
A FELON FOR PEACE

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Tom Engelhardt, who runs the Nation Institute's **Tomdispatch.com** ("a regular antidote to the mainstream media"), is consulting editor for Metropolitan Books. He is the co-founder of the **American Empire Project** (www.americanempireproject.com) and the author of **The End of Victory Culture**, a history of American triumphalism in the Cold War, and the **Last Days of Publishing**, a novel about the commercial world of books.

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A FELON FOR PEACE

TOM ENGELHARDT

She's just off the plane from Tulsa, Oklahoma, the cheapest route back from a reunion in the little Arkansas town where she grew up in the 1950s. For thirty years, she and her childhood friends have climbed to the top of Penitentiary Mountain, where the local persimmon trees grow, for a persimmon-spitting contest. ("All in the great spirit of just having fun and being crazy.") She holds out her hands and says, "I probably still have persimmon goop on me!"

We seat ourselves at a table in my dining room, two small tape recorders between us. She's dressed all in black with a bright green overshirt, a middle-aged blond woman wearing gold earrings and a thin gold necklace. As she settles in, her sleeves pull back, revealing the jewelry she'd rather talk about. On her right wrist is a pink, plastic band. "This one was to be a volunteer in the Astrodome for Hurricane Katrina. I did two days work there, then three days in Covington, Louisiana, the first week after." On her left wrist, next to a watch from another age, are two blue plastic bands: "And this one," she says with growing animation, fingering the nearest of them, "was my very first arrest of my whole life on September 26th in front of the White House with 400 of my closest friends. This is the bus number I was on and this is the arrest number they gave me and then, later on, I had to date it because now I have

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two." She fingers the second band. "Last week 26 of us were arrested after a die-in right in front of the White House in commemoration of the two thousandth American and maybe one hundred thousandth Iraqi who died in this war. So now," she announces, chuckling heartily, "I'm a felon for peace."

When she speaks – and in the final g's she drops from words ("It's freezin' in Mongolia!") – you can catch just a hint of the drawl of that long-gone child from Bentonville, Arkansas. In her blunt, straightforward manner, you can catch something of her 29 years in the Army; and in her ease perhaps, the 16 years she spent as a State Department diplomat. Animated, amused by her foibles (and those of her interviewer), articulate and thoughtful, she's just the sort of person you would want to defend – and then represent your country, a task she continues to perform, after her own fashion, as one of the more out-of-the-ordinary antiwar activists of our moment.

Last August, she had a large hand in running Camp Casey for Cindy Sheehan at the President's doorstep in Crawford, Texas; then again, that wasn't such a feat, given that in 1997 she had overseen the evacuation of 2,500 foreigners from the war zone that was then Sierra Leone, a harrowing experience for which she was given the State Department's Award for Heroism. "That's why I joined the foreign service," she comments, her voice still filled with some residual excitement from those years. "I wanted to go to places you wouldn't visit on vacation." In fact, the retired colonel opened and closed embassies from Africa to Uzbekistan and took some of the roughest diplomatic assignments on Earth, including the reopening of the American embassy in Kabul in December 2001.

On March 19, 2003, the day before the first Cruise missiles were launched against Baghdad, she resigned from the Foreign Service in an open letter sent from the U.S. embassy in Mongolia (where she was then Deputy Chief of Mission) to Secretary of State Colin Powell. In it she wrote, in part:

"This is the only time in my many years serving America that I have felt I cannot represent the policies of an Administration of the United States. I

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disagree with the Administration's policies on Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, North Korea and curtailment of civil liberties in the U.S. itself. I believe the Administration's policies are making the world a more dangerous, not a safer, place. I feel obligated morally and professionally to set out my very deep and firm concerns on these policies and to resign from government service as I cannot defend or implement them."

Once used to delivering official U.S. statements to other governments, she now says things like: "Everyone should have to be handcuffed with the flexi-cuffs they use now and feel just how inflexible they are, just how they cut, and then imagine Iraqis, Afghans, and other people we pick up in them 24 hours a day." She relaxes, sits back, awaits the first question, and responds with gusto.

Tom Engelhardt: *I thought we'd start by talking about two important but quite different moments in your life. The first was not so long ago. Let me quote from a New York Times article on a recent Condoleezza Rice appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "It was a day that echoed the anguish, anger and skepticism that opinion polls show have begun to dominate the thinking of Americans. The hearing was punctuated by a heckler who called for an end to the war, only to be hustled out." Now, I believe this was you.*

Ann Wright: [She chuckles.] Yes! Not a heckler, I was a protester.

TE: *Tell me about it.*

AW: It was as much a protest against the Senators as against Condoleezza Rice, because they were not holding our Secretary of State responsible. I picked up the Washington Post that morning and noticed that Condoleezza was going to testify on Iraq, and I thought, well, I'm free until noon. When I walked in, I was not planning on doing anything.

But I sat there for two hours and Senators were saying: We've heard the

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administration is discussing a military option in Syria and perhaps Iran. The committee needs to be brought in on this, because we've only given you authorization for military action in Iraq. In an almost rude, dismissive tone, the Secretary of State essentially replied: We'll talk to you when we want to; all options are on the table; and thank you very much. Then the senators just kind of sat there. It was like: Come on, guys talk! Pin that woman down! We, the people, want to know. I want to know. And then they just started off on something else. It was like: No! Come back to this question. We don't want to go to war in Syria or Iran...

TE: *And did you stand up?*

AW: So I stood up. I was back in the peanut gallery. I've never done anything like it before in my whole life. I took a deep breath and went, "Stop the killing! Stop the war! Hold this woman accountable! You, the Senate, were bamboozled by the administration on Iraq and you cannot be bamboozled again! Stop this woman from killing!"

At that point, I ran out of things to say because I hadn't really planned it. [She laughs.] I was looking around. There was only one police officer and he was just ambling toward me. It was like he enjoyed what I was saying. I thought, until he gets here I've got to say something more, so I went: "You failed us in Iraq, you can't fail us on Syria!" The police officer finally said, "Uh, ma'am, you've got to come with me." This is the first time – somebody told me later – anyone's ever seen a protester put her arm around a police officer. [She laughs.]

TE: *So you weren't "hustled" out?*

AW: Noooooo. It was a slow walk and there was silence in the room, so I thought: Well, I can't let this go by and I started another little rant on the way out. That part wasn't mentioned in the news reports.

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TE: *At least some papers like the Washington Post mentioned you by name. The Times merely called you a heckler.*

AW: Well, how rude! I wasn't heckling anyway. I was speaking on behalf of the people of America.

TE: *This obviously takes you a long way from your professional life, because you were in the Foreign Service for...*

AW: Sixteen years...

TD: *... and in all those years this would have been rather inconceivable.*

AW: Having testified at congressional hearings as a Foreign Service officer, particularly on Somalia issues back in '93 and '94, I was always humbled to go into those rooms as a government employee. I always found it interesting when people in the audience stood up to say something. You know, I learned later that most protestors do it in the first ten minutes because that's when the cameras and all the reporters are sure to be there.

As it happened, the chairman of the committee declined to have me arrested. The police officer said, "Well, if you're disappointed, I can arrest you." I replied, "If you don't mind, I'll just run on over to my lunch appointment." I was actually on my way to a presentation by Larry Wilkerson, Colin Powell's former chief of staff, where he would describe the secrecy of the administration and the way the State Department was isolated by the White House and the National Security Council.

TD: *Another moment of protest, one I'm sure you thought about very carefully, took place the day before the shock-and-awe campaign against Iraq began. That day you sent a letter of public resignation to Colin Powell which began – and not many people could have written such a sentence – "When I last saw you in Kabul in 2002..."*

AW: Indeed I had volunteered to go to Kabul, Afghanistan in December

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2001 to be part of a small team that reopened the U.S. embassy. It had been closed for twelve years. I have a background in opening and closing embassies. I helped open an embassy in Uzbekistan, closed and reopened an embassy in Sierra Leone. I've been evacuated from Somalia and Sierra Leone. And with my military background, I've worked in a lot in combat environments.

I volunteered because I felt the United States needed to respond to the events of 9/11, and the logical place to go after al-Qaeda was where they trained, knowing full well that you probably weren't going to get a lot of people. The al-Qaeda group is very smart and few of them, in my estimation, would have been hanging out where we were most likely to go after them in Afghanistan. Actually, I was amazed the administration went in physically. I thought, like the Clinton administration, they would send in cruise missiles. Considering the severity of September 11, I guess the military finally said: Well, it looks like we're going into that hell-hole where the Russians got their butts whipped. Everybody knew it was going to be tough.

TD: *You've commented elsewhere that a crucial moment for you was watching the President's Axis of Evil State of the Union address from a bunker in Kabul.*

AW: A bunker outside the chancellery building meant to protect against the rockets the mujahedeen were sending against each other after they defeated the Soviets. We had taken [then interim leader] Hamid Karzai, who had been invited to the State of the Union, to Bagram Air Base and sent him off three days before. We told him, "You've got to start getting together some detailed plans for economic development funds because the attention of the United States doesn't stay on any country for long; so, get your little fledgling cabinet moving fast." Well, the President started talking about other interests that the United States had after 9/11 and these interests were Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Just as he said that, the cameras focused on Karzai and you could almost see him going: Hmmmm [she

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mugs a wince], now I know what they were telling me at the embassy. And we were sitting there thinking, Oh my God...

TD: *You had a functioning TV?*

AW: Barely. We had a satellite dish made of pounded-out coke cans – these were being sold down in Kabul – and a computer chip sent in from Islamabad, because we wanted to hear from Washington what was going to happen with Afghanistan. When, instead of talking much about Afghanistan, the President started in on this axis-of-evil stuff we were stunned. We were thinking: Hell's bells, we're here in a very dangerous place without enough military. So for the President to start talking about this axis of evil... everyone in the bunker just went: Oh Christ, here we go! No wonder we're not getting the economic development specialists in here yet. If the American government was going after al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and clearing out the Taliban and preparing to help the people of Afghanistan, why the hell was it taking so long? Well, that statement said it all.

TD: *Did you at that moment suspect a future invasion of Iraq?*

AW: I'm a little naïve sometimes. I really never, ever suspected we would go to war in Iraq. There was no attempt at that moment to tie 9/11 to Iraq, so it didn't even dawn on me.

Anyway, that was the preface to my letter of resignation. I wanted to emphasize that I had seen Colin Powell on his first trip to Kabul. I wanted to show that this was a person who had lots of experience.

TD: *In the whole Vietnam era, few, if any, government officials offered public resignations of protest, but before the invasion of Iraq even began, three diplomats – Brady Kiesling, John Brown, and yourself resigned in a most public fashion. It must have been a wrenching decision.*

AW: I had been concerned since September 2002 when I read in the

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papers that we had something like 100,000 troops already in the Middle East, many left behind after the Bright Star [military] exercise we have every two years in Egypt. I thought: Uh-oh, the administration is doing some sneaky-Pete stuff on us. They were claiming they wanted UN inspectors to go back into Iraq, when a military build-up was already underway. It's one thing to put troops in the region for pressure, but if you're leaving that many behind, you're going to be using them. Then, as the mushroom-cloud rhetoric started getting stronger, it was like: Good God! These guys mean to go to war, no matter what the evidence is.

By November, I was having trouble sleeping. I would wake up at three, four in the morning – this was in Mongolia where it was freezing cold – wrap up in blankets, go to the kitchen table, and just start pouring my soul out. By the time I finally sent that resignation letter in, I had a stack of drafts like this. [She lifts her hand a couple of feet off the table.] I did know two others had resigned, but quite honestly I hadn't read their letters and I didn't know them.

TD: *You were ending your life in a way, life as you had known it...*

AW: Thirty-five years in the government between my military service and the State Department, under seven administrations. It was hard. I liked representing America.

TD: *Was there a moment when you knew you couldn't represent this government anymore?*

AW: I kept hoping the administration would go back to the Security Council for its authorization to go to war. That's why I held off until virtually the bombs were being dropped. I was hoping against hope that our government would not go into what really is an illegal war of aggression that meets no criteria of international law. When it was finally evident we were going to do so, I said to myself: It ain't going to be on my watch.

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TD: *Was it like crossing a border into a different world?*

AW: It was a great relief. During the lead-up to war, I had begun showing symptoms of an impending heart attack. The State Department put me on a medivac flight to Singapore for heart tests. The doctors said, "Lady, you're as strong as a horse. Are you just under some kind of stress?" "Yes, I am!" The moment I sent in that letter, it was like a great burden had been lifted from my shoulders. At least I had made my stand and joined the other two who had resigned.

TD: *And what of those you left behind?*

AW: In the first couple of days, while I was still in Mongolia, I received over 400 emails from colleagues in the State Department saying: We're so sad you're not going to be with us, but we're so proud of the three of you who resigned because we think this going-to-war is just so horrible; then each one would describe how anti-American feeling was growing in the country where they were serving. It was so poignant, all those emails.

TD: *Why don't you think more people in the government – and in the military where there's clearly been opposition to Iraq at a very high level – quit and speak out?*

AW: There were a few. [General] Eric Shinseki talked about the short-changing of the [Iraq] operations plan by a couple of hundred thousand people. He was forced out. But see, in the military, in the Foreign Service, you're not supposed to be speaking your own mind. Your job is to implement the policies of an administration elected by the people of America. If you don't want to, your only option is to resign. I understood that and that's one of the reasons I resigned – to give myself the freedom to talk out.

There are a lot of people still in government service speaking out, but you've got to read between the lines. The senior military leaders in Iraq, what they've been saying is very different from what Donald Rumsfeld and the gang in Washington say. These guys are being honest and truthful

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about the lack of Iraqi battalions really ready for military work, the dangers the troops are under, the days when the military doesn't go out on the streets. They're signaling to America: We're up a creek on this one, guys, and you, the people of America, are going to have to help us out.

TD: *Let's talk about [Colin Powell's chief of staff] Larry Wilkerson as an example. He assumedly left after the election when Colin Powell did, so almost a year has passed. He saw what he believed was a secret cabal running the government and it took him that long after he was gone to tell us about it. I'm glad he spoke out. But I wonder why there isn't a more urgent impulse to do so?*

AW: If you look at Dick Clarke [the President's former chief adviser on terrorism on the National Security Council], he had all the secrets from the very beginning and he retired in January 2003. Yet he didn't say anything for over a year and a half, until he published that book [Against All Enemies] in 2004. If he had gone public before the war started, that man could have told us those same secrets right then. So could [the National Security Council's senior director for combating terrorism] Randy Beers. I worked with both of them on Somalia, on Sierra Leone. I know these guys personally and it's like: Guys, why didn't you come forward then?

As you probably know, on the key issues of the first four years of the Bush administration, the State Department was essentially iced out. I mean, look at the Iraq War. Colin Powell and the State Department were just shoved aside and all State's functions put into the Department of Defense. Tragically, Colin Powell, who was trying to counsel Donald Rumsfeld behind the scenes that there weren't enough troops in Iraq, never stood up to say, "Hold it, guys, I'll resign if we don't get this under control so that logical functions go in logical organizations and you, the Defense Department, don't do post-combat civil reconstruction stuff. That's ours." He just didn't do it. To me, he was more loyal to the Bush family than he was to the country. His resignation was possibly the one thing that could

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have deterred the war. Then the people of America would really have looked closely at what was going on. But tragically he decided loyalty to the administration was more valuable than loyalty to the country. I mean, it breaks my heart to say that, but it's what really happened.

TD: *So what is it that actually holds people back?*

AW: I think the higher up you go, the more common it is for people to retire, or maybe even resign, and not say what the reasons are, because they may hope to get back into government in a different administration. Dick Clarke had served every administration since George Washington and maybe he was looking toward being called back as a political appointee again. Sometimes such people don't speak out because they feel loyalty to the person who appointed them. Nobody appointed me to nothin', except the American people. I'm a career foreign service officer and I serve the American people. When an administration wasn't serving the best interests of the American people, I felt I had to stand up.

TD: *And are you now pretty much a full-time antiwar activist?*

AW: [She laughs.] That's the way it's turned out.

TD: *What, if anything, do you think your military career, your State Department career, and this... well, I can't call it a career... have in common?*

AW: Service to America. It's all just a continuation of a real concern I have about my country.

TD: *And what would you say to your former compatriots still in the military and the State Department?*

AW: Many of the emails I received from Foreign Service officers said, I wish I could resign right now, but I've got kids in college, I've got mort-

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gages, and I'm going to try really hard, by staying, to ameliorate the intensity of these policies. All I can say is that they must be in agony about not being able to affect policy. There have been plenty of early retirements by people who finally realized they couldn't moderate the policies of the Bush administration.

TD: *What message would you send to the person you once were from the person you are now?*

AW: You trained me well.

TD: *If in this room you had the thirty-five year-old woman about to go into Grenada, as you did back in 1983, what would you want her to mull over.*

AW: I would say: You were a good Army officer and Foreign Service officer. You weren't blind to the faults of America. In many jobs, you tried to rectify things that were going badly and you succeeded a couple of times. My resignation wasn't the first time I spoke out. For instance, I was loaned, or seconded, from the State Department to the staff of the United Nations operation in Somalia and ended up writing a memo concerning the military operations the UN was conducting to kill a warlord named Addid. They started taking helicopters, standing off, and just blowing up buildings where they had intelligence indicating perhaps he was there. Well, tragically he never was, and here we were blowing up all these Somali families. Of course the Somalis were outraged and that outrage ultimately led to Blackhawk Down.

I wrote a legal opinion to the special representative of the Secretary General, saying the UN operations were illegal and had to stop. It was leaked to the Washington Post and I got in a bit of hot water initially, but ultimately my analysis proved correct. I was also a bit of a rabble-rouser on the utilization of women in the military back in the eighties, part of a small group of women who took on the Army when it was trying to reduce the career potentials of women. I ended up getting right in the thick of some

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major problems which ultimately cost the Army millions of dollars in the reassessment of units that had been given incorrect direct-combat probability codings. I was also part of a team which discovered that some of our troops had been looting private homes in Grenada. The Army court-martialed a lot of our soldiers for this violation of the law of land warfare. We used their example in rewriting how you teach the code of conduct and, actually, the Geneva Convention on the responsibility of occupiers.

TD: *You know a good deal about the obligations of an occupying power to protect public and private property, partially because in the 1980s you were doing planning on the Middle East, right?*

AW: Yes, from 1982 to 1984, I was at Fort Bragg, North Carolina when the Army was planning for potential operations using the Rapid Deployment Force – what ultimately became the Central Command. One of the first forces used in rapid deployment operations was the 82 Airborne at Fort Bragg. I was in the special operations end of it with civil affairs. Those are the people who write up the annexes to operations plans about how you interact with the civilian population, how you protect the facilities — sewage, water, electrical grids, libraries. We were doing it for the whole Middle East. I mean, we have operations plans on the shelf for every country in the world, or virtually. So we did one on Iraq; we did one on Syria; on Jordan, Egypt. All of them.

We would, for instance, take the UNESCO list of treasures of the world and go through it. Okay, any in Iraq? Yep. Okay, mark 'em, circle 'em on a map, put 'em in the op-plan. Whatever you do, don't bomb this. Make sure we've got enough troops to protect this. It's our obligation under the law of land warfare. We'd be circling all the electrical grids, all the oil grids, all the museums. So for us to go into Iraq and let all that looting happen. Well, Rumsfeld wanted a light, mobile force, and screw the obligations of treaties. Typical of this administration on any treaty thing. Forget 'em.

So everything was Katy-bar-the-door. Anybody could go in and rip up

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anything. Many of the explosives now being used to kill our troops come from the ammo dumps we did not secure. It was a total violation of every principle we had for planning military operations and their aftermath. People in the civil affairs units, they were just shaking their heads, wondering how in the hell this could have happened. We've been doing these operations plans forever, so I can only imagine the bitchin' and moanin' about – how come we don't have this civilian/military annex? It's in every other op-plan. And where are the troops, where are the MPs?

TD: *If back in the early eighties you were planning to save the antiquities of every country in the Middle East, then obviously the Pentagon was also planning for a range of possible invasions in the region. Do you look back now and ask: What kind of a country has contingency plans to invade any country you can imagine?*

AW: One of the things you are likely to do at a certain point in your military career is operations plans. It did not then seem abnormal to me at all that we had contingency plans for the Middle East, or for countries in the Caribbean or South America. At that stage, I was not looking at the imperialism of the United States. I just didn't equate those contingency plans with empire-building goals. However, depending on how those plans are used, they certainly can be just that. Remember as well that this was in the days of the Cold War and, by God, that camouflaged a lot of stuff. You could always say: You never can tell what those Soviets are going to do, so you better be prepared anywhere in the world to defeat them.

TD: *And we're still prepared anywhere in the world...*

AW: Well, we are and now, let's see, where are the Russians? [She laughs heartily.]

TD: Tell me briefly the story of your life.

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AW: I grew up in Arkansas, just a normal childhood. I think the Girl Scouts was a formative organization for me. It had a plan to it, opportunity to travel outside Arkansas, good goals – working on those little badges. Early State Department. Early military too. It's kind of interesting, the militarization of our society, how we don't really think of some things, and yet when I look back, there I was a little Girl Scout in my green uniform, and so putting on an Army uniform after college wasn't that big a deal. I'd been in a uniform before and I knew how to salute, three fingers. [She demonstrates.]

If you look, we now have junior ROTC in the high schools. We have child soldiers in America. We're good at getting kids used to those uniforms. And then there's the militarization of industries and corporations, the necessity every ten years to have a war because we need a new generation of weaponry. Corporations in the military-industrial complex are making lots of money off of new types of weaponry and vehicles.

TD: *While you were in the military, did you have any sense that these wars were actually living weapons labs?*

AW: Particularly seeing the privatization after Gulf War I, going into Somalia. All of a sudden, as fast as military troops were arriving, you had Halliburton and Kellogg, Brown, and Root in Somalia. They started saying, You need mess halls, oh, we'll do the mess halls for you. And it turned out they had staged a lot of their equipment in the Middle East after the Gulf War. So it was in Somalia lickety-split. The privatization of military functions is now so pervasive that the military can no longer function by itself, without the contractors and corporations. These contractors, these mercenaries really, are now fundamentally critical to the operations of the U.S. military.

TD: *So a Girl Scout and...*

AW: In my junior year at the University of Arkansas, a recruiter came

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through town with the film, "Join the Army, See the World." I had been an education major for three years. Nurse, teacher, those were the careers for women. I didn't want any of it. So, in the middle of the Vietnam War, I signed up to go to a three-week Army training program, just to see if I liked it. And I found it challenging. Even though there were protests going on all over America, I divorced myself from what the military actually did versus what opportunities it offered me. I hated all these people getting killed in Vietnam, but I said to myself: I'm not going to kill anyone and I'm taking the place of somebody who will be able to go do something else. All these arguments that... now you look at it and go: Oh my God, what did you do?

TD: *Don't you think this happens now?*

AW: Absolutely! I sympathize with the people in the military right now. The majority didn't sign up to kill anybody. You always prayed that, whatever administration it was, it didn't go off on some wild goose chase that got you into a war you personally thought was really stupid.

TD: *Would you counsel a young woman now to go into the military?*

AW: I think we will always have a military and I think the military is honorable service as long as the civilian leadership uses it in appropriate ways and is very cautious about sending us to war. And yes, I would encourage people to look at a military career, but I would also tell them that, if they're sent to do something they think is wrong, they don't have to stay in, though they may have to take some consequences for saying, "Thank you very much but I'm not going to kill anybody."

In fact, if I were recalled to active duty, which is possible... I put myself purposely at the Retired Ready Reserve so that, if there was ever an emergency and my country needed me, I could be recalled, and in fact there are people my age, 59, who are agreeing to be recalled. The ultimate irony would be resigning from my career in the diplomatic corps and then having the Bush administration recall me, because my specialty, civil affairs, recon-

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struction, is in really short supply. I'm a colonel. I know how to run battalions and brigades. I can do this stuff. But I would have to tell them, sorry, I refuse to be placed on active duty. And if they push hard enough, then I'd just have to be court-martialed and I'd go to Leavenworth. I will not serve this administration in the Iraq war which I firmly believe is an illegal war of aggression.

TD: *You know, if someone had said to me back in the 1960s that a Vice President of the United States might go to Congress to lobby for a torture exemption for the CIA the way Dick Cheney has done, I would have said: This couldn't happen. Never in American history. I'm staggered by this.*

AW: Me, too. The other thing that's quite interesting is the number of women who are involved in it. There were something like eighty women I've identified, ranging from high officers to CIA contractors being used as interrogators in Guantanamo. Talking about things that will come back to bite us big time, this is it. And we are complicit, all of us, because, quite honestly, we're not standing out in front of the White House every single day, and every time that Vice President leaves throwing our bodies in front of his car, throwing blood on it. We need to get tough with these guys. They're not listening to us. They think we're a bunch of wimps. We've got to get tougher and tougher with them to show them we're not going to put up with this stuff.

TD: *You've quoted Teddy Roosevelt as saying: "To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public." I was particularly struck by that word "servile." Do you want to talk about dissent for a moment?*

AW: Well, we shouldn't be hesitant about voicing our opinions, even in the most difficult of times which generally is when your nation is going to war and you're standing up to say, this isn't right. That's tough and, in fact, the

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first couple of months after I resigned, oh man, all that TV and nothing on but the war, and very few people wanted to hear me. It probably was a good four months before anybody even asked me to come speak about why I had dissented, and that was a little lonely. [She chuckles.]

TD: *Any final thoughts?*

AW: We now have a two-and-a-half-year track record of being a very brutal country. We are the cause of the violence in Iraq. That violence will continue as long as we're there, and the administration maintains that we will be there until we win. That means to me that this administration is planning for a long-term siege in Iraq. It means that young men and women in America should be prepared for the draft because the military right now cannot support what this administration wants. In fact, yesterday I was talking to about ninety high school seniors in Fayetteville, Arkansas, a very Republican part of the United States. I said: Your parents may support this war, but how strongly do you feel about it? If it drags on for years and there's a draft, how many of you will willingly go? Only three put up their hands.

We are continuing down a very dangerous road. The United States and its citizenry are held in disdain in world opinion for not being able to stop this war machine. So one of the things I'm doing is ratcheting up my own level of response. A dear friend, Joe Palambo, a Vietnam veteran in Veterans for Peace who went to hear the President in Norfolk when he talked about terrorism, was recently cited in the newspapers this way: There was one protestor in the second row of the audience who stood up and railed against the President, saying: "You're the terrorist! This war is a war of terrorism!" Joe called me right after that happened and said, "Hey, Ann, I heard what you did in the Senate and I thought, I'm going to go do the same thing to the President."

I mean, we're going to dog these guys all over the country. Our Secretary of State, our Secretary of Defense, our Vice President, our President, our

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National Security Adviser, the head of the CIA, any of these people who are the warmongers, who are the murderers in the name of our country, wherever they go, the people of America need to stand up to them to say, "No! Stop! Stop this war. Stop this killing. Get us out of this mess." Because that's the only time they hear it, when we stand up in these venues. They don't come out to the street in front of the White House to see the hundreds of thousands of people who are protesting. They ignore that. But for those fifteen seconds, if you can stand up so that everybody in that audience sees that there's one person, or maybe even two or three... Who knows?



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