals in the US and that allowed the president to refuse unannounced inspections(12). In 2002, the Bush government forced the sacking of José Maurício Bustani, the director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons(13,14). He had committed two unforgiveable crimes: seeking a rigorous inspection of US facilities and pressing Saddam Hussein to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention, to help prevent the war George Bush was itching to wage.
The US used millions of gallons of chemical weapons in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It also used them during its destruction of Falluja in 2004, then lied about it(15,16). The Reagan government helped Saddam Hussein to wage war with Iran in the 1980s, while aware that he was using nerve and mustard gas(17). (The Bush administration then cited this deployment as an excuse to attack Iraq, 15 years later).

Smallpox has been eliminated from the human population, but two nations – the US and Russia – insist on keeping the pathogen in cold storage. They claim their purpose is to develop defences against possible biological weapons attack, but most experts in the field consider this to be nonsense(18). While raising concerns about each other’s possession of the disease, they have collaborated to bludgeon the other members of the World Health Organisation, which have pressed them to destroy their stocks(19).

In 2001, the New York Times reported that, without either Congressional oversight or a declaration under the Biological Weapons Convention “the Pentagon has built a germ factory that could make enough lethal microbes to wipe out entire cities.”(20, 21) It claimed the purpose was defensive, but, developed in contravention of international law, it didn’t look good. The Bush government also sought to destroy the Biological Weapons Convention as an effective instrument, by scuttling negotiations over the verification protocol required to make it work(22).

**Looming over all this is the great unmentionable: the cover the US provides for Israel’s weapons of mass destruction.** It’s not just that Israel – which refuses to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention – has used white phosphorus as a weapon in Gaza (when deployed against people, phosphorus meets the convention’s definition of “any chemical which through its chemical action on life processes can cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm”(23)).

It’s also that, as the Washington Post points out, “Syria’s chemical weapons stockpile results from a never-acknowledged gentleman’s agreement in the Middle East that as long as Israel had nuclear weapons, Syria’s pursuit of chemical weapons would not attract much public acknowledgement or criticism.”(24) Israel has developed its nuclear arsenal in defiance of the non-proliferation treaty, and the US supports it in defiance of its own law, which forbids the disbursement of aid to a country with unauthorised weapons of mass destruction(25).

As for the norms of international law, let’s remind ourselves where the US stands. It remains outside the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, after declaring its citizens immune from prosecution. The crime of aggression it committed in Iraq – defined by the
Nuremberg tribunal as “the supreme international crime”(26) – goes not just unpunished but also unmentioned by anyone in government. The same applies to most of the subsidiary war crimes US troops committed during the invasion and occupation. Guantanamo Bay raises a finger to any notions of justice between nations.

None of this is to exonerate Bashar al-Assad’s government – or its opponents – of a long series of hideous crimes, including the use of chemical weapons. Nor is it to suggest that there is an easy answer to the horrors in Syria.

But Obama’s failure to be honest about his nation’s record of destroying international norms and undermining international law, his myth-making about the role of the United States in world affairs and his one-sided interventions in the Middle East all render the crisis in Syria even harder to resolve. Until there is some candour about past crimes and current injustices, until there is an effort to address the inequalities over which the United States presides, everything the US attempts, even if it doesn’t involve guns and bombs, will stoke the cynicism and anger the president says he wants to quench.

During his first inauguration speech, Barack Obama promised to “to set aside childish things”(27). We all knew what he meant. He hasn’t done it.

References:


SYRIA: BROADCAST MEDIA HANGS IN FOR WAR

PETER HART, “THE ILLUSION OF DEBATE OVER STRIKING SYRIA.” EXTRA! (Nov. 2013). “When the United States government is committed to going to war, it can usually count on the corporate media to amplify the message.” For example, either from the public or elites “there was little support for war on Syria—except on US broadcast news, where most of the debates and discussions still tilted in favor of a military attack.” [Hart studied 9 shows Aug. 30-Sept. 10.] --Dick

RESISTANCE TO EMPIRE

Knowledge and Action Against US Wars

By Dick Bennett

“A people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” James Madison

An underlying theme of this newsletter and of all of the newsletters pertaining to war is the necessity of the US peace movement in all its local organization to be informed, to try to see through lies and secrecy, to think, question, examine, and to ACT both locally and globally. The phone numbers of all of our representatives should be in reach. But that’s only the beginning and right now nigh futile so inured to slaughter, so comfortable with corporate-military money, made so complacent by our militarized media, are most. We should be active members of as many peace and justice organizations as we can possibly afford. We should support all people who oppose the US Superpower. For that power includes not only horrific, violent aggressions against other countries, which has been called the worst international crime: “To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.” (Robert H. Jackson, Chief U.S.
Prosecutor, Nuremberg Military Tribunal) But the Superpower also controls information, control of the “facts,” of meaning. “ . . . 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).) J. William Fulbright in 1972, described the preceding three decades, specified the ruinous consequences: “War, and the chronic threat of war, have consumed our resources, distorted our priorities, and undermined national security by eroding its domestic base, all the while carrying us—as Tocqueville warned. . . . toward despotism.” (The Crippled Giant, 254). Instead of Defense Department let us say War Department. Instead of War on Terror say War Of Terror or War for Resources. Instead of Taliban say Afghan/Pakistan Pashtun Resistance to Occupation. These labels express facts and true compassion in action for humanity.

Often the argument is made that peacemaking must begin with individual search for inner equanimity, steadiness, and strength, and nobody can deny that foundation for peace, but our leaders’ reckless lawlessness, making the world hostile and unstable and killing millions of people, destabilizes each and every one of us locally and individually, and must be stopped. “Of all the enemies to public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes. . . .” (James Madison, “Political Observations,” April 20, 1795.) In order to act, we are not compelled to wait until we have fully matured, and anyway a lifetime is seldom enough time to enable that ideal condition. Dag Hammarskjold, UN Secretary General: “In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.” The condition of the world under the Superpower (and now add warming and its consequences of stronger storms, rising seas, raging fires, and droughts)) demands us to stop diddling and playing and evading and denying, to get informed, and to take action.

ARTICLES VIA HISTORIANS AGAINST WAR DECEMBER 2013 AND JANUARY 2014

Links to Recent Articles of Interest

"The Misuse of American Might, and the Price It Pays"
By Andrew J. Bacevich, Los Angeles Times, posted January 12
The author teaches history and international relations at Boston University

"Ariel Sharon's Legacy for Israel and the Middle East"
By Juan Cole, Informed Comment blog, posted January 11
The author teaches political science at Tel Aviv University

"Neocons Who Brought You the Iraq War Endorse AIPAC's Iran Bill"
"The American People and Support for War"
By Lawrence S. Wittner, History News Network, posted January 7
*The author is a professor of history emeritus at SUNY Albany*

"Why Are We Still in Afghanistan?"
By Stanley Kutler, History News Network, posted December 30
*The author is a professor of history emeritus at the University of Wisconsin*

"CNN Poll: Afghanistan War Arguably Most Unpopular in U.S. History"
By CNN Political Unit, posted December 30

"Review of Stephen Kinzer's 'The Brothers'"
By Jeremy Kuzmarov, History News Network, posted December 30
*The author teaches history at the University of Tulsa; the book, is about Allen and John Foster Dulles*

"Israel Has Been 'Singled Out' in the US for a Very Long Time"
By Thomas S. Harrington, CounterPunch.org, posted December 27

"Spinning Desert Storm: TV Coverage of a Pentagon Production"
By William J. Astore, History News Network, posted December 18
*The author teaches history at Pennsylvania College of Technology*

"The One Percent Republic: Without Citizen Soldiers, Plutocracy Rises Unchecked"
By Andrew J. Bacevich, *The American Conservative*, posted December 18

"American Hellfire"
Interview with Robert Neer, History News Network, posted December 16
*Robert Neer is the author of a newly published history of napalm*
Thanks for Mim Jackson, Rosalyn Baxandall, Steve Gosch, and an anonymous reader for suggesting articles that are included in the above list.

**READINGS ON THE US EMPIRE**

**US HISTORY OF IMPERIAL CONQUEST**

Adapted from the bestselling grassroots history of the United States, the story of America in the world, told in comics form.

**CORPORATE IMPERATIVES, THE CORPORATE-IMPERIAL STATE**


**DELUSIONAL NATIONAL MYTHS LEADING TO IMPERIAL DREAMS**

Lawlessness of US Empire


Rise of Imperial Presidency


Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex


US Empire, Mainstream Media, Public Acquiescence


ON THE GLORY OF BOOKS: "...in Germany the cultural definition of the 'book' as a major source of intellectual, scientific, economic and aesthetic self-improvement has carried the day over the capitalist notion that a book is a commodity and therefore deserving of no special considerations. The book as such is sacred. One does not throw books away." Michael Naumann, “Germany, by the Book,” The Nation (June 18, 2012).

Contact Arkansas Congressional Delegation

Arkansas is represented in Congress by two senators and four representatives. Here is how to reach them. None of the senators or representatives publishes his e-mail address, but each can be contacted by filling in forms offered through his website.

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JONESBORO: (870) 268-6925
LITTLE ROCK: (501) 372-7153
LOWELL: (479) 725-0400
MOUNTAIN HOME: (870) 424-0129
STUTTGART: (870) 672-6941
EL DORADO: (870) 863-4641
Website: www.boozman.senate.gov

Sen. Mark Pryor
Democrat, second term
255 Dirksen Office Building
Constitution Avenue and
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REPRESENTATIVES
Rep. Rick Crawford
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Website: www.crawford.house.gov

Rep. Tim Griffin
2ND DISTRICT
Republican, second term
1232 Longworth Office Building
New Jersey and
Independence Avenues SE
Contents #1

2013 (FYI 2014)


Mismanagement: How Can Our Generals and Secretaries of War Lose Trillions of Dollars?

Tomgram (Nick Turse), Kramer and Pemberton, Conversion: Demilitarize the Economy

United for Peace and Justice UFPJ vs. 2014 FY

Sia, Cutting Egregious Fat Insignificant, a Non-Killing Drone Not Needed

Naiman, Cut Pentagon Not Social Services

Randall, FCNL, Demand a Budget for Helping People, Not Neglecting or Killing Them

Comparing Earlier Budgets

Korb, 2006

Website: www.pryor.senate.gov

Washington, D.C. 20515
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HOT SPRINGS: (501) 520-5892
PINE BLUFF: (870) 536-3376
Website: www.cotton.house.gov

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US Imperialism Newsletters
Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index: http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

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Kutler: McGovern’ Critique of US Foreign Policy
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San Juan , PNAC Militarist Takeover Remembered
Vlchek, US and USSR Compared
Empire and Social Sciences
Early Years, 2 Books
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Blum, America's Deadliest Export
Boggs, The Crimes of Empire
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    Kuzmarov: Control and Police Training
Dirty Wars Film
Quigley’s The Ruses for War Republished Updated
Wikipedia, US Imperialism
US Navy, US Imperialism: Google Search
Dick, US Navy in US Interests Anywhere, Any Time
Kirschner, Historical Open: 128 US Military Invasions and Interventions

Contents #13 Sept. 3, 2013
Drake, Robert La Follette Anti-Imperialist
Bennis, Challenging Empire
Chomsky, Imperial USA a Failed State
Davies, How Totalitarian Societies Produce Wars
Vonnegut, War the Worst Addiction of All
Engelhardt, US Culture of War and Children
Cockburn, Ferocity and Failure of US Sanctions
Engelhardt, US Permanent War But What Orwell Did Not Foresee
Here is the link to all of OMNI’s newsletters

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/  Laying the foundation for peace, justice, and ecology in knowledge.

END US EMPIRE NEWSLETTER #14

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Dick Bennett

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