

INSIDE: SEEING STARS AT THE PENTAGON ● SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW FASCISM ● PALESTINE & THE LAST TABOO ● THE STATE WITHOUT SHAME ● & MORE

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**AMERICA'S
SUMMER
OF HATE**

By MICHAEL I. NIMAN

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A nation at war with other countries eventually becomes a nation at war with itself, says journalism professor, Michael I. Niman, The Iraq war and the 40-year-old war on drugs have come home, with a huge rise in the rate of senseless murders in American cities. It's time to call a halt . . .

INSIDE AMERICA'S SUMMER OF HATE

Drug gangs, drive-bys, executions, revenge killing, automatic weapons, funerals, prayer vigils and “Stop the Violence” rallies – these are the headlines for summer 2006 in most American cities and countless small towns. We’re awash in blood as an endless stream of senseless murders dominate our evening newscasts. Using words like “insanity” to describe the wave of killings, besieged communities are calling for forces ranging from God to the National Guard to come save us from our own children. Community activists want to know what the hell is going on.

Simple. The Iraq war, predictably, and right on schedule, has come home. It’s one of those “I told you so” moments when progressives consciously have to avoid appearing arrogant in the face of calamity as yet one more foreseeable consequence of Bush administration policies catastrophically plays itself out.

The historically verified pattern works like this: The US, in going to war, models wholesale violence as its

most effective strategy for problem resolution. Such violence goes unquestioned, and is even glorified, by a mainstream media that celebrates the technology of mass killing while playing down the humanity of its victims. “Embedded” reporters talk about the merits and features of different weapons systems while avoiding reporting firsthand on humanistic stories about how such weapons impact the people upon whose communities they rain down.

Subjective camera angles show us the perspective of soldiers firing weapons, but never the story of a family whose small child just stumbled upon a cluster bomblet. We learn to feel and identify with the power of those soldiers – not to empathize with the invisible victims. When victims do appear, they are editorially stripped of their subjectivity, written off as necessary “collateral damage.”

The armed forces, like the tobacco industry, are constantly prowling for youthful recruits to replace those who quit, are injured or are killed. As with other child predators, the search for

Subjective camera angles show us the perspective of soldiers firing weapons, but never the story of a family whose small child just stumbled upon a cluster bomblet

THE PRICE OF WAR

Once violence is modeled and celebrated on such a mass scale, it's only a matter of time before people start emulating their government, using violence to solve their own problems

naive youngsters willing to enlist to become cannon fodder for an increasingly discredited government leads recruiters into the nation's schools, onto Web sites and into cultural venues frequented by young people. Once there, they use every seductive tool modern media offers to lure children into their web of violence. This includes distributing posters glorifying armed and dangerous young recruits who are shown in control of powerful weapons systems, offering online video games where players can virtually experience the power of an assassin, or even working recruiting videos into the electronic wallpaper at Chuck-E-Cheese. In poorer schools, where students face bleak job prospects, school administrators invite recruiters to pose as teachers, militarizing their curriculums with Junior ROTC programs. In the end, the recruiting process not only snares enlistees – it lends the credibility of government to a regimen of ultra violence.

Once violence is modeled and celebrated on such a mass scale, it's only a matter of time before people start emulating their government, using violence to solve their own problems. This reality has been with us since media technology starting bringing wars and military recruiting into our homes and schools.

According to US Department of Justice statistics, the US domestic murder rate spiked by five percent during World War I. During the longer World War II, the rate temporarily rose by 15 percent. It went up five per-

cent during the shorter Korean War, and then surged by a whopping 40 percent during the decade-plus Vietnam War.

This pattern all but guaranteed that as the current war against Iraq dragged on, the domestic murder rate would increase accordingly. As with previous wars, there is a lag time from when the war starts to when the war hits home. Usually, as wars wear on, governments become harder pressed to justify them, hence increasing vilification of enemies and a concurrent celebration of the impending “victory,” usually through annihilation of said enemies.

In the case of the current Iraq War, the lag time was further drawn out by early media insistence that this wasn't really a war but a benign “police action” meant to “liberate” the country that would actually wind up occupied.

With the war now dragging on longer than US involvement in World War II, the reality of the war, as a war, and the government's need to justify it, have both hit home. Hence, according to the FBI, the nation saw a 4.8 percent increase in its murder rate from 2004 to 2005, with what might be an even larger jump for 2006.

Complicating the matter is another war – the four-decade-long “War on Drugs,” initially declared by President Nixon. As this failed “war” increased the penalties and risk associated with drug dealing, it drove some dealers out of the market, tightening the availability of illicit drugs. With the market tightened, but demand still

THE PRICE OF WAR

strong, street prices went up, making the market more profitable, and hence more competitive, for the smaller and more committed number of dealers that remained. Drug War critics refer to this outcome as a government price support for drug gangs.

Here we have an irony. As the conservative Cato Institute has pointed out, the more we spend on anti-drug measures, the more lucrative the drug trade becomes, and the more violence we see as rival groups of drug dealers literally battle for market share. Since they are already facing draconian anti-drug laws (60 percent of federal prisoners and 25 percent of state prisoners nationwide are incarcerated for drug dealing or possession), adding potential murder charges into the mix doesn't act as an additional deterrent.

Again, none of this should have come to us as a surprise. We saw a similar spike in violence in the 1920s during Prohibition, when rival gangs brutally fought over the lucrative liquor-running market. The difference is that while Prohibition was repealed after 13 years, the failed War on Drugs is approaching its 40th birthday, with the only real result being an uptick in violence and the creation of a global class of powerful, rich, violent narco-traffickers.

It gets worse. The money used to incarcerate drug prisoners and fund other aspects of the War on Drugs, and the bottomless pit of tax dollars incinerated daily by the Iraq War, represent funding diverted from education, job creation, effective policing and drug treatment programs that

could effectively address our current epidemic of violence.

Likewise, some of the knee-jerk draconian responses proposed by well-intentioned community activists promise to also, if enacted, exasperate rather than solve the problem of street violence. History has shown that police-state escalations in the War on Drugs only serve to increase profits and hence violent competition for those profits.

There's only one effective way to address violence on our streets — that's to address violence and the celebration of violence in our society. In the past, war-caused surges in the nation's murder rates have subsided when the wars have ended.

This holds true for Prohibition as well. If we are serious about ending the insane bloodshed on our streets we need to end the insane bloodshed in Baghdad. We need to end the War on Drugs. We need to get military recruiters and JROTC out of our schools. We need to fund education and drug treatment instead of endless wars.

We need to end the social inequality that offers one set of children the opportunity to go to college while tempting another with only the riches from drug-dealing.

In short, if we want peace, we need to live in peace as a nation and as a society. **CT**

Dr. Michael I. Niman is a professor of journalism at Buffalo State College and Vice President of Niagara Independent Media (AM 1270).

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THE ARMS TRADE

*America's best-known export to the world is movies (and movie stars). But, as **Frida Berrigan** reminds us, we should also be aware of the export for which the country is the second-best known throughout the world: the arms trade, in which US firms often - very profitably - supply arms to both sides of regional conflicts*

SEEING STARS AT THE PENTAGON

In Uzbekistan, those same movie fans are denied the rights of free speech and assembly, while President Islam Karimov tightens his grip on power with an array of arms made in the USA

Oh, the stars! We're riveted by their clothes, their suntans, what they do (and don't) eat for breakfast. We're titillated when they appear too fat, disheveled, or lumpy. We're envious when they're expectably sleek, well muscled, and well coiffed. Christie Brinkley's heartbreak is front page news. Britney's baby gaffes are carefully dissected. The trials and tribulations of Jessica and Nick and Jennifer and Brad provided the tabloids and entertainment mags with months of fodder.

America exported \$10.48 billion worth of film and television in 2004. The world's favorite TV show is the soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful*. Every day, in almost every corner of the globe, people stream to movies made in the United States. They watch Halle Berry conjure up a storm with her eyes, Johnny Depp swash-buckle his way through the Caribbean, and Keanu Reeves swoon and mope in the company of Sandra Bullock. (Sorry about that last one, world!). But, in Uzbekistan, those

same movie fans are denied the rights of free speech and assembly, while President Islam Karimov tightens his grip on power with an array of arms made in the USA. In the Philippines, they watch the country's debt skyrocket as President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo gobbles up American weaponry at startling prices and an alarming rate.

Like American entertainment, American arms are a multibillion-dollar industry that leans heavily on foreign sales. In fact, the United States exported \$18.55 billion in fighter planes, attack helicopters, tanks, battleships, and other weaponry in 2005. All signs point to 2006 being another banner export year. Just as in the movie, TV, and music businesses, we dwarf the competition.

Russia is the next largest arms exporter with a measly \$4 billion in yearly sales. In fact, U.S. arms exports accounted for more than half of total global arms deliveries - \$34.8 billion - in 2004, and we export more of them ourselves than the next six largest exporters combined.

Given the huge payoffs and even larger payloads delivered, isn't it strange how little attention the American arms industry gets? Maybe, in some small part, that's because the industry's magazines all have the word "Defense," or some equivalent, prominently displayed on the cover – Defense Week, Defense News – instead of Glamour or Allure. Maybe it's because of the Pentagon's predilection for less than magnetic

PowerPoint presentations, unbearably unexpressive acronyms, and slightly paunchy, very pasty, older white men in business suits. Maybe the arms trade just doesn't seek the plush of the red carpet or the jittery pulse of flashing paparazzi cameras. Or maybe, it's a business that just loves to revel in profitable anonymity.

But don't be fooled. Like Hollywood, the arms industry has sex to spare.

After all, the weapons themselves are all gleaming golden curves and massive thrusting spikes; they move at breath-robbing speed, make ear-splitting noise, and are capable of performing with awesome lethality.

Just ask the Bush administration if you can't fall in love with weapons this sexy and the military that wields them.

And then there are the glittery galas and trade shows like the Paris Air Show – at Le Bourget airport north of the French capital – where generals and corporate bigwigs with power, prestige, and incomparable sums of money rub against each other amid the scandalous whispers of corporate

breakups and new mergers.

"A! Today in the arms trade"

It's common to say that "you are what you eat"; but, at the level of nation-states, "you are what you export" may be no less true. We think of ourselves as trendsetters and style arbiters because of our best-known export – mass culture.

But weapons are our most deadly and potent export; they help determine who controls key regions of the world and shape how those regions are governed; they create jobs, extinguish lives, and sometimes obliterate whole neighborhoods.

In the mountains of Turkey, Kurdish kids may not have a chance to drink Coke, listen to American rap, or play Street Fighter, but they do know two words of English, "Cobra" and "Black Hawk," the names of the U.S.-made attack helicopters the Turks have used to strafe their villages.

We should at least know as much about the weapons our country sells as they do, and more about the arms industry as whole than we do about Lindsay Lohan's brush with anorexia and addiction.

What if we did? What if American girls grew up reading Jane's Defence Weekly instead of (or in addition to) JANE? What if Vince Vaughn and Colin Farrell labored on their craft in virtual obscurity, while Cameron Diaz and Scarlett Johansson did their own laundry after a hard shift on the film set?

What if the attention these stars now get went to the arms trade?

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THE ARMS TRADE

Putting aside what Poland actually needed all this firepower for, how about a Power magazine in-depth investigation on how the big U.S. arms makers tempted Poland with \$6.3 billion in investments

Then, Jeffrey Kohler and Robert Joseph would be household names, their every move tracked by a voracious media.

Perhaps then we would watch A! (as in “A! Today in the Arms Trade”) instead of E! Of course, I wouldn’t even have to write this next sentence, because everyone would already know that Jeffrey Kohler is the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) within the Defense Department and Robert Joseph is Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security – and that the arms business wouldn’t be its sexy self without them.

Under Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, these are the men who help promote U.S. weapons and military technology – as well as the companies that make them – to the world, assemble financing packages, and facilitate weapons buys. Their decisions help to determine who our friends and foes are (and will be) and what kind of weapons they will have.

A! might start with early morning chatter about Jeff’s tie choice and what that signals for future fighter-plane sales to Chile. Later, a panel would cheerily consider the excitement of Rob’s recent trip to Taiwan, and how Beijing views our new technology-sharing agreements with Taipei.

Any announcement from the DSCA about a major arms transfer would be headline news and the particulars of an arms deal would be the froth of early-morning talk shows, happy-talk

chatter on the news channels, not to speak of the wit of late night comedy and Dave’s or Jay’s monologue.

The power treatment

Even though we know that A! will never replace E!, nor will a magazine named Power replace People in those supermarket racks, there’s still plenty to talk about. It’s just that you have to read Aviation Week or SeaPower (or the Business pages of major newspapers) to know about it.

Take but one relatively modest example: In March 2003, the United States and Poland inked a Pentagon-brokered agreement worth \$3.5 billion with U.S. arms companies. The emerging power and new member of the European Union bought a whole new military in a box: including 48 Lockheed Martin F-16 fighter planes, Raytheon Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles, Sidewinder Short-Range Air-to-Air Missiles and Maverick Air-to-Ground Missiles.

Putting aside what Poland actually needed all this firepower for, how about a Power magazine in-depth investigation on how the big U.S. arms makers tempted Poland with \$6.3 billion in investments. As one of Lockheed Martin’s directors explained, the deal wasn’t really about selling weapons to Poland. Nope, they were interested in “enhancing Poland competitively in the global economy, creating jobs and enhancing local labor market skills.” Kinda sweet, right?

So, to put this in a simple way, in order to sell Warsaw \$3.5 billion in military hardware, we gave them \$6.3

billion in goodies. Think about that for a moment. Isn't it just a little too much of a good thing – like the \$100,000 gift-bags movie stars get at parties after their \$100 million movie premieres? Poland gets a GM plant (wait, didn't one just close in Muncie, Indiana?) and a Motorola communications system in addition to a Lockheed Martin factory and billions more in U.S. investment. As the American ambassador to Poland said, "It's the deal of the century." For Poland yes, for American workers – like the ones who don't make Pontiacs and Caddies in Detroit and Muncie anymore – maybe not.

Saudi bling and Pentagon rhetoric

In South Asia, the situation is different, but no less gossip-worthy for some future Power cover story. There, the desire to sell weapons has cast President George W. Bush in the role of a man trying to woo a new lover and placate his wife at the same time.

When the United States announced the sale of as many as 36 F-16 fighters to Pakistan, the Indian government was outraged. Though Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told President Bush that he was "greatly disappointed," apoplectic might better describe the strength of the reaction; and you can see Singh's point. India views itself as a stalwart and democratic ally, one with a growing economy and a growing appetite for U.S. goods.

So, when the Bush administration inked that arms deal with arch-rival Pakistan and agreed to send Islamabad F-16 fighter planes whose only

likely use would be against India, you can hardly blame the Indians for being heartbroken.

Pakistan – which would get the fighter planes with all the fixins for about \$3 billion – is more the love-'em-and-leave-'em type anyway, an impetuous, impulsive dictatorship that has, in the past, harbored al-Qaeda elements and whose intelligence services helped create (and probably still supports) the Taliban; a country which, in the past, let its nuclear "secrets" slip off to states that our President loathes like Iran and North Korea, and that refuses to crackdown on Islamic fundamentalist schools and fundamentalist training camps within its borders.

India and Pakistan are, of course, the bitterest of rivals, having fought three wars and suffered countless smaller flare-ups; both have tested nuclear weapons and continue to menace each other with them.

So, given India's indignation, what did Bush do? He offered New Delhi similar fighter planes to those being given to Islamabad (twice the profits for American weapons makers, twice the power on each side to fight the next war).

He then re-pledged his fidelity to India and guaranteed that country's nuclear fuel supply, while opening talks about what fighter planes would be most suitable for India's special needs. The U.S. offered the possibility of purchasing 126 of either Lockheed Martin's F-16 or Boeing's F-18 Hornet. And all of a sudden, everybody was remarkably satisfied – except perhaps

So, given India's indignation, what did Bush do? He offered New Delhi similar fighter planes to those being given to Islamabad (twice the profits for American weapons makers, twice the power on each side to fight the next war)

THE ARMS TRADE

Boeing – the bomber behemoth – tried to sucker the Air Force into leasing one hundred KC-135 tanker planes for in-air refueling at a cost of perhaps \$6 billion dollars, more than it would have cost the government to buy the (unnecessary) planes outright

the people of India and Pakistan who might have wondered where in the world their countries were going to get the dough for these advanced weapons systems, while so many of them stand on line at the village pump, or walk three miles to the closest school, or labor long hours bent over crops, or answer requests at customer-service call centers.

If, for a while, India played the spurned spouse, Saudi Arabia has taken on the role of a diva of hip-hop proportions. When it comes to weapons systems, the oil-rich oligarchy demands the best and always pays in cash – which is why the arms industry is just delighted with its brand new \$6 billion deal with Riyadh (pending the normal Congressional rubber-stamp). Included will be a mélange of lethal toys: 24 UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters, armored vehicles, and other military equipment. Among the companies involved are Sikorsky, General Electric, General Dynamics, and Raytheon.

The DSCA claims this weapons package will help strengthen Saudi Arabia's military and its ability to help the United States fight global terrorism, not to speak of giving that country's armed forces the means to defend "stability" in a destabilizing region without perhaps having to call on an overstressed American military in a pinch. But beneath Riyadh's bling and the Pentagon's hopeful rhetoric lies another reality, worthy of one of those supermarket tabloids – the rulers of Saudi Arabia are fickle and not at all sure whether they want to cozy up to

the West or to those who have the urge to bring the West down. Most of the 9/11 hijackers, of course, were Saudis; the royal family continues to support terrorist organizations and right-wing religious schools; and the kingdom rests on a sea of oil without access to which the global economy might sink in a nanosecond.

Weapons-maker to a grim world

While foreign arms sales are regularly edged in scandal, here in the United States weapons deals are evidently worth going to prison over! You want sex, lies, and videotape? Okay, maybe not the sex part – and it was email, not video-tape that provided the incriminating evidence – but there were plenty of lies in a 2003 domestic arms scandal that bilked taxpayers of millions.

Boeing – the bomber behemoth – tried to sucker the Air Force into leasing one hundred KC-135 tanker planes for in-air refueling at a cost of perhaps \$6 billion dollars, more than it would have cost the government to buy the (unnecessary) planes outright.

The scheme landed Darleen Druyun, a former Air Force weapons buyer, in a Florida prison after she pled guilty to giving Boeing special treatment on a \$23.5 billion government contract in exchange for a post as Senior Vice President at the company and perks for her family members. Talk about a cheap date! As a Boeing veep, Druyun pulled in a mere \$250,000 a year, while the company would have taken in billions in revenue.

Of course, to the extent that the U.S. arms industry wants attention at all, it would prefer that we focus on the good news – all those benefits to be derived from arms sales abroad, which make for humming assembly lines at home.

According to the DSCA, the United States sells weapons abroad mainly to foster relationships that promote specified U.S. interests, while building allied and friendly nation capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations. They may also mention what we get in return, especially secure access to military facilities around the world, but these alleged benefits can come at a high price.

Any PR flak could warn you about how a reputation for late-night carousing can sully a star's squeaky-clean on-screen reputation. You can't act like Paris Hilton at night and land roles for Mandy Moore the next morning. The same goes for arms sales. But the U.S. keeps trying. While boasting about democracy, security, and peace, we sell weapons to dictators, human rights abusers, and countries at war or at the edge of war (sometimes with each other).

In fact, twenty of our top twenty-five arms clients in the developing world in 2003 – a full 80% of them – were undemocratic regimes and/or governments with records as major human-rights abusers.

All too often, U.S. arms transfers only fuel conflict, weaponize human-rights abusers, or fall into the hands of our adversaries. Far from serving as a force for security and stability, these

sales frequently serve to empower unstable, undemocratic regimes to the detriment of global security.

The ways and means of America's arms trade are not going to be spoon-fed to us the way model Naomi Campbell's run-ins with the law are. Unfortunately, it takes work on our part to discover how our arms trade functions. But knowing where our weapons are going and what sort of havoc they are wreaking in our name seems worth the minor effort and inconvenience – even if it doesn't offer the promise of the perfect tan or six-pack abs! **CT**

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ISRAEL'S MAN

The performance of Israeli ambassador Daniel Gillerman at a United Nations debate at the end of Israel's war with Lebanon was a masterpiece of obfuscation, writes William Cook, who enlists the help of Joseph Conrad to expose the ambassador's justification of his country's atrocities against innocent people

ISRAEL: THE STATE WITHOUT SHAME

I could not help but be repulsed by this state that bears no shame for its atrocities against innocent people

As I watched Ambassador Daniel Gillerman of Israel at the final proceedings of the United Nations Security Council at the end of Israel's war with Lebanon, I remembered how Henry David Thoreau described meeting his government: "I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year – no more – in the person of its taxgatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it..." Today, ordinary citizens meet their representative via generalized statements issued on their behalf: "The Congress today issued ...," or "The White House today announced ...," or "White House spokesman, Tony Snow, announced..." or Representative _____ met today with Tim Russert on 'Meet the Press'."

In general, the ordinary citizen no longer meets a representative "face to face." But I did meet Israel's government "face to screen" as he enunciated Israel's position before the Security

Council, and I could not help but be repulsed by this state that bears no shame for its atrocities against innocent people.

How does one describe Daniel Gillerman? He images the manicured, impeccably attired diplomat of sophisticated demeanor, calm in facial expression and gesture as he looks attentively at each member of the Security Council, assuring them of his sincerity and empathy for the difficult situation that has necessitated this gathering. He speaks in a deliberative manner with soft, sensitive, but modulated tones as he encapsulates his statements in words that obfuscate the reality of their purported meaning.

One might say with Joseph Conrad as he describes Kurtz, who in another era of colonization represented to another world the "civilized" nations of Europe, "He is a prodigy. He is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress ..."

And Conrad continues as he puts Kurtz's mission in perspective, "We want for the guidance of the cause in-

trusted (sic) to us by Europe (with Gillerman it is the 'West'), higher intelligence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose." If "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz," Europe and America contributed to the making of Gillerman.

For Gillerman like Kurtz argued that whites, "from the point of development we had arrived at, 'must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we might approach them with the might as of deity', ... By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded."

Gillerman's words, like those of Kurtz, sing of possibilities made inevitable by the gratuitous favor of a beneficent neighbor: "The choice that faces the people of Lebanon is clear. It is a choice between those who would develop agriculture and make the deserts bloom, and those who turn towns into bases of terror and barren land. It is a choice between those who work to advance medicine and bring health to body and limb, and those who manufacture only weapons of destruction to tear limb from limb. It is a choice between those who invest (sic) industry and trade, and those whose only product and export is terror."

Marlow, speaking perhaps for Conrad, makes this caustic and cynical observation on the eloquent words written by Kurtz, an observation I would suggest is even more appropriate when applied to Gillerman's tinted and florid language: "It was very

simple, and at the end of that moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightening in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes!'"

Buried beneath the implied progress of Israel's cultivated state that "makes the desert bloom" lies its opposite, the devastated landscape of Palestine where Israel has turned "towns (called settlements) into bases of terror" hidden behind a 'wall of horrors,' as Chris Hedges so clearly observes, a landscape that Israel has "cultivated" and "civilized" for the past 60 years, a landscape carved into a chiaroscuro of shadows and filtered light where rage now roams unleashed, a landscape America built and a rage America helped create, a landscape Hedges notes "is the Africanization of Palestinian land." Gillerman might have been honest and told the assembly of the world, "Exterminate the brutes!", for that seems to be the promise the Lebanese can expect as their current devastated landscape suggests.

Embedded in Gillerman's prose resides the "idea" that gives justification to the wanton and illegal slaughter inflicted upon the Lebanese, the idea of superiority in intellect, morality and military might that comes with the efficiency of Capitalistic enlightenment.

Condescendingly, Gillerman creates a dehumanized scenario of insane Arabs from Teheran, Damascus, Gaza and "parts of Lebanon" dancing in joy as planes fall from the sky, the

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ISRAEL'S MAN

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result of "terror" tactics planted in London, a rejoicing comparable to that witnessed when the Twin Towers fell. He does not mention the five Israelis dancing on the panel truck in a Jersey parking lot as they filmed the planes slamming into the Towers. There is much that Gillerman does not mention.

Having fictionalized the non-existent suicidal destruction of the planes, he provides a seamless rationale that binds these fanatical Arabs together, a "genocidal ideology inspired it." Now we have a dehumanized enemy working together to destroy not just "our region" but "the world at large." And Israel alone has entered the fray to stop this "vile phenomenon" with its "gruesome record of heinous innovations" that uses "hostage taking," "suicide bombers," and "hijackings" to carry out its insidious ends. All countries of the west and good, moderate regimes in "our region" "which offer hope of progress and prosperity" can await the impending "campaign of terror."

Thus does Gillerman compress multiple organizations and nation states into one conglomerate of power intent on the destruction of the West providing no evidence of his contentions but unsubstantiated assertions, negating in the process the distinctions between states and insurgent groups that are created and designed for specific response to occupying forces like Hezbollah Shias fighting against Israeli occupation of Lebanon and Syrian land and Hamas Sunnies and Fatah PLO that fight on

behalf of those suffering Israeli occupation in Palestine.

But Gillerman goes further than this. He has the unmitigated gall to yoke the people of Israel with the people of Lebanon as victims of these fanatical Arabs with the "genocidal ideology." As Israel pounds the people of Lebanon and their civilized state into the dark ages, Gillerman, the visible representative of Israel, decries the "heavy price" "the peoples of Israel and Lebanon" have had to pay at the hands of Hezbollah, as if by some miraculous act of God, Hezbollah's rockets had ricocheted like boomerangs off the homes of Israelis to return and devastate those of Lebanese.

Thus does Gillerman make the thousands upon thousands of Israeli bombs and missiles hurled into Lebanon, weapons of mass destruction caused by Hezbollah. Unfortunately, as Gillerman sympathetically proclaims, Israel had "no choice" but to destroy Lebanese roads, bridges, utility plants, gas stations, sea ports, oil tanks, coastal waters, shipping, irrigation systems, hospitals, businesses and homes in order to recapture two of its soldiers "kidnapped" on Israeli land, a decided act of aggression taken by Hezbollah.

Now, as he asserts the innocence of Israel in the devastation of Lebanon, Gillerman fails to mention that the cost of this "no choice" has been the death of more than 900 Lebanese, near a million made homeless, suffering untold hardships as they wander the demolished landscape of their country, and a country ravaged and

decimated.

But, as Yitzhak Laor notes lamentably, “Israelis long ago ceased to be distressed by images of sobbing women in white scarves, searching for the remains of their homes in the rubble left by our soldiers. We think of them much as we think of chicken or cats.” (Yitzhak Laor, “You are terrorists, we are virtuous.”).

Perhaps now we must account for the most serious omissions in Gillerman’s text, the reality behind what he appears to say.

What is not said when he asserts “The tragedy of the past month, could – and would – have been avoided if the previous resolutions of this Council had been heeded...”?

What is not said when he claims desperately that “Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens from Hezbollah’s unprovoked attacks...”?

What is not said when he states poetically “There is nothing more beautiful, holier or more eternal than a child able to grow up in region (sic) living in security and at peace.”? Gillerman’s focus on UN Resolution 1559 places full responsibility for Israel’s need to invade Lebanon on the government of Lebanon because it did not disarm Hezbollah.

What Gillerman does not mention is Israel’s defiance of more than 60 UNSC resolutions, especially Resolution 242 demanding that Israel withdraw to the 1967 borders returning occupied land to Palestine, and including Resolution 520 that calls for Israel to withdraw from occupied lands belonging to Syria, the Golan Heights,

and Lebanon, the Shaba Farms. Should the UNSC have acted to force Israel to comply with these resolutions, the very need for Hezbollah and Hamas to exist would have been removed.

It is Israel’s illegal occupation of the lands of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria that has caused the growth of organizations that fight against Israel and its supplier of weapons, the United States. Indeed, Iraq’s failure to comply with Resolution 687 in 1982 was one of the reasons UNSC Res. 1441 passed giving the US its rationale for attacking Iraq since it continued to violate that Resolution.

However, that same resolution stipulated that there must be a nuclear weapons free Middle East, a provision that Israel continues to defy.

Consider now Gillerman’s use of the Israeli and United States mantra that “Israel has a right to defend itself” or, as Gillerman notes, “Israel, like any other state, has the right to defend itself.” Does it? The fighting this summer has taken place in southern Lebanon and in northern Israel, we are told. But the reality behind that statement does not hold. What we call northern Israel is stolen land, the land of Galilee. In 1948, “According to the New York Times, the sixty hour campaign was designed to ‘eliminate the Arab-held bulge descending into Galilee from Lebanon ...’

This was the last pocket of Arab resistance in Galilee. Within three days the whole of Upper Galilee was occupied; the population was either expelled or fled out of fear. Some vil-

Should the UNSC have acted to force Israel to comply with these resolutions, the very need for Hezbollah and Hamas to exist would have been removed

ISRAEL'S MAN

The very reason that Hamas exists is to regain land stolen by Israel and, since Hezbollah exists in full sympathy with its cause, the insurgents' attack against the occupiers' forces is a legitimate act of war

lages captured during the operation were emptied of their inhabitants immediately, but other villagers were expelled in the following weeks, on the pretext of 'clearing' the border." This ethnic cleansing came as a direct result of Israeli intention as expressed by David Ben-Gurion that the Galilee would become "clean" and "empty" of Arabs. (All That Remains, p.5).

The 1947 map that divided the Palestinian lands into Jewish and Palestinian gave northern Palestine from Acre (Akka) north of Haifa to the Lebanon border to Palestine going east to Dayshun. That section of northern Palestine made possible a connected Palestinian state since it reached south to the West Bank. Israel took the land by force and it has defied UN resolutions that demand its return.

Therefore, the Israeli claim that it has a right to defend itself is disingenuous on the surface and outright deceit proclaimed before the United Nations. The very reason that Hamas exists is to regain land stolen by Israel and, since Hezbollah exists in full sympathy with its cause, the insurgents' attack against the occupiers' forces is a legitimate act of war.

What, finally, is not said when Gillerman waxes poetic about that lovely child who simply wants to grow up in peace? Let me offer two polarized perspectives, the first eloquently marked by Chris Hedges in his essay, *Israel's Wall of Horrors* (<http://www.coldtype.net/index.b.html>): "Israel's security wall has ripped a mortal gash in the lives of

Palestinians living in its shadow. The rage and extremism of the Islamic militants in Lebanon and the occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza appear incomprehensible to the outside world. . . . But this branding of these militants as something less than human, as something that reasonable people cannot hope to understand, is possible only because we have ignored and disregarded the decades of repression, the crushing weight of occupation, the abject humiliation and violence, unleashed on Lebanese and Palestinians by Israel because of our silence and indifference. It is Israel's penchant for violence and occupation that slowly created and formed these frightening groups."

This reality brands not only Israel but the United States. It is perhaps the most single telling cause of terrorism against America, one that Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton have just acknowledged in their book, *Without Precedent: the Truth Behind the 9/11 Commission Report*. Israel is the principle cause of terror against America.

Let me return to Conrad to understand how the same deviance, the inability for people to control their actions, to restrain behavior corrodes both the oppressed and the oppressor. Our civilized culture assumes that those who act without restraint are savages, but, as Conrad notes, "No fear can stand up to hunger, no patience can wear it out, disgust simply does not exist where hunger is; and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze. Don't you know the

devilry of lingering starvation, its exasperating torment, its black thoughts, its somber and brooding ferocity?”

Not understanding such internal and, to our ignorant citizens, ignorant because they have been denied the truth of such oppression, inscrutable anguish, we instinctively condemn those who strike back with force.

But the truth is more terrible. When the civilized state falls into a state of emotional and psychological oblivion, when it fosters in its people a cold withdrawal from its violence against others, when it divorces its citizens from the pain and suffering inflicted on the weak and helpless, when it negates the humiliation it imposes on others and finds itself not just accepting such behavior but enjoying it, and when it fosters silence and indifference about its inhumane acts, it has reached a nadir of human behavior that permeates each soul so that it knows no faith, no fear, and, thereby, knows no restraint freeing itself to commit barbaric acts in the name of progress and the advancement of civilization.

For Gillerman to sit impassively before the eyes of the world, for him to assume that no one watching his performance would recognize his deceit, for this frozen specter of the nation of Israel to raise the picture of a lovely girl desiring peace as his closing remarks, pointedly made to the Lebanese ambassador, is a stark illustration of how far Israel has fallen from its inherent roots that found sustenance in the soil of morality.

Certainly, as he sat there he knew of the pictures that could be placed before the whole world of the atrocities that Israel has perpetrated on the Palestinians in the dead silence behind its detestable Wall of Fear, that monument to the inhumanity of Ariel Sharon.

What he did know is that Israel had killed 176 residents of Gaza since June 27th, 40 of them children like the young girl he uses as a poster girl of Israel's love for humanity.

What he did know is that Israel had wounded 872 in Gaza including 272 children during that same period and shot and injured another 172 in the West Bank. (Eliza Ernschire, "No Lights in Gaza").

What he did know is that the world would not see these dead because Israel controls what goes in and what comes out of Gaza and the West Bank and it determines what the world will know and what it will not. What hubris. What hypocrisy.

What he did know for certain is that the world watched the slaughter played out before the TV cameras in Lebanon and was repelled by it.

What he knew was that the mangled body of a child, unrecognizable as boy or girl, held up before the camera by a United Nations medic, a body charred after an Israeli missile hit a van carrying passengers in southern Lebanon on July 15, a body lacking a portion of the head, the left arm a stub, the stomach ripped from its socket and left hanging, a body caked in blood and dirt, a body seen by hundreds of thousands around the

What he did know for certain is that the world watched the slaughter played out before the TV cameras in Lebanon and was repelled by it

ISRAEL'S MAN

What he knew and hid from the Security Council members and the people of the world is that Israel has hurled new and barbarous weapons at the civilians of Lebanon

world, would never grow up to go to school and enjoy the morning sun as it beckoned her to a new day.

What he knew and hid from the Security Council members and the people of the world is that Israel has hurled new and barbarous weapons at the civilians of Lebanon, weapons that leave “the bodies with dead tissues and no apparent wounds; shrunken corpses; civilians with heavy damage to lower limbs that require amputation, which is nevertheless followed by unstoppable necrosis and death ... corpses blackened but not burnt.” (Prof. Paola Manduca, Global Research, 7/8/06).

What he knew is that he sat there in full civilian dress, pin striped suit and lapel pin shining beneath the TV lights, and he condemned the “diabolical inventions” of the “genocidal

ideology” that used these “heinous innovations” against the innocent Israelis when in fact it is the Israelis that unleash with full malevolence violence of a kind never seen before in the world.

That he knew, yet he played out his role as spokesperson for all Israelis, speaking in their name whether or not they could find it in their hearts to support this state that has arrived at a point where its government knows no faith, knows no fear, and drives forward knowing no restraint, the indelible mark of a nature that has returned to its savage base. **CT**

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In this excerpt from his new book, Freedom Next Time, John Pilger meets an Israeli father whose daughter was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber. Instead of seeking revenge for her murder, Rami Elhanan has taken to the streets to call for an end to the violence and find ways for people to live together in peace

PALESTINE AND THE LAST TABOO

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, an opponent of all kinds of attacks on civilians and a persistent voice for Israeli-Palestinian co-existence, wrote: ‘We have to understand – not justify – what gives rise to this tragedy ... Palestinian people are in love with life. If we give them hope – a political solution – they’ll stop killing themselves.’¹ The following are lines from his poem ‘Martyr’:

*I love life
On earth, among the pines and the fig trees
But I can’t reach it, so I took aim
With the last thing that belonged to me.*

For Rami Elhanan, an Israeli graphic designer, the sacrifice by a Palestinian of ‘the last thing that belonged to me’ caused the death of his fourteen-year-old daughter, Smadar. There is a home videotape of Smadar that is difficult to watch. She is playing the family piano, and throwing her head back and laughing. She has long hair, which she cut two months before she

died. ‘It was her way of making a statement of her independence,’ Rami told me with a smile. ‘Her brothers used to tease her because she was such a good student. But she knew what she wanted. She wanted to be a doctor, and she loved to dance.’²

On the afternoon of September 4, 1997, Smadar and her best friend, Sivane, had auditions for admission to a dance school. Smadar had argued that morning with her mother, Nurit, who was anxious about her going to the centre of Jerusalem to buy books she needed for school. ‘I was worried about the increase in suicide bombings,’ said Nurit. ‘But I didn’t want to row, so I let her go.’

Rami was in his car when he turned on the radio at three o’clock to listen to the news and heard reports of a suicide bombing in Ben Yehuda shopping precinct. Three Palestinians had walked into the crowd and turned themselves into human bombs. There were nearly two hundred injured, and several dead. Within minutes, Rami’s mobile phone rang. Nurit was crying. She had received a call

‘I was worried about the increase in suicide bombings,’ said Nurit. ‘But I didn’t want to row, so I let her go’

BOOK EXCERPT

'There is no basic moral difference between the soldier at the checkpoint who prevents a woman who is having a baby from going through, causing her to lose the baby, and the man who killed my daughter'

from one of their son's friends, who had seen Smadar making her way into the Ben Yehuda mall shortly before the bombs went off. For hours, Rami and Nurit toured hospitals, looking for her. 'Finally,' he said, 'a policeman gently suggested we go to the scene of the bombing, where we were referred to a morgue.'³

Their 'descent into darkness', as Rami describes it, was also the beginning of an inspirational campaign for peace. I have not met anyone like Rami, and the interview I conducted with him in the sunny sitting room of his Jerusalem home moved me deeply. Sometimes, solutions to apparently intractable political problems seem closer at hand when there is a Rami Elhanan engrossed in them, saying the unsayable.

'It's painful to acknowledge, but it really is quite simple,' he said. 'There is no basic moral difference between the soldier at the checkpoint who prevents a woman who is having a baby from going through, causing her to lose the baby, and the man who killed my daughter. And just as my daughter was a victim [of the occupation], so was he.'

On the shelf behind him was a photograph of Smadar at the age of five, holding a placard. 'Stop the occupation,' it said. Rami calls her 'a child of peace'. Her parents were both brought up to believe that the estab-



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lishment of Israel as a Jewish national homeland was an act of self-preservation. Rami's father had survived Auschwitz. His grandparents and six aunts and uncles perished in the Holocaust. Nurit's father, Matti Peled, a general, was a hero of the 1948 war. Rami describes him as 'one of the true pioneers of making peace with the Palestinians'. He was among the first Israelis to visit Yasser Arafat in his exile in

Tunisia. Nurit herself has been awarded the European Parliament's peace prize.

Rami dates his own 'awareness of the truth we dare not speak' to his time as a young army conscript. The 1967 war had just happened and was not, he says, the 'divine intervention' it was portrayed as in Israel, particularly among the 'settlers' who built their illegal fortresses on newly occupied land. He describes it as 'the beginning of a cancer at the heart of Israel'. Later, as a soldier in the 1973 Yom Kippur war, he said he realised 'I had blood on my hands, too.'

Rami and Nurit are among the founders of the Parents' Circle, or Bereaved Families for Peace, which brings together Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones. They include the families of suicide bombers. They jointly organise educational campaigns and lobby politicians to begin serious negotiations. When I met Rami, they had just pla-

ced one thousand coffins outside the United Nations building in New York, each draped in an Israeli or Palestinian flag. ‘Our aim’, he said, ‘is not to forget or forgive the past, but to find some way of living together.’

I asked him: ‘How do you distinguish the feelings of anger you must have felt as a father at losing your daughter from the feeling of wanting to reach out?’

‘Very simple. I am a human being; I am not an animal. I lost my child, but I didn’t lose my head. Thinking and acting from the guts only increases an endless circle of blood. You have to think: our two peoples are here to stay; neither will evaporate. We have to compromise in some way. And you do that by the head, not by the guts.’

‘Have you made contact with the parents of the suicide bomber who killed Smadar?’

‘That was tried once; someone wanted to make a film about it, but I wasn’t interested. I am not crazy; I don’t forget, I don’t forgive. Someone who murders little girls is a criminal and should be punished, and to be in personal contact with those who did me wrong, it’s not the point. So you see, I sometimes have to fight myself to do what I’m doing. But I’m sure what I’m doing is right. I certainly understand that the suicide bomber was a victim the same as my girl was. Of that, I am sure.’

‘Have you made contact with the parents of other suicide bombers?’

‘Yes. Very warm and encouraging contacts.’

‘What is the point of that?’

‘The point is to make peace, and not to ask questions. I have blood on my hands, too, as I said. I was a soldier in the Israeli army ... if you are digging into the personal history of each and every one of us, you won’t make peace, you’ll make more arguments and more blame. Tomorrow, I am going to Hebron to meet bereaved Palestinian families. They are living proof of the willingness of the other side to make peace with us.’

‘Isn’t the public mood in Israel quite different?’

‘I have a friend who says that what I am doing is like taking water out of the ocean with a spoon. We [in the Parents’ Circle] are very few, it’s true, and the world is being led by very stupid people: that’s also true. I’m talking about the American President and my own Prime Minister. To take this word “terrorism” and build everything around it, as they do, you only make more misery, more war, more casualties, more suicide bombers, more revenge, more punishment. Where does that go? Nowhere. Our task is to point out the obvious. George Washington was a terrorist, Jomo Kenyatta was a terrorist, Nelson Mandela was a terrorist. Terrorism only has meaning for those who are weak and who have no other choice, and no other means.’

‘What has to be done to end this suffering?’

‘We have to start by fighting ignorance. I go to schools and give lectures. I tell the children how the conflict began by asking them to imagine a house with ten rooms where Mo-

‘I am a human being; I am not an animal. I lost my child, but I didn’t lose my head. Thinking and acting from the guts only increases an endless circle of blood’

BOOK EXCERPT

'I watch the faces of the kids when I show them the maps and tell them that we had seventy-eight per cent, and the Palestinians had twenty-two per cent, and that's all the Palestinians want now, and I see ignorance lift'

ammed and his family are living in peace. Then, one stormy night, there's a knock at the door, and outside stands Moshe and his family. They are sick, beaten, broken. "Excuse me," he says, "but I once used to live in this house." This is the whole Arab–Israeli conflict in a snap; and I tell the kids that the Palestinians gave up seventy-eight per cent of the country which they are sure is theirs, so the Israelis should give up the twenty-two per cent that was left [following the 1967 war].'

He shows the schoolchildren maps of the offer Prime Minister Ehud Barak made to Yasser Arafat at Camp David before the 'peace process' broke down. The maps reveal that swathes of the West Bank were held back from the Palestinians and kept for Jewish settlers. 'This was the greatest secret of all,' he said, 'because Barak never allowed any [official] maps to be made. He was proposing something he knew the Palestinians would not, could not, accept.'

'What kind of reaction do you get: in schools, at public events?'

'I watch the faces of the kids when I show them the maps and tell them that we had seventy-eight per cent, and the Palestinians had twenty-two per cent, and that's all the Palestinians want now, and I see ignorance lift. You know, in Israel, the bereaved are said to be sacred. People give them respect because they have paid the price. I am due that respect, but of course there are people who don't want to hear what I say.'

Every 'Jerusalem Day' – the day the

modern State of Israel celebrates its conquest of the city – Rami has stood in the street with a photograph of Smadar and sought to persuade people of his mission for peace. The last Jerusalem Day, he stood in front of crossed Israeli and Palestinian flags, and people told him it was a pity he wasn't blown up, too. 'That is the dimension of the problem,' he said.

'Will you do that this Jerusalem Day?'

'Yes, and I will be spat and cursed at by some, but I know that's only one part of the human equation; it's the other part we must solve, and I and other parents are making a start.'

'What is the price that a society pays when it runs a military occupation?'

'It's an unbearable price. The list begins with moral corruption. When we don't let pregnant women through checkpoints, and their babies die, we have reduced ourselves to animals and we are no different from the suicide bombers.'

'What do you say to Jewish people in other countries, like Britain: people who support Israel because they feel they must?'

'I say they should be loyal to real Jewish values, and support the peace movement in Israel, not the state at all costs. It's only pressure from outside – from Jews, from governments, from public opinion – that will end this nightmare. While there is this silence, this looking away, this profane abuse of our critics as anti-Jew, we are no different from those who stood aside during the days of the Holo-

caust. We are not only complicit in a crime, we ensure that we ourselves never know peace, and our surviving children never know peace. I ask you: does that make any sense?’

‘But they might say the Jews are in danger of being pushed into the sea by the Arabs, that Israel must stand firm?’

‘Pushed into the sea by whom? We are the most powerful power in the Middle East. We have one of the greatest armies in the world. In this latest operation [Sharon’s attack on the West Bank in April 2002], we sent four armoured divisions against some five hundred armed people. It’s a laugh. Who will push us into the sea? Who can push us into the sea?... The real issue is played out every day at the checkpoints. The Palestinian boy whose mother is humiliated in the morning will be a suicide bomber in the evening. There is no way that Israelis can sit in their coffee houses and eat and drink while two hundred metres away desperate people are humiliated and Palestinian children are beginning to starve. The suicide bomber is no more than a mosquito. The occupation is the swamp.’

The chairman of the Parents’ Circle is Yitzhak Frankenthal, whose son Arik, a conscripted soldier, was kidnapped and killed by Hamas. His generosity of spirit was expressed in his address to a peace rally in Jerusalem. ‘Let all the self-righteous who speak of ruthless Palestinian murderers take a hard look in the mirror,’ he said.

[Let them ask themselves] what

they would have done had they been the ones living under occupation. I can say for myself that I, Yitzhak Frankenthal, would have undoubtedly become a freedom fighter and I would have killed as many on the other side as I possibly could. It is this depraved hypocrisy that pushes the Palestinians to fight us relentlessly – our double standard that allows us to boast the highest military ethics, while the same military slays innocent children ... As much as I would like to do so, I cannot say the Palestinians are to blame for my son’s death. That would be the easy way out [for] it is we who are unwilling to make peace with them. It is we who insist on maintaining our control over them. It is we who feed the cycle of violence ... I regret to say it.⁴

Israel’s dissidents are among the bravest I have met. Apart from the remarkable Mordechai Vanunu, who spent nineteen years in prison, mostly in solitary confinement, and who today lives under effective house arrest, most of those who take on the Israeli state remain in the community, where their punishment is often unrelenting. To many, they have betrayed not only their country but their family and their Jewishness and the memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

Shopkeepers refuse to serve them; lifelong friends cross the road rather than speak to them. Without warning, they are shouted at and spat upon – like Rami with his flags.

At the time of writing, 635 Israeli soldiers have refused to serve in occu-

“There is no way that Israelis can sit in their coffee houses and eat and drink while two hundred metres away desperate people are humiliated and Palestinian children are beginning to starve. The suicide bomber is no more than a mosquito. The occupation is the swamp’

BOOK EXCERPT

'The roadblocks were there thirty-five years before suicide bombing began. They are there to control, always control'

pied Palestine. Hundreds have been sent to prison. Others have made public declarations that have worried the regime; they include paratroopers, tank officers and members of the Special Forces, Sayeret-Matka. In September 2003, twenty-seven air force pilots, including Brigadier-General Yiftah Spector, a hero of the 1967 war, announced they had refused to carry out 'illegal and immoral' raids 'on civilian population centres'. The majority are young conscripts who must serve three years with the military. Their organisation is 'Courage to Refuse'.

I spent an afternoon with one of them, former Sergeant Ishai Rosen-Zvi, an orthodox Jew. We met in a Tel Aviv park, away from unfriendly eyes. I asked him what had made him a 'refusenik'.⁵

'It took me longer than I wish to think. When I arrived in Gaza with my unit, I could see what we were doing was horrible, but I did my job; I felt uneasy and embarrassed, but I did my job. On leave, at home, I never talked about it; I became a kind of Jekyll and Hyde character. Then I began to realise I was on the wrong side of the checkpoint, the roadblock we had to man day after day. The real story of the occupation is there at the roadblocks. Your job there is nothing, you stand around, and you think that if you could phone home, you would say, "This is boring." Then it dawns on you what this nothingness really is. It is keeping thousands of people in frustration, in humiliation, in hunger, in anger.

'Imagine it. You are standing there and it's five in the morning, and you see their eyes – some of the people could be my grandfather – and you glimpse the humiliation and the hatred. You want to take them aside and say, "Look, I'm a good guy; I've got nothing against you." But of course that has no point. For them, you are the occupation. And *nobody* gives you their liberty for nothing.'

I said, 'The government insists the roadblocks are there to stop the suicide bombers coming.'

'The roadblocks were there thirty-five years before suicide bombing began. They are there to control, always control.'

'Did Palestinians waiting under your control ever want to debate this with you?'

'You have all the power; they have no power. You can, at any moment, take their ID, and then they have nothing, because without ID, they can be arrested at any time. So they take no risks; they don't debate; they may even be deferential, but that's not how they are in their hearts.'

'How do other Israelis regard you, people you meet every day, who know you are a refusenik?'

'Some look on me as an extreme leftist, which is funny, because I am a religious person. For them, the whole question of morality doesn't come into it; they think I am twisted in the head. One of my best friends told me, "OK, it's a stupid war, but it's a war, and we've got to fight it."'

'And your family?'

'We don't talk about it, or we try

not to. My wife is speaking all the time about other things, because it's too hard...'

'So you've done this on your own?'

'Yes. I am alone on this.'

'What is the price you've paid?'

'I am not a hero, believe me. I am a hurt person; I am hurt when I am in the market and someone I don't know says, "I read in the newspaper what you've done. It's horrible. People like you are ruining our country." That is like a knife attack and I am plunged into a personal battle in my head and heart; how do I say it...?'

'You mean you have to keep explaining it to yourself?'

'Yes, yes, and not just explain; I have to reassure myself. I have to say, "Ishai, you are *not* a traitor." It is hard saying this to yourself, on your own.'

'What do you say to those Jewish people abroad who associate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism?'

'Well, this is a huge bluff. It is the worst kind of propaganda. Jewish people in Britain, all over the world, who play this game of bluff are perpetuating the occupation and all its

horrors. They should not contribute to such a device that desecrates the memory of Jewish suffering, and use it to justify the oppression of another people. It is profane.'

'What would you like to say to your compatriots?'

'I would like to say they should think hard about patriotism, because criticising our government on this issue is the *only* patriotic thing we have left.'

CT

Notes:

1: Cited in 'Profile', The Review, Guardian, June 8, 2002.

2: Toomey, Sunday Times magazine, March 3, 2002.

3: Ibid.

4: Extracted from a speech by Yitzhak Frankenthal, Jerusalem, July 27, 2002. Cited in Guardian, August 7, 2002.

5: Interviewed Tel Aviv, May 2002. For an update on refuseniks, visit 'Courage to Refuse', www.seruv.org.il/defaulting.asp.

'Some look on me as an extreme leftist, which is funny, because I am a religious person. For them, the whole question of morality doesn't come into it; they think I am twisted in the head'

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THE ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

Don't believe everything you read about terror plots such as recent ones to destroy Chicago's Sears Tower and blowing 10 airliners from Britain, says **William Blum**, most of those arrested are guilty of no more than what Orwell described as 'thoughtcrimes,' with the assistance of helpful government agents provocateurs

SAVED AGAIN, THANK THE LORD

It turned out there was not only no plot, there was no ricin. The Brits discovered almost immediately that the substance wasn't ricin but kept that secret for more than two years

"Our government has kept us in a perpetual state of fear – kept us in a continuous stampede of patriotic fervor – with the cry of grave national emergency. Always there has been some terrible evil at home or some monstrous foreign power that was going to gobble us up if we did not blindly rally behind it by furnishing the exorbitant Funds demanded. Yet, in retrospect, these disasters seem never to have happened, seem never to have been quite real."
– General Douglas MacArthur, 1957.¹

So now we've (choke) just been (gasp) saved from the simultaneous blowing up of ten airplanes headed toward the United States from the UK. Wow, thank you Brits, thank you Homeland Security. Well done, lads. And thanks for preventing the destruction of the Sears Tower in Chicago, saving lower Manhattan from a terrorist-unleashed flood, smashing the frightful Canadian "terror plot" with 17 arrested, ditto the three Toledo terrorists, and squashing the Los Angeles al Qaeda plot to fly a hijacked airliner

into a skyscraper.

The Los Angeles plot of 2002 was proudly announced by George W. early this year. It has since been totally discredited. Declared one senior counterterrorism official: "There was no definitive plot. It never materialized or got past the thought stage."²

And the scare about ricin in the UK, which our own Mr. Cheney used as part of the buildup for the invasion of Iraq, telling an audience on January 10, 2003: "The gravity of the threat we face was underscored in recent days when British police arrested ... suspected terrorists in London and discovered a small quantity of ricin, one of the world's deadliest poisons."

It turned out there was not only no plot, there was no ricin. The Brits discovered almost immediately that the substance wasn't ricin but kept that secret for more than two years.³

From what is typical in terrorist scares, it is likely that the individuals arrested in the UK August 10 are guilty of what George Orwell, in 1984, called "thoughtcrimes". That is to say, they haven't actually DONE any-

thing. At most, they've THOUGHT about doing something the government would label "terrorism". Perhaps not even very serious thoughts, perhaps just venting their anger at the exceptionally violent role played by the UK and the US in the Mideast and thinking out loud how nice it would be to throw some of that violence back in the face of Blair and Bush. And then, the fatal moment for them that ruins their lives forever ... their angry words are heard by the wrong person, who reports them to the authorities. (In the Manhattan flood case the formidable, dangerous "terrorists" made mention on an Internet chat room about blowing something up.)⁴

Soon a government agent provocateur appears, infiltrates the group, and then actually encourages the individuals to think and talk further about terrorist acts, to develop real plans instead of youthful fantasizing, and even provides the individuals with some of the actual means for carrying out these terrorist acts, like explosive material and technical know-how, money and transportation, whatever is needed to advance the plot. It's known as "entrapment", and it's supposed to be illegal, it's supposed to be a powerful defense for the accused, but the authorities get away with it all the time; and the accused get put away for very long stretches. And because of the role played by the agent provocateur, we may never know whether any of the accused, on their own, would have gone much further, if at all, like actually making a bomb,

or, in the present case, even making transatlantic flight reservations since many of the accused reportedly did not even have passports. Government infiltrating and monitoring is one thing; encouragement, pushing the plot forward, and scaring the public to make political capital from it is quite something else.

Prosecutors have said that the seven men in Miami charged with conspiring to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago and FBI buildings in other cities had sworn allegiance to al-Qaeda. This came after meeting with a confidential government informant who was posing as a representative of the terrorist group. Did they swear or hold such allegiance, one must wonder, before meeting with the informant?

"In essence," reported The Independent of London, "the entire case rests upon conversations between Narseal Batiste, the apparent ring-leader of the group, with the informant, who was posing as a member of al-Qaeda but in fact belonged to the [FBI] South Florida Terrorist Task Force." Batiste told the informant that "he was organizing a mission to build an 'Islamic army' in order to wage jihad."

He provided a list of things he needed: boots, uniforms, machine guns, radios, vehicles, binoculars, bullet proof vests, firearms, and \$50,000 in cash. Oddly enough, one thing that was not asked for was any kind of explosives material.

After sweeps of various locations in Miami, government agents found no

Soon a government agent provocateur appears, infiltrates the group, and then actually encourages the individuals to think and talk further about terrorist acts, to develop real plans instead of youthful fantasizing

THE ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

There must be millions of people in the United States and elsewhere who have thoughts about "terrorist acts". I might well be one of them when I read about a gathering of Bush, Cheney, and assorted neocons that's going to take place

explosives or weapons. "This group was more aspirational than operational," said the FBI's deputy director, while one FBI agent described them as "social misfits". And, added the New York Times, investigators openly acknowledged that the suspects "had only the most preliminary discussions about an attack." Yet Cheney later hailed the arrests at a political fundraiser, calling the group a "very real threat".⁵

Perhaps as great a threat as the suspects in the plot to unleash a catastrophic flood in lower Manhattan by destroying a huge underground wall that holds back the Hudson River. That was the story first released by the authorities; after a while it was replaced by the claim that the suspects were actually plotting something aimed at the subway tunnels that run under the river.⁶

Which is more reliable, one must wonder, information on Internet chat rooms or WMD tips provided by CIA Iraqi informers? Or information obtained, as in the current case in the UK, from Pakistani interrogators of the suspects, none of the interrogators being known to be ardent supporters of Amnesty International.

And the three men arrested in Toledo, Ohio in February were accused of – are you ready? – plotting to recruit and train terrorists to attack US and allied troops overseas. For saving us from this horror we have a paid FBI witness to thank. He had been an informer with the FBI for four years, and most likely was paid for each new lead he brought in.⁷

There must be millions of people in the United States and elsewhere who have thoughts about "terrorist acts". I might well be one of them when I read about a gathering of Bush, Cheney, and assorted neocons that's going to take place. Given the daily horror of Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Palestine in recent times, little of which would occur if not for the government of the United States of America and its allies, the numbers of people having such thoughts must be rapidly multiplying. If I had been at an American or British airport as the latest scare story unfolded, waiting in an interminable line, having my flight canceled, or being told I can't have any carry-on luggage, I may have found it irresistible at some point to declare loudly to my fellow suffering passengers: "Y'know, folks, this security crap is only gonna get worse and worse as long as the United States and Britain continue to invade, bomb, overthrow, occupy, and torture the world!"

How long before I was pulled out of line and thrown into some kind of custody?

If MacArthur were alive today would he dare to publicly express the thoughts of his cited above?

Policy makers and security experts, reports the Associated Press, say that "Law enforcers are now willing to act swiftly against al-Qaeda sympathizers, even if it means grabbing wannabe terrorists whose plots may be only pipe dreams."⁸

Commonly, the "terrorists" are watched for many months, then the

police pounce on them at a politically opportune time. The reasons in the current case may stem from some aspect of the Blair and Bush administrations being under attack from all sides, including the defeat of super-war-supporter Senator Joseph Lieberman (just 36 hours before the British announcement), and the upcoming November elections, when the Republicans will be running on the War on Terrorism issue. “Weeks before September 11th, this is going to play big,” said a White House official, adding that “some Democratic candidates won’t ‘look as appealing’ under the circumstances.”⁹

Referring to the alleged UK terrorism plot, the New York Times reported that: “The White House and the Republican Party had pounced on that news, along with the defeat of Senator Joseph I. Lieberman in the Connecticut Democratic primary by an antiwar candidate, Ned Lamont, to paint the Democrats as weak on national security. Mr. Cheney had gone so far as to imply that the defeat of Mr. Lieberman, a strong backer of the war, would embolden ‘Al Qaeda types’.”¹⁰

Vote Republican or the terrorists win!

The announcement of this particular terrorist threat may also be explained by this news item:

“Much of the televised discussion yesterday concerned the investigative tools available in Britain that U.S. officials credit with allowing authorities to get ahead of the plot before it

proved catastrophic. [Homeland Security Secretary Michael] Chertoff said the ability to monitor monetary transactions and communications and to arrest suspects for a period of 28 days on an emergency basis made a significant difference in the case.”¹¹

We should be hearing further from the administration about these things.

The American Empire for Dummies (an excerpt from an unwritten book)

1. The United States is determined to dominate the world, not to mention outer space. This is not a left-wing cliché, the empire’s leading lights trumpet Washington’s desire, means, and intention for domination, while assuring the world of the noble purposes behind this crusade. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, these declarations have been regularly put forth in policy papers emanating from the White House, the Pentagon, and think tanks closely associated with the national security establishment. They make it perfectly clear that any potential rival to the world’s only superpower must be, and will be, seriously challenged. Here is the first of these warnings, from 1992: “We must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.”¹²

2. World domination includes dominating the Middle East; one might say particularly the Middle East. (See chapter 3, “Oil”, and chapter 6, “Israel”. Please note that there is no

They make it perfectly clear that any potential rival to the world’s only superpower must be, and will be, seriously challenged

THE ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

The basketizing of Syria awaits only a quasi-plausible excuse, which it was hoped Israel would provide by provoking a hostile Syrian reaction in the recent Israeli-Lebanon war

chapter on “Democracy and Freedom”.)

3. In recent times only Iraq, Syria and Iran have stood in the way of US Middle East domination (“remaking the Middle East” is the usual euphemism). Iraq is now a basket case.

The basketizing of Syria awaits only a quasi-plausible excuse, which it was hoped Israel would provide by provoking a hostile Syrian reaction in the recent Israeli-Lebanon war.

The US-Israeli assault on Lebanon was aimed at basketizing Hezbollah so that it couldn’t come to the aid of Iran by attacking Israel during the basketizing of Iran; the latter may begin with sanctions, approved by a pliant Security Council. This was one of the key ways the basketizing of Iraq began. Do not believe the canard that France is hostile to US foreign policy. Time and again, both in and out of the Security Council, France has raised a little objection to this point or that point of Washington’s policy because it needs to pretend and feel that it’s still a great power and has a significant role to play in world affairs, but in the end it smooths the way for the empire.

And Germany against the US war in Iraq? Hardly. Germany has helped the American war effort in half a dozen important ways, including on the ground in Iraq, even while German politicians ran on an anti-Iraq War platform.

Carlos Romulo, former president of the UN General Assembly: “If there is a problem between a weak nation and another weak nation and the UN

takes action, the problem disappears. If there is a problem between a strong nation and a weak nation and the UN takes action, the weak nation disappears. If there is a problem between a strong nation and a strong nation and the UN takes action, the UN disappears.”

4. World domination also includes Central Asia and its massive oil and gas reserves. Afghanistan with its pipelines and US military bases is vital to this undertaking. Through one war or another in recent years, the United States has managed to establish military bases/facilities throughout the region, including in Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia, vital to protecting the pipelines to the eastern Mediterranean; one of the pipelines will extend to Israel, which, along with Turkey, is expected to play a role in the protection of the area.

The Cuban punching bag ad infinitum

I could scarcely contain my surprise. A National Public Radio (NPR) newscaster was speaking, August 1, with an NPR correspondent who had just left a White House press conference and was reporting that the president, in response to a question, had stated that the United States had nothing whatsoever to do with Israeli policies in Lebanon and Gaza. The newscaster, Alex Chadwick, then asked the reporter: “How do you know what to believe from the White House?”

Was this a sign of the long-awaited breath of skepticism blowing in the

mainstream media? No, it wasn't. I made the story up. What really happened was that the correspondent reported that the Cuban government had announced that Fidel Castro was going to have an operation and that his brother, Raul Castro, would be replacing him temporarily. Chadwick then asked: "How do you know what to believe in Cuba?"¹³

This also really happened: Jay Leno on his August 7 program: "There's news of a major medical crisis from Cuba concerning Fidel Castro. It looks like he's getting better."

Think of a US president battling a serious ailment and a broadcaster on Cuban TV making such a remark.

Can anyone find a message hidden here?

The following quotations all come from the same article in the Washington Post of August 4 by Ann Scott Tyson concerning the Iraqi town of Hit:

"Residents are quick to argue that the American presence incites those attacks, and they blame the U.S. military rather than insurgents for turning their town into a combat zone. The Americans should pull out, they say, and let them solve their own problems."

"We want the same thing. I want to go home to my wife," said an American soldier.

"Another U.S. officer put it more bluntly: 'Nobody wants us here, so why are we here? That's the big question.'"

"If we leave, all the attacks would

stop, because we'd be gone."

"The problem is with the Americans. They only bring problems," said watermelon vendor Sefuab

Ganiydum, 35. "Closing the bridge, the curfew, the hospital. It's better for U.S. forces to leave the city."

"What did we do to have all this suffering?" asked Ramsey Abdullah Hindi, 60, sitting outside a tea shop. Ignoring U.S. troops within earshot, he said Iraqis were justified to attack them. "They have a right to fight against the Americans because of their religion and the bad treatment. We will stand until the last," he said somberly.

"City officials, too, are adamant that U.S. troops leave Hit."

"I'm the guy doing the good stuff and I get shot at all the time! Nobody is pro-American in this city. They either tolerate us or all-out hate us," said a US Marine major.

"If we do leave, the city will be a lot better and they'll build it a lot better."

This just in: Dubya has just read this article and says the hidden message is that the United States is bringing freedom and democracy to Iraq.

CT

Notes

1. Vorin Whan, ed. "A Soldier Speaks: Public Papers and Speeches of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur" (1965)
2. The Daily News (New York), February 10, 2006
3. Washington Post, April 14, 2005; United Press International, April 18, 2005

"I'm the guy doing the good stuff and I get shot at all the time! Nobody is pro-American in this city. They either tolerate us or all-out hate us," said a US Marine major

THE ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

4. Time, July 7, 2006, article by Joshua Marshall; Associated Press, July 14, 2006

5. Sears case: Knight Ridder Newspapers, June 23, 2006; The Independent (London), June 25, 2006; St. Petersburg Times (Florida), June 24, 2006; New York Times, August 13, 2006

6. Associated Press, July 14, 2006

7. Associated Press, April 18, 2006

8. Associated Press, July 8, 2006

9. Agence France Presse, August 11, 2006

10. New York Times, August 17, 2006. p.23

11. Washington Post, August 14, 2006, p.9

12. "Defense Planning Guidance for the Fiscal Years 1994-1999", as quoted in New York Times,

March 8, 1992, p.14, emphasis added

13. NPR, Day to Day, August 1, 2006, 12:08 pm

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Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2;
Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower;
West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir;
Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire. His Anti-Empire Reports and excerpts from his books may be read at www.killinghope.org

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When apartheid ended in South Africa, there was an expectation that the new ANC government policies would be based on socialist principles rather than free market capitalism. Stan Winer describes the failure of the new society in which the poor are getting poorer as their political leaders amass unimaginable wealth

SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW FASCISM

One thing the 'old' and the 'new' South Africa have in common is a capacity for inventing history. History is not seen as a dispassionate inquiry into what happened, but rather as an opportunity to promote some kind of favourable self image. The old apartheid fascists did it, and South Africa's new ruling elite is doing so. They do it because they hate complexity, especially any that complicates the essential message that there are winners and losers in life, and we must trust the politicians to tell us which are which.

The history of the Great Trek into the interior, for instance, was told as a story of heroic pioneers who brought the light of Christian values to a dark continent; while the present government would have us believe that, after South Africa's "peaceful" transition to democracy, the country has become a happily reconciled "rainbow nation" that serves as "a beacon of hope to the rest of the world". Or in other words, the African National Congress (ANC) which won the coun-

try's first democratic election in 1994, has succeeded in becoming "all things to all people". To some extent, this is true.

The ruling party's headlong rush to embrace capitalism, and the government's unwavering commitment to privatisation and to conservative free-market macroeconomic policies dictated by World Bank and IMF consultants has stolen the thunder from the Right, which now finds itself with little else to do other than occasionally carping and pouting – sitting, as Disraeli once said of the British opposition, like a range of exhausted volcanoes. The Left, meanwhile, in the shape of the South African Communist Party (SACP) with its peculiar brand of socialism – if socialism it can even be called at this stage – has subsumed itself to the ANC's political efforts. South African voters who want to vote for the SACP can do so only by voting ANC.

In this way, South African communists have ironically and perhaps unintentionally become a conservative force through remaining in a stolid,

South African communists have ironically and perhaps unintentionally become a conservative force through remaining in a stolid, unyielding alliance with the ruling ANC

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Violent crime has become an almost metaphorical term invoking the collapse of morality and the decline of social stability in the country

unyielding alliance with the ruling ANC. Which turns the SACP into an aberration, because parties that constitute alliances all over the world invariably contest elections under their own banners. The Left is thus left with little else to do other than pay lip-service to the Hegelian dialectic while remaining essentially a-dialectical. It has been so thoroughly tamed that it is difficult to remember the last time any of one of its aparatchiks said anything surprising, outrageous, or for that matter, even meaningful.

With the end of contestation between Right and Left, it would seem polarity is no longer a factor in the country's political process; or to quote Francis Fukuyama only slightly out of context: South Africa is experiencing its own "end of history". It is an affront to those trained to respect grand polarities. The dialectical wars were not supposed to be waged like this. But, much as some people may want to have nothing to do with the dialectic, the dialectic always somehow manages to have everything to do with us.

And so, an anarchic force has entered the equation. Not anarchic in the comparatively benign sense of classical anarchism, which advocates the deliberate violation of laws in pursuit of some social goal, but something rather more sinister. It now threatens the social cohesion of the country and is characterised by a desperate, all-consuming criminal nihilism. Since the "new, democratic dispensation" of 1994, violent crime has become an almost metaphorical term

invoking the collapse of morality and the decline of social stability in the country.

Although South Africa's general crime rate is comparable to those of developed countries, what basically sets South Africa apart from every other country on earth, is its extraordinarily high level of violent crime. More people are murdered each day in South than the number of civilians being killed in war-torn Iraq. South African police statistics show a daily murder rate of 51, compared with an average of 34 civilians killed in Iraq. Add to this the current average South African road accident mortality rate of 36 killed each day, most of them while breaking road traffic laws, and an even more alarming picture emerges. Not to mention the official average of more than 200 attempted murders, 150 rapes and 350 armed robberies each day, or the 800 children who die annually from gang-related and accidental gunshot wounds.

At one stage, Interpol noted that its own crime statistics for South Africa were approximately double those stated officially by the country's Crime Information Analysis Centre. At the same time, no less than one in four of the country's law enforcement officials were themselves under investigation for corruption. The government then imposed a moratorium on its crime statistics, assuring the public that this not to hide the excessively high crime rates, but rather to "put systems in place to ensure accurate crime reporting". The independent Institute for Security Studies later found

WHAT WENT WRONG?

that at “no stage” were the problems of data accuracy of “such an extent that a moratorium on the release of crime statistics to the public was necessary”. One thing not in dispute, however, is that far more violent crimes have taken place since the advent of democracy in South Africa than during the most violent phases of apartheid repression with all its racist massacres and state-sponsored death squads. In the four decades preceding 1994 there was a reported average of 7,036 murders per year, compared with a total of 18,793 last year and continuing.

Social conditioning under apartheid may well have laid the foundations of a violent society where values became dangerously warped, but it can also be argued that the problem of crime in post-apartheid South Africa is ultimately the product of a political elite creating a society in its own image. Many in the ANC leadership and in government circles, including the recently sacked deputy president Jacob Zuma, are associated in the public mind with corruption, crude and rampant accumulation of material wealth, and the abuse of state resources for personal gain. These are people who were supposed to be the exemplars of what defines the product of a liberated South Africa, but they now represent an assault on everything the liberation movement claimed to honour.

Some other things have turned full circle as well, reflecting a profound ideological shift that has occurred in the ANC since it came into power 14

years ago. The ANC, for example, won the 1994 election largely on the strength of its historic Freedom Charter, replete with socialist rhetoric decreeing that the national wealth including “the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be restored to the people as a whole.” Nelson Mandela himself, in a message smuggled out of prison before his release in 1990, promised that “nationalisation is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views in this regard is unthinkable”. Yet the unthinkable has occurred, with an emphasis on privatisation and free-market macroeconomic policies, and a corresponding decline of nationalisation

While the government leadership tends to be heavily educated in the European provenance of ideas and action, it appears surprisingly unappreciative of the lived experience of ordinary workers and the poor. Take for example the kind of official thinking as reflected in a recent policy planning document emanating from the Office of the President. The document identifies “the system of ownership and distribution of resources” as a primary determinant of social behaviour. A politics so heavily grounded in the market with its survival-of-the-fittest “morality” as opposed to human decency, runs the constant risk of losing its bearings, as it now seems to have done. At the same time, the government has appropriated some basic ideas of the communist Left, emptied them of their original content and refilled them with an unappealing blend

Many in the ANC leadership and in government circles, including the recently sacked deputy president Jacob Zuma, are associated in the public mind with corruption, crude and rampant accumulation of material wealth, and the abuse of state resources for personal gain

WHAT WENT WRONG?

This irrational policy – racist in essence, because it assumes that black capitalists will automatically behave differently to their white counterparts – has ushered in a small clique of former politicians and state officials eager to get rich quick

of archaic Bolshevik theory and brute materialism.

In sum, according to government strategy, there must first be a “national democratic revolution” and then socialism will arrive at some unspecified future date. The government started peddling the fallacy of a “black, patriotic bourgeoisie” as a prerequisite to greater equality for the impoverished masses. This irrational policy – racist in essence, because it assumes that black capitalists will automatically behave differently to their white counterparts – has ushered in a small clique of former politicians and state officials eager to get rich quick. Many of them have nothing constructive to offer, other than the colour of their skin and their proximity to political influence in the awarding of tenders.

Today, a majority of members of the ANC’s national executive committee, and key ANC provincial and local government officials, have become big business players with some of them ranking as SA’s wealthiest men and women. They are “deracialising” the South African economy and “transforming” it, according to the prevailing jargon and premises, while in practice they have little interest in anything that might interrupt their energetic accumulation of personal wealth. The gap continues to widen daily between the impoverished masses and this black bourgeoisie grown flush in the post-apartheid years. These instant millionaires, with their shiny BMWs and glitzy mansions juxtaposed against 40 percent

unemployment and five million homeless, have done nothing to create jobs or skills development opportunities. Instead, their “transformation” of society for the better might even have had the opposite effect of imposing a heavy price on it, by unintentionally spawning the kind of criminal cryptofascism – capitalism with a gun – that now threatens social stability. It is difficult for people to remain honest when the integrity of the highest is in question.

The once prevalent idea that, as participants in a collective struggle for freedom, people have a relationship with something bigger than themselves, has been replaced by political disengagement and withdrawal into aggressive self-interest. The problem of crime is not a problem of antisocial behaviour but rather the problem of living in an asocial and anti-socialist society, a society that lacks the capacity to connect people with one another through a common system of meaning.

People have lost their trust in political organisations and beliefs, and consequently with one another, while authority has largely come to be perceived as some kind of personal insult. People now play by their own rules. “My world, my rules”.

Government policy planners have taken the country deep into dangerous territory from which it will be hard to return, and the Left, sadly, has helped them do it. Together, they have failed to project and promote a national or social sense of purpose and responsibility by uniting people

WHAT WENT WRONG?

around a common set of values and beliefs. While workers and the poor exhibit a bitter, prolonged restraint on the verge of bursting into violent fury, neither the Left nor the Right are able to give shape to new ideas growing out of ingenuity, common sense and simple decency. By themselves these things do not owe allegiance to any particular paradigm.

Unless the ANC and its labour federation and communist alliance partners substitute their archaic rhetoric and agendas with cohesive development initiatives, those ubiquitous masked men – the capitalists with guns – might well turn out to be the real “winners” in South Africa’s newly emergent correlation of forces. **CT**

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*South African writer Stan Winer is author of the book *Between the Lies: Rise of the media-military-industrial complex*, published in London by Southern Universities Press, 2004. Buy this book from www.amazon.co.uk or download a free PDF of the full text at www.coldtype.net/archives.html*

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LAST WORDS

*When author and film maker **Greg Palast** went to Louisiana to video thousands of refugees from Hurricane Katrina living like prisoners of war behind barbed wire in a trailer park, he didn't expect to be charged with a breach of national security, But that's what happened, as a bemused and angry Palast reports . . .*

JOURNALISM IN THE FIRST DEGREE

Apparently, the broadcast of these stinking smokestacks tipped off Osama that, if his assassins pose as poor Black folk, they can get a cramped Airstream right next to a "critical infrastructure" asset

It's true. It's weird. It's nuts. The Department of Homeland Security, after a five-year hunt for Osama, has finally brought charges against . . . Greg Palast. I kid you not. Send your cakes with files to the Air America wing at Guantanamo.

But not just yet. Fatherland Security has informed me that television producer Matt Pascarella and I have been charged with unauthorized filming of a "critical national security structure" in Louisiana.

On August 22, we videotaped – for LinkTV and Democracy Now! – the thousands of Katrina evacuees still held behind a barbed wire in a trailer park encampment 100 miles from New Orleans. It's been a year since the hurricane and 73,000 POW's (Prisoners of War) are still in this aluminum ghetto in the middle of nowhere. One resident, Pamela Lewis said, "It is a prison set-up" – except there are no home furloughs for these inmates because they no longer have homes.

To give a sense of the full flavor and smell of the place, we wanted to show that this human parking lot, with kids

and elderly, is nearly adjacent to the Exxon Oil refinery, the nation's second largest, a chemical-belching behemoth.

So we filmed it. Without Big Brother's authorization. Uh, oh. Apparently, the broadcast of these stinking smokestacks tipped off Osama that, if his assassins pose as poor Black folk, they can get a cramped Airstream right next to a "critical infrastructure" asset.

So now Matt and I have a "criminal complaint" lodged against us with the feds.

The positive side for me as a journalist is that I get to see our terror-busters in action. I should note that it took the Maxwell Smarts at Homeland Security a full two weeks to hunt us down.

Frankly, we were a bit scared that, given the charges, we wouldn't be allowed on a plane into New York last night. But what scared us more is that we were allowed on the plane.

Once I was traced, I had a bit of an other-worldly conversation with my would-be captors. Detective Frank Pananepinto of Homeland Security told us, "This is a 'Critical Infrastructure' . . . and they get nervous about unauthorized

filming of their property.

Well, me too, Detective. What makes me nervous is that the Bush Terror Terriers have kindly indicated on the Internet that this unprotected critical infrastructure can be targeted – I mean located – at 30° 29' 11" N Latitude and 91° 11' 39" W Longitude.

After I assured Detective Pananepinto, "I can swear to you that I'm not part of Al Qaeda," he confirmed that, "Louisiana is still part of the United States," subject to the first amendment and he was therefore required to divulge my accuser.

Not surprisingly, it was Exxon Corporation, one of a handful of companies not in love with my investigations.

So I rang America's top petroleum pusher-men and asked their media relations honcho in Houston, Marc Boudreaux, "Do you want us to go to jail or not? Is it Exxon's position that reporters should go to jail?"

Because, all my dumb-ass jokes aside, that is what's at stake. And Exxon knew we were journalists because we showed our press credential to the Exxon guards at the refinery entrance. The Exxon man was coy: "Well, we'll see what we can find out. . . . Obviously it's important to national security that we have supplies from that refinery in the event of an emergency."

Really? According to the documents our team uncovered from the offices of Exxon's lawyer, Mr. James Baker, the oil industry is more than happy to see a limit on worldwide crude production. Indeed, the current squeeze has jacked the price of oil from \$24 a barrel to \$64 and refined products have jumped yet

higher – resulting in a record-busting profit for Exxon of nearly \$1 billion per week.

So this silly "criminal complaint" has nothing to do with stopping Al Qaeda or keeping the oil flowing. It has everything to do with obstructing news reports in a way that no one would have dared attempt before the September 11 attack.

Detective Pananepinto, in justifying our impending bust, said, "If you remember, a lot of people were killed on 9/11."

Yes, Detective, I remember that very well: my office was in the World Trade Center. Lucky for me, I was out of town that day. It was not a lucky day for 3,000 others.

Yes, I remember "a lot" of people were killed. So I have this suggestion, Detective – and you can pass it on to Mr. Bush: Go and find the people who killed them. It's been five years and the Bush regime has not done that. Instead, the War on Terror is reduced to taking off our shoes in airports, hoping we can bomb Muslims into loving America and chasing journalists around the bayou. Meanwhile, King Abdullah, the Gambino of oil, whose princelings funded the murderers, gets a free ride in the President's golf cart at the Crawford ranch.

I guess I shouldn't complain. After all, Matt and I look pretty good in orange. **CT**

Greg Palast is the author of the New York Times bestseller "Armed Madhouse: Dispatches From The Front Lines Of The Class War" (Penguin-Dutton, 2006)

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