

# JULIAN ASSANGE: FREE AT LAST!

Now, perhaps, we can get around to ending some of the world's other great injustices – Caitlin Johnstone (PAGE 14)

coldtype.net

Issue 259

# ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING ■ PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

July 2024

Exploring the complex and controversial relationship between the US and Cuba, a story of embargo, invasion and resistance

An exclusive six-page excerpt from **On Cuba,** the new book by **Noam Chomsky & Vijay Prashad** (PAGE 26)

# TARGETING

# CASTRO





Read back copies of ColdType  
 at [www.coldtype.net/reader.html](http://www.coldtype.net/reader.html)  
 and [www.issuu.com/coldtype](http://www.issuu.com/coldtype)



# INSIDE

## INSIGHTS

5. **Why Israel destroyed Gaza's 12 universities**  
**Marwan Aswar**
7. **Landlords' profits soar as tenants drown in rent hikes**  
**Julia Conley**
8. **Netanyahu in spat with Washington over killing**  
**Binoy Kampmark**
9. **Bendib's World**  
**Khalil Bendib**
10. **No one is above the law? Really, Mr Biden?**  
**Ralph Nader**
12. **One country isn't rolling out red carpets for the rich**  
**Sam Pizzigati**
13. **We Are All Fried**  
**Greg Koenderman**

## ColdType

7 Lewis Street, Georgetown, Ontario,  
Canada L7G 1E3

**Contact:** Tony Sutton  
editor@coldtype.net

**Subscribe:**  
For a FREE subscription  
e-mail editor@coldtype.net

**Back Issues:**  
www.coldtype.net/reader.html or  
www.issuu.com/coldtype

**Disclaimer:**  
The contents of the articles in ColdType  
are the sole responsibility of the author(s).  
ColdType is not responsible for any  
inaccurate or incorrect statements  
they may contain

©ColdType 2024



Free at last! – Page 14

## ISSUES

14. **Julian Assange is free – now anything is possible!**  
**Caitlin Johnstone**
16. **'This is a sharp time' – Israel's Day of Joy**  
**David Edwards**
20. **Gaza: The donkey and the fate of western civilisation**  
**Jamal Kanj**
22. **Why won't US help negotiate a peaceful end to war in Ukraine?**  
**Jeffrey D. Sachs**
26. **BOOK EXCERPT – Targeting Castro**  
**Noam Chomsky & Vijay Prashad**
32. **If the wars go on ...**  
**Edward J. Curtin**
36. **Battle-tested in Gaza: Britain's next drones**  
**Mark Curtis**
38. **The absence – and presence – of Daniel Ellsberg**  
**Norman Solomon**
42. **What's next for Battlefield America? Israel's high-tech tactics point the way**  
**John & Nisha Whitehead**
46. **Post-colonial prophet or an advocate of 'barbaric justice?'**  
**Michelle Hamadecke**



## HERMES 900 FIELD-TESTED ON PALESTINIANS

The Hermes 900 is a lethal drone manufactured by Elbit systems and first deployed during Israel's 2014 attack on the besieged Gaza strip. Elbit supplies 85% of the drones used by the Israeli military for drone strikes and surveillance, resulting in grave human rights violations against Palestinians.

**36,090**  
**PALESTINIANS  
KILLED**

during Israel's genocide in Gaza as of May 28, 2024. The Israeli military used drones for 90% of targeted killings in Gaza in October and November 2023.

**11.5%**  
**RISE IN REVENUE**

(year over year) reported by Elbit Systems for the first quarter of 2024, 6 months into the genocide in Gaza.

**TESTED  
ON PALESTINIANS**

"The fact that our systems are in operational use in Israel helps us because customers prefer to get mature solutions." –Elbit Systems CEO Bezhael Machlis, May 2024

VISUALIZING **PALESTINE**

SOURCES [bit.ly/vp-elbit](https://bit.ly/vp-elbit)  
[WWW.VISUALIZINGPALESTINE.ORG](http://WWW.VISUALIZINGPALESTINE.ORG)

[@visualizingpal](https://www.instagram.com/visualizingpal)  
[/visualizing\\_palestine](https://www.facebook.com/visualizing_palestine)  
[fb.me/visualizingpalestine](https://www.facebook.com/fb.me/visualizingpalestine)

JUN 2024



# INSIGHTS



Destroyed by Israel – Gaza's Al-Aqsa University

In their war on Gaza, the Israelis pulverised the educational sector in the enclave. There are no schools, no colleges and no universities due to the mass bombings deliberately targeting these institutions since October 7, 2023.

Over 90,000 Palestinian university students in Gaza have no universities to go back to when the war ends. In the long term the Israelis may want to create an illiterate population in the enclave which becomes easier to control.

Israel's bombings have turned all 12 universities in the Strip into piles of rubble, campuses a wreck, student lecture halls no longer exist, tumbledown buildings have

► MARWAN ASMAR

**Israel hates knowledge:**  
That's why it destroyed Gaza's 12 universities

become the standard textbook cases of woes and misery underlined by running sewers and dirty water floods.

The mass attack on the higher educational system by Israeli warplanes that targeted and killed nearly 100 Palestinian scholars, deans, scientists and professors, has led to claims that this criminal rampage is *scolarcide* – with Israel intending to destroy the whole system of education in the Gaza Strip, say UN experts.

To demonstrate his outrage, Palestinian-American Dr Tariq Haddad refused to meet US Secretary Anthony Blinken after Israel killed 100 people from his family in

---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

its Gaza genocide. Family members murdered included physicians and professors.

The attack on the universities was a deliberate attempt to destroy Palestinian culture and learning. Al-Aqsa University in Khan Yunis, in the south of the Gaza Strip, was completely destroyed by Israeli, a regime that seeks to instill a poverty of culture.

Al Aqsa University began to be destroyed slowly at the end of 2023. As Palestinians started to move in search of safe areas, they found the university had been turned into a place for the thousands of displaced people being forced out of their homes by Israeli warplanes.

But then the Israeli army increased the bombing of this institution resulting in carnage, killing and mayhem. The same is the case with the Islamic University in Gaza which was also destroyed by the Israeli occupation forces.

The Islamic University was the biggest educational institution in Gaza, yet all of its faculties were completely destroyed soon after October 7.

There are many before and after pictures that show a horrendous, vicious attack on educational learning. One Israeli soldier relished his destructive work so much that he filmed himself walking through Al Azhar University which now lies in a desolate, dilapidated state.

In a mock display, he walks among its ruins, saying the university is now closed for reconstruction and asking the Israeli soldiers who have now come to occupy its wrecked and debris-ridden halls, if they want to sign up for the new semester.



Screenshot / x.com

**An Israeli soldier holds a book as a fire burns behind him at Al Aqsa University**

In remembrance of their destruction, *Middle East Eye* ran a piece on those higher learning that once existed in Gaza. Besides the Islamic University of Gaza and the Aqsa University, there was Al Israa University, Al Azhar University, Palestine Technical College, University of Applied Sciences, University of Palestine, Gaza University, Hassan II University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences and Dar Al Kalima University.

They're all gone now. US Congressman Bernie Sanders tried to emphasise the point across to the US Senate about student protesting in US university campuses for the support of Palestine. He told Senators that there are no student protesters in Gaza because every one of the 12 campuses there have been destroyed by the Israelis.

Another Israeli soldier found it appropriate to take a selfie of himself behind bookshelves in Al Aqsa University which he had just set on fire (*see photo above*).

The university in Khan Yunis, South of Gaza City, the second largest city in Gaza, was occupied for almost three months by the Israeli army in a bid to get rid of Hamas and Palestinian resistance fighters.

Israeli soldiers gave up last April and left. They hadn't destroyed the resistance, but they decimated Khan Yunis, its university, colleges and schools. It was pure terrorist vandalism.

The photo of the Israeli soldier went viral. It shows him holding a book while a fire burns behind him in the Al Aqsa University library that is one of the largest book depositories in the Gaza Strip.

Despite the killing of its doctors, nurses, computer scientists, engineers, teachers, lecturers, workers, journalists and many other professions, Palestinians are still hopeful about the "day after" when the war will end.

The image of 21-year-old Duaa



---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

from deep down Gaza is heartening. It is a call for the outside world to let her continue her studies despite the fact “...we are living in a state of occupation war that destroyed my home, my country, and my university...” she said.

And there are many like her which means the destroyed universities will be rebuilt one day and the

educational system will be reconstituted despite the Israeli slaughter because Palestinians will not go anywhere else – they intend to stay in Gaza. **CT**

*Dr Marwan Asmar is an Amman-based journalist covering Middle East affairs. He blogs at [www.crossfirearabia.com](http://www.crossfirearabia.com)*

---

➤ JULIA CONLEY

## Landlords' profits soar as tenants drown in rent hikes

---

---

**W**ith monthly inflation down to its lowest point in more than two years and heading toward the Federal Reserve's target, the Biden administration has just celebrated “welcome progress.”

But an analysis from the website Accountable.US showed how more than 100-million people who rent their homes in the US are not seeing the benefits of what one Biden spokesperson called “the great American comeback” in their housing costs, particularly millions of people whose homes are owned by corporate landlords.

The government watchdog found that the six largest corporate landlord companies brought in close to a combined \$300-million in increased profits in the first quarter of 2024, with the profits mostly stemming from rent hikes.

Overall in the US, rent prices have skyrocketed by 31.4 percent since 2019 while wages have increased by just 23 percent, meaning

tenants need to earn nearly \$80,000 a year to keep from being rent-burdened and spending 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

The six companies included in the Accountable.US analysis have more than rent increases in common: They have all faced lawsuits regarding their use of the property management software company RealPage, which is alleged to have used an algorithm to fix rent prices, impacting about 16-million rental units in the United States.

The largest net income increase Accountable.US found among the six corporate land-

lords was that of Camden Property Trust, which increased its net income by 97 percent in the first quarter of this year to \$85.8-million. The company spent \$50-million on stock buybacks that it said were made possible by its “weighted average monthly rental rate,” which went up nearly 2 percent year over year.

Essex Property Trust increased its net income by 76 percent year over year to more than \$285-million, also raising rents by 2.1 percent, while Equity Residential's income jumped 39 percent to \$305-million as it increased its rental rates by 3.4 percent, with tenants paying an average of \$3,077.

AvalonBay Communities saw its net income increase 18 percent to \$173.6-million, apparently owing both to its “rental and other income” revenue going up by 5.6 percent and its “management, development, and other fees” for tenants soaring by 68.4 percent to nearly \$1.8-million.

“Big corporate landlords have kept right on raising rent on everyday families regardless of how high their profits have grown. Adding insult to injury, many landlords rewarded a small group of wealthy investors with new hand-

outs at the expense of struggling tenants,” said Liz Zelnick, director of the economic security and corporate power program at Accountable.US.

The group's analysis was released weeks after the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted a raid on an Atlanta-based property management firm in the Department of Justice's



---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

antitrust investigation into RealPage regarding “allegations of a nationwide conspiracy to artificially inflate apartment rents.”

As Competition Policy International (CPI) reported last month, “RealPage’s system, which provides rental price recommendations based on real-time data from landlords, is alleged to be a key tool in manipulating the rental market. The firm’s influence covers 70 percent of multifamily apartment buildings.”

“The scheme purportedly operated by encouraging landlords to adopt RealPage’s pricing recommendations, a practice they follow 80-90 percent of the time,” reported CPI.

“This coordinated approach reduces the availability of rental units, driving up prices. One of the architects of RealPage’s system reportedly stated that the aim is to prevent landlords from under-

valuing their properties, ensuring consistently higher rents across the board.”

Zelnick said it was “unsurprising that some of the same companies that needlessly inflated housing costs have worked closely with a software company accused of helping landlords coordinate a massive price fixing scheme. Through-the-roof rent hikes based on greed – not need – have kept many Americans from getting ahead, which is why Congress must do more to support the Biden administration’s affordable housing actions.”

President Joe Biden as urged Congress to pass legislation to stop price gouging by landlords and to build millions of affordable rental units. **CT**

*Julia Conley is a staff writer with Common Dreams – [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org) – where this article was first published*

had “assured” him “that the administration is working day and night to remove these bottlenecks. I certainly hope that’s the case. It should be the case.”

The release coincided with efforts made by President Joe Biden’s envoy, Amos Hochstein, to cool matters concerning Israel-Hezbollah hostilities, a matter that threatens to move beyond daily border skirmishes. It was also a pointed reference to the halt in a single shipment of 2000 pound (900kg) bombs to Israel regarding concerns about massive civilian casualties over any planned IDF assault on Rafah. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre was uncharacteristically unadorned in frankness. “We genuinely do not know what he is talking about.” Discussions between US and Israeli officials were continuing. “There are no other pauses – none.” It fell to the White House National Security Communications advisor, John Kirby, to field more substantive questions on the matter.

---

► BINOY KAMPMARK

## Netanyahu in spat with Washington over killing

---

---

Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is unhappy. Not so much with the Palestinians, whom he sees as terroristic, dispensable and a threat to Israeli security. Not with the Persians, who, he swears, will never acquire a nuclear weapon capacity on his watch. His recent lack of happiness has been directed against the fatty hand that feeds him and his country’s war making capabilities.

On June 18, the Israeli PM released a video decrying Washington’s recent conduct towards his government in terms of military aid. It was “inconceivable that in the past few months, the administration has been withholding weapons and ammunitions to Israel.” Having claimed such an idea to be inconceivable, Netanyahu proceeded to conceive. He stated that US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken

On June 20, Kirby admitted to being perplexed and disappointed at Netanyahu’s remarks, “especially given that no other country is doing more to help Israel defend itself against the threat by Hamas”. As he was at pains to point out, the US military industrial complex had enthusiastically furnished “material assistance to Israel” despite the pause on the provision of 2,000-pound bombs. The notion “that we had somehow stopped helping Israel with their self-defense needs is absolutely not accurate”. Netanyahu, in other words, was quibbling about the means of inflicting death, a matter of form over substance.



---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

Blinken confirmed as much, stating that the administration was “continuing to review one shipment that President Biden has talked about with regard to 2000-pound bombs because of our concerns about their use in densely populated areas like Rafah.” All other matters were “moving as it normally would move.”

These remarks are unequivocally true. Annual military assistance to Israel from US coffers totals \$3.8-billion. In April, President Joe Biden approved the provision of \$17-billion in additional assistance to Israel amidst the continued pummeling of Gaza and the starvation of its thinning population. The Biden administration has also badgered Democratic lawmakers to bless the sale of 50 F-15 fighters to Israel in a contract amounting to \$18-billion. But this, according to accounts from Israel’s Channel 12 and the German paper Bild, has been less than satisfactory for Israel’s blood lusting prime minister.

The disgruntled video precipitated much agitation among officials in the Biden administration. In an Axios report, three, inevitably anonymised, offer their views. One found it “hard to fathom” how the video “helps with deterrence. There is nothing like telling Hezbollah that the US is withholding weapons from Israel, which is false, to make them feel emboldened.”

The interviewed officials all admitted to Netanyahu’s inscrutability. A half-plausible line was ventured: running up points on the domestic front ahead of a visit to Washington from Israel’s defence minister, Yoav Gallant. Not that the strategy was working for opposition leader, Yair Lapid, who found



Netanyahu’s effort damaging in its reverberating potential. From Moscow to Tokyo, “everyone is reaching the same conclusion: Israel is no longer the closest ally of the US. This is the damage Netanyahu is causing us.”

Kirby’s remarks deserve scrutiny on another level. For one, they suggest a rationale that would have done much in flattening Israeli egos. “The president put fighter aircrafts up in the air in the middle of April to help shoot down several hundred drones and missiles, including ballistic missiles that were fired from Iran proper at Israel.”

Here arises an important omission: the intervention by the US was part of a coordinated, choreographed plan enabling Iran to show force in response to the April 1 Israeli strike on its ambassadorial compound in Damascus while minimising the prospect of casualties. Accordingly, Tehran and Washington found themselves in an odd, unacknowledged embrace that had one unintended consequence: revealing Israeli vulnerability. No longer could Israel be seen to be self-sufficiently impregnable, its defences firmly holding against all adversaries. In a perverse twist on that dilemma, a strong ally providing support is bound to be resented. Nothing supplied will ever be, or can be, enough. **CT**

*Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University. Email: [bkampmark@gmail.com](mailto:bkampmark@gmail.com)*

---

## BENDIB'S WORLD

KHALIL BENDIB



---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

► RALPH NADER

## ‘No one is above the law?’ Really, Mr Biden?

---

---

After the jury came in with its verdict that Donald Trump was guilty of a scheme and cover-up to illegally influence the 2016 election, the Biden campaign issued a statement saying that the judgment demonstrated that “no one is above the law,” not even a former President. The overwhelming truth is that the majority of criminal laws are not a deterrent to the serious violations of law committed by sitting presidents of the United States.

This includes the incumbent Joe Biden, especially with regard to foreign and military decisions.

At least five long-standing federal laws explicitly condition the shipment of weapons to foreign countries. It is legally impermissible for the US government to provide weapons to countries that violate human rights or use these weapons offensively. Day after day, Joe Biden has become a co-belligerent with Netanyahu’s genocidal war crimes and mass slaughter of innocent children, women and men. He has violated all five of these federal laws. (See my February 16, 2024 column: Biden & Blinken – Rule of Illegal Power Over Rule of Law).

As the military, diplomatic and political enabler of the Israeli government’s siege, with the unconditional shipment of weapons of mass destruction, along with civilian bombardment and starvation of defenceless Palestinians in Gaza,

Biden is violating the UN Charter and other treaties that past Administrations have signed and that have been ratified by the US Senate. Biden and other presidents act like they are above these and other laws.

One president after another has spent monies not appropriated by Congress, has defied subpoenas issued by Congress, launched wars undeclared by Congress, sent deadly weapons to nations that obstruct



**Joe Biden: Co-belligerent in Benjamin Netanyahu's war crimes**

the delivery of US humanitarian aid, and that do not protect civilian populations under foreign military rule. All violations of federal law.

Donald Trump in 2019 brazenly stated the lawlessness in one sentence: “I have an Article II, where I have the right to do whatever I want as President.” Trump got away with defying over 125 Congressional subpoenas, and with vio-

lating the criminal statute known as the Hatch Act by using the White House and other federal property to promote his re-election campaign. Then of course there was the January 6 insurrection, and the likely delay of his trial until after the election, if at all.

Joe Biden shuffles around unappropriated monies, continues to allow the violation of a 1992 federal law requiring the Pentagon to provide Congress with an audited military budget, and is constantly sending unlawful armed incursions into other weaker countries with impunity.

To make matters easier for presidents, there is the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel memo, from decades ago, that asserts there can be no criminal prosecution initiated against a sitting president.

As attorney Bruce Fein, who worked in the Office of Legal Counsel, has said repeatedly, this baseless opinion has no legal force and should be rescinded.

The courts have shielded presidents from accountability for perpetuated crimes committed either by the White House or by the president’s administration. For example, citizens have no “standing to sue,” to challenge in court a variety of Executive Branch abuses says the Supreme Court, not even members of Congress. As for presidential violations of the Constitution and federal laws by launching illegal wars or armed attacks abroad, the courts dismiss such cases, saying they raise “political questions” outside the jurisdiction of the courts.

Being allowed to get away with crimes is what constitutional law specialist Bruce Fein calls “a way of life at the White House.” Obstruc-



---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

tion of justice or deliberate non-enforcement of seriously violated laws marks every presidency. Trump just boasted about what he inherited and intensified it.

Again, presidents operate in a system of considerable sovereign immunity, and law that either can't or has not breached this shielded impunity. They really are above the criminal laws. Only the very difficult political penalty of impeach-

ment by the House of Representatives and conviction by two-thirds of the Senate can only evict them from office, after which they are free to enjoy life, and receive huge lecture fees and large book advances. **CT**

*Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer and author of **Only the Super-Rich Can Save Us!***

this Massachusetts island now have a nasty habit of “falling into the ocean.”

Or contemplate what life would be like if you were a person of means who fell in love with a megayacht the length of a football field and just had to be able to call that yacht your own. The purchase sets you back well over \$100-million. But now you've just realised you'll be annually paying at least 10 percent of that purchase price to dock and staff and fuel and insure your oh-so-cute new plaything.

The one saving grace amid challenges like these: Things could be a lot worse. You could be a rich Norwegian.

Norway's wealthiest have faced a wealth tax ever since 1892, and, over the generations since then, no nation in the world has taken taxing wealth as seriously. But that tradition came under a direct challenge just over a decade ago, in 2013, when a new conservative government came into power. Over the next eight years, that government set about cutting Norway's richest some slack at tax time.

This conservative government, under prime minister Erna Solberg, trimmed down Norway's wealth tax, eliminated the nation's levy on inheritances, and slashed the tax rate on incomes. The predictable result: Norwegians with the greatest wealth, a Statistics Norway analysis found, saw the greatest gains.

“The richest have been given 100 times more in tax cuts than the lowest-paid under Erna Solberg,” the Norwegian Labour Party's Hadia Talik would charge. “If you want less inequality, tax policies have to be distributive. That's the fairest way and gives a better basis for the country to create value.”



Norway won't roll out the red carpet for its rich jet-setters . . .

► SAM PIZZIGATI

## One nation isn't rolling out red carpets for the rich

**S**o you think the rich have life easy, do you? Just try telling that to the deep pockets who've spent tens of millions buying condos at 432 Park Avenue, the 11-year-old Manhattan luxury tower that once rated as our hemisphere's tallest residence. Condo owners in the tower have had to put up with “faulty elevators, leaky plumbing, and noise issues.”

They're now suing the building's operator.

Or consider the plight of those fabulously wealthy souls who've had to pay millions to move their mansions off the sandy coast of Nantucket, the one-time hippie refuge that's become a summer “holiday hot spot for billionaires.” The problem? With climate change raising water levels, seaside homes on

---

---

# INSIGHTS

---

---

In the 2021 elections, voters would agree. The centre-left government they voted into power that year moved quickly to reverse the Conservative Party's rich-people-friendly tax cuts.

By 2023, the top wealth tax rate on Norway's largest fortunes had risen from 0.85 to 1.1 percent, just one of a number of moves that distinctly displeased many of Norway's richest, among them the industrialist Kjell Inge Røkke. Midway through 2022, Røkke announced he was moving to Switzerland.

Other rich Norwegians would follow Røkke out. By 2022's close, over 30 of Norway's richest had departed, more wealthy emigres than Norway had seen over the previous 13 years combined. But that exodus would only strengthen the resolve of tax-the-rich progressive lawmakers.

"The wealthiest should contribute more to society," noted Bjørnar Moxnes, the Red Party leader, "and it's important that Norway doesn't let itself be held hostage by billionaires who threaten capital flight."

Norway's richest, the finance

ministry state secretary Erlend Trygve Grimstad would add, have always had to pay more in taxes to help keep the nation's world-class public services – including free health care – strong and vital.

"Those who enjoy success with this social model," Grimstad posited, "must contribute more than others."

Other Norwegians – like the *Financial Times* economics commentator Martin Sandbu – would directly challenge the case against raising taxes that Norway's tax exiles were trying to make.

These exiles, Sandbu observed, tend never to say "that they just want to pay less" at tax time. They instead pose as the "geese that lay golden eggs." They're only moving, these rich insist, "because the wealth tax forces them to take capital out of their companies to pay it, and that, in turn, is bad for growth, business development, and employment where their companies are based."

But Norwegian companies, Sandbu countered, show no signs of suffering from a lack of access to capital. The capital these companies

need can "come from other sources than the original owners, and it may be precisely this dilution that rankles, especially for self-made entrepreneurs or family businesses."

Those Norwegian wealthy who feel most rankled, Norway's current legislative majority believes, do have every right to exit the nation. But they have no right to leave with all the wealth that Norway's commitment to economic security – for everyone – has helped those rich amass.

How to keep wealthy exiles from jetting off with wealth they should be sharing? Norway's progressive lawmakers have put together a new "exit tax" that will have wealthy exiles paying a loophole-free exit levy on unrealised capital gains. Exiles will have the option of paying their exit tax in interest-free instalments over 12 years or paying the total due, with interest, after 12 years.

These exiles will, of course, have the option of returning home to Norway anytime they'd like. And if they do return, they'll be reentering what may be the world's most equal nation. One telling indicator of that equality: the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. On this list of the world's 500 richest, only one Norwegian today appears – in 374th place.

In a few years, who knows, you might not find any Norwegian on that list at all. **CT**


**READ THE BEST OF  
EDWARD S. HERMAN**

[www.coldtype.net/herman.html](http://www.coldtype.net/herman.html)

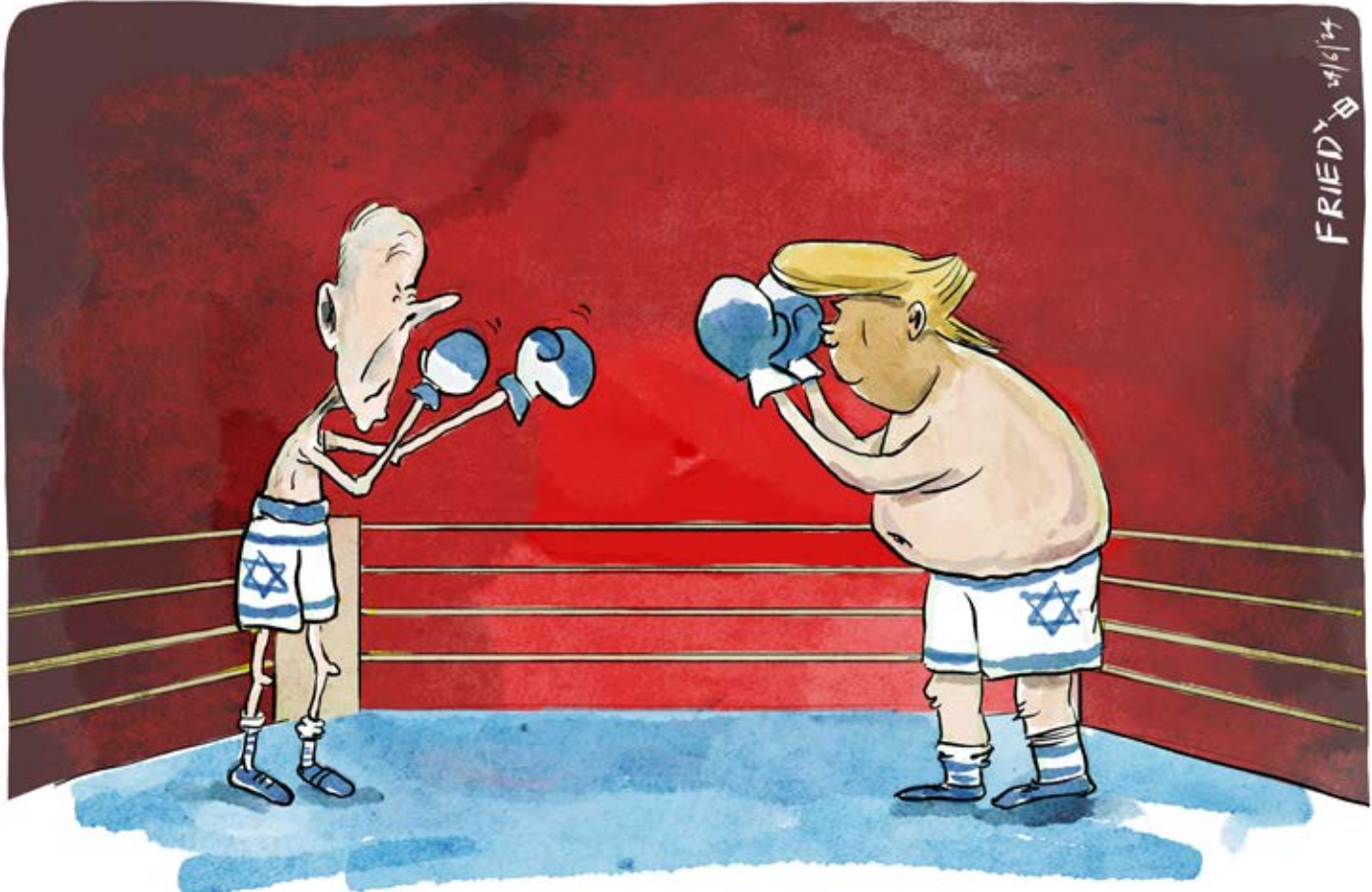
*Sam Pizzigati, an Institute for Policy Studies associate fellow, co-edits Inequality.org. His latest books include *The Case for a Maximum Wage* and *The Rich Don't Always Win: The Forgotten Triumph over Plutocracy that Created the American Middle Class, 1900-1970**



# INSIGHTS

WE ARE ALL FRIED 

Greg Koenderman



DEMOCRACY ON THE LINE

**GET YOUR FREE  
SUBSCRIPTION  
TO COLDTYPE**

Send an email to [editor@coldtype.net](mailto:editor@coldtype.net)  
write SUBSCRIBE in the Subject line





Julian Assange steps out to board his plane at London's Stansted airport ...



Relaxing as his plane prepares to land at Bangkok

► CAITLIN JOHNSTONE

# Julian Assange is free – now anything is possible!

Now, perhaps, we can end some of the world's other great injustices

**T**he thing that stands out for me the most when watching the deeply moving footage of Julian Assange arriving home to Australia on June 26 is how impossible this all felt until it happened.

If you've been following this case for a while, you know what I'm talking about. This was the moment you'd dream of in your quiet, private moments, but could never fully allow yourself to believe would actu-

ally happen.

It was very easy to imagine Assange dying in a prison cell, either in the near future at London's Belmarsh prison or further along the timeline in some US hellhole. It was possible to imagine him getting out many years from now, his children fully grown and half his life stolen away from him. It was even possible to imagine him getting out one day on some legal technicality or whatever and living out the rest

of his life in a nation that has an oppositional relationship with Washington like Edward Snowden, maybe. But coming home, to Australia?? No chance.

And yet there he is. It happened.

It's easy to get so lost in all the emotion and controversy and discussion about the details of Assange's case and his plea bargain that you forget to appreciate the fact that an impossible thing just happened. That this was a historic event which very few





Almost home. Assange deplanes at Bangkok.

of us believed was ever going to occur – until it did.

And I don't know about you but I find this all rather humbling. I never voiced my dark pessimism about the future of Assange's plight publicly because it's important to push hard for victory even when the odds appear stacked against you, but I honestly did not believe what just happened was going to happen. And I was completely wrong.

Which makes me wonder, what else have I been doing that with? What other battles that feel almost futile right now will one day make a fool of me by yielding an unexpected victory?

Hell, maybe anything is possible. Maybe what just happened with Assange can happen with any of the other injustices and abuses we see in our world today.

Maybe it can happen with Palestine. Or with the build-up to war with Russia and China. Or with

## Maybe it's better to throw ourselves into this fight not just believing we might win, but knowing that we will

the corruption, opacity and malfeasance of our own governments. Or with the empire itself. Or with capitalism entirely.

Maybe we really do win this thing. Maybe that's not a pipe dream after all. As with the Assange case it might not happen in the most grand and egoically satisfying way we'd want it to, but what does?

This isn't a Hollywood movie, it's real life. Real life doesn't move the way Hollywood conditions us to expect it to. Real life produces anticlimactic victories and mundane miracles. And it moves in ways that the

ego cannot anticipate.

It's comfortable to be jaded and pessimistic. You feel less vulnerable. You look cooler. You don't have to deal with the emotional work of disappointment. And admittedly, you are very often proven right. That is, until you're not.

And maybe that's not the most authentic way to come at this thing. Maybe it's better to throw ourselves into this fight not just believing we might win, but knowing that we will. Maybe all that pessimism and reservedness is holding us back from really swinging for the fences and leaving it all in the ring. And maybe it's based on completely false assumptions about what we're actually capable of anyway.

Assange has been freed. Maybe all of humanity can be. **CT**

*Caitlin Johnstone is an Australian blogger. Read more of her work at [www.caitlinjohnstone.com.au](http://www.caitlinjohnstone.com.au)*

► DAVID EDWARDS

# ‘This is a sharp time’ – Israel’s Day of Joy

In obedience to Israel, the Western political and media class is isolating itself from public opinion on Gaza in ways hard to believe. Here are a few examples

In his very last article, “We are Spartacus,” published just a month before his death in December, John Pilger included a quote that exactly captured the truth of our time:

“‘This is a sharp time, now, a precise time ...’ wrote Arthur Miller in *The Crucible*, ‘We live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world.’”

No-one saw more clearly than Pilger that the West’s use of ultra-violence to impose its brutal, zero-sum version of ‘international order’ is now completely out in the open. Even the blurred obfuscations of the state-corporate media lens are no longer able to hide the reality of who ‘we’ are.

Consider US Senator Lindsey Graham. With tens of thousands of civilians dead in Gaza, Graham dug down to some dark place and said in May on NBC:

“Can I say this? Why is it OK for America to drop two nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end their existential threat war? Why was it OK for us to do that? I thought it was OK.”

Graham was mistaken; it wasn’t ‘OK’ at all. But anyway, his point:

“So, Israel, do *whatever* you have to do to survive as a Jewish state. Whatever you have to do.” (Original



**Sen. Lindsay Graham: “Do whatever you have to do to survive as a Jewish state”**



**Sen. Brian Mast: “Israel should go in there and kick the shit out of them”**

emphasis)

The implication was clear. Past and future massacres of civilians – notably of women and children – were declared, not just ‘OK,’ but unavoidable:

“I think it’s impossible to mitigate civilian deaths in Gaza as long as Hamas uses their own population as human shields. I’ve never seen in the history of warfare such blatant efforts by an enemy – Hamas – to put civilians at risk.”

Graham concluded: “The last thing you want to do is reward this behaviour.”

Israel reining in its US-supplied firepower to kill fewer civilians would be a ‘reward’ for bad behaviour.

Perhaps you remember Western politicians expressing such unapologetic savagery in the face of genocidal killing. We do not.

And Graham is not alone. Also in May, US Congressman Brian Mast called on Israel to devastate Rafah, where 600,000 children were then sheltering from Israeli bombs:

“I think Israel should go in there and kick the shit out of them, just absolutely destroy them, their infrastructure, level anything that they touch.”

Three weeks later, on May 27, media reported that at least eight Israeli missiles had slammed into Ra-





**A child sits among the ruins of the Nuseirat Preparatory Boys' School after the refugee camp was raided by Israeli forces**

fah's camp of plastic tents. Refugees, mostly women and children, were burned alive. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting described the carnage many of us saw for ourselves on social media:

"A boy cries in horror and fear as he watches his father's tent burn with him inside. A man holds up the body of his charred, now-headless baby, wandering around, not knowing what to do or where to go. An injured, starving child convulses in pain as a medic struggles to find a vein for an IV in her emaciated arm."

Worse was to come on June 8 when Israeli forces launched a raid to rescue four hostages from the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. At least 274 Palestinians were killed with 698 wounded. The EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell described

the assault as a 'massacre,' while the UN's aid chief Martin Griffiths spoke of 'shredded bodies on the ground.' Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, posted on X:

"The Nuseirat massacre will go down in history as one of the most appalling examples of disdain for Palestinian life in one of the most well-documented and boasted about

**It was not at all surprising that the BBC mentioned the four hostages rescued ahead of the 'scores' – in fact, nearly 300 – of Palestinians killed**

genocides in history."

The BBC headline reporting this massacre read merely:

"Four hostages rescued in Gaza as hospitals say scores killed in Israeli strikes."

It was not at all surprising that the BBC mentioned the four hostages rescued ahead of the 'scores' – in fact, nearly 300 – Palestinians killed. News of the 274 Palestinian victims quickly dropped down the news page. Former *Guardian* journalist Jonathan Cook commented:

"BBC News' main report on Saturday night breathlessly focused on the celebrations of the families of the freed captives, treating the massacre of Palestinians as an afterthought."

Compare the BBC's headline with one supplied by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner



for Human Rights:

“UN experts condemn outrageous disregard for Palestinian civilians during Israel’s military operation in Nuseirat”

Conditioned as we are by the mainstream habit of normalising the unthinkable, we might not find the BBC headline all that biased – they just reported the facts. But just imagine if the identities of the civilians killed and the hostages rescued were reversed. While the deaths of 274 Israelis would have been a seismic event for the BBC for days and weeks, the liberation of four Palestinian hostages would hardly have been mentioned and certainly not celebrated. Journalists would have dreaded giving the impression that the release of four Palestinian hostages in any way justified the killing of so many Israelis. This *New York Times* headline would be unthinkable:

“Hostages Reunited with Family After Israel Military Operation

“Scores of Palestinians were killed, hospital officials said, as Israel carried out an intense military campaign to free four hostages”

Likewise, this *Washington Post* headline:

“Four Israeli hostages rescued alive; at least

“210 people killed in Gaza, officials say”

Is it not clear how the value of one group of human beings is relentlessly raised above the other? The *Washington Post* even commented:

“For Israel, a rare day of joy amid bloodshed as 4 hostages rescued alive.”

If the identities were reversed, the idea that a day on which 274 Israelis had been killed might be declared “a rare day of joy” would be deemed unthinkable, obscene.

Despite the many hundreds of dead and wounded civilians, and so many massacres of civilians over so many months, headlines in London’s

NEWS

The Sunday Times, July 4, 2024

**A surgical strike, a vicious gunfight, and celebrations broke the sabbath's quiet**

HOW THE HOSTAGES WERE RESCUED

1 2 3 4

“It had to be like brain surgery so accurate”

**A ‘daring raid’, a ‘surgical strike’ that resulted in ‘celebrations’ – How the London *Sunday Times* described the massacre in Nuseirat. A subhead reads “It had to be like brain surgery – so accurate”. No mention of the 274 Palestinians who were slaughtered during the raid**

*Sunday Times* described the massacre as a ‘daring raid’, a ‘surgical strike’ that resulted in ‘celebrations’.

Although the Nuseirat massacre clearly trashed President Biden’s supposed ‘red lines,’ US national security adviser Jake Sullivan also described the attack as a ‘daring operation.’ The German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called it an ‘important sign of hope.’ With hundreds of ‘shredded bodies on the ground,’ British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak expressed his ‘huge relief.’

**F**or seven months, all political writers using social media have been relentlessly assailed by footage of tiny Palestinian children (often orphans) burned, bleeding, crushed, shaking in pain and terror, bits of broken skull protruding from their heads. We

know we are living ‘in a sharp time’ when the *Telegraph*’s Associate Editor Camilla Tominey can respond to all of this on 18 May with a piece titled:

“Admitting Gazan refugees would be proof that Britain has a death wish

“We have no idea how many Palestinians support their murdering, raping masters”

Tominey wrote with utmost brutality:

“We took in Ukrainians in part because we have a security agreement with Ukraine and can be fairly certain that none of those fleeing the Russian invasion are terrorists.

“Sadly the same cannot be said for occupants of a country run by Hamas. Regardless of their medical – or other – qualifications, we have no idea how many Gazans support their murdering, raping masters, or how many have been further



radicalised by war.

“It would surely be better if these Labour MPs focused on our own problems, without burdening Britain yet further with someone else’s.”

Britain should not assume the ‘burden’ of helping injured babies and tiny, traumatised infants, when we have no way of knowing how many might ‘support their murdering, raping masters.’

Regarding rape, the *Times* discussed (June 7) a United Nations report submitted earlier this year by Pramilla Patten, the UN secretary-general’s special representative on sexual violence during and since the Hamas massacres of October 7:

“Patten made it clear there was sufficient evidence of acts of sexual violence to merit full and proper investigation and expressed her shock at the brutality of the violence. The report also confirmed Israeli authorities were unable to provide much of the evidence that political leaders had insisted existed. In all the Hamas video footage Patten’s team had watched and all the photographs they had seen, there were no depictions of rape. We hired a leading Israeli dark-web researcher to look for evidence of those images, including footage deleted from public sources. None could be found.

“The report would prove confusing to the Israeli political establishment. On the one hand, it gives substantial and substantiated credence to the sexual assault claims; on the other it does not show them to be systematic and specifically says Israel has been unable to produce evidence it has claimed to possess of Hamas’s written orders to rape. Patten also asked that Israel investigate ‘credible allegations’ of rape and sexual violence against Palestinian women and girls gathered by the UN’s legal mandate mission in the Palestinian territories.”

The *Times* also cited Orit Sulitz-

## For 7 months, political writers have been assailed by footage of tiny Palestinian children burned, bleeding, crushed, bits of broken skull protruding from their heads

eanu, the executive director of Israel’s Association of Rape Crisis Centres:

“The first letter that I received from the government of Israel talked about hundreds or thousands of cases of brutal sexual violence perpetrated against men, women and children. I have not found anything like that.”

Tominey smeared the entire Palestinian population with this comment: “It is also worth noting that a Palestinian student has already had her visa revoked after saying she was ‘full of joy’ after the October 7 attacks. Dana Abuqamar, 19, a law student at the University of Manchester, said that she was ‘proud that Palestinian resistance has come to this point’ after the atrocities. It would be naive to believe that the average Palestinian wishing to come to the UK thinks much differently.”

Tominey linked to an earlier *Telegraph* article by Isabel Oakeshott from October 2023, which sympathised with the plight of the Palestinians in Gaza, but added:

“To usher in an additional cohort of traumatised people, many, if not most, of whom will not share our values; will not speak our language; and will not find it easy to build new lives here, would be insane. With the right support, most would probably integrate – but we must face up to the uncomfortable truth that a very small number will not wish us

well, and may repay our generosity by fomenting division and hatred in our communities – or worse.”

Oakeshott offered the warning of protesters who “appear convinced that the plight of the people of Gaza is the fault of the Israelis, as opposed to the cruel Iranian-sponsored militia that controls the territory.” This, she said, “has grave implications for community cohesion. How much more dangerous will this already febrile situation become, if we naively import thousands more people brutalised by war and confused about who is to blame for their plight?”

Oakeshott’s brutal sign-off: “the UK does not have a duty to take a *single one* of those escaping the fallout.” (Our emphasis)

Media brutality feeds party political brutality, which feeds further media brutality... and down we go. Peter Osborne, former chief political commentator of the *Daily Telegraph*, commented recently:

“One of the historical roles of the Conservative Party has been to act as a prophylactic against fascist and far-right forces which, history shows us, have always lurked not far under the surface in British society.

“It is no longer playing that role. The Conservative Party is falling into the hands of the far right before our eyes.”

In his conclusion to a separate piece, Osborne posts an ominous warning on the emerging political culture of this ‘sharp time’:

“For the first time in my life it is possible to look forward and envisage a sequence of events that might turn Britain fascist.” (‘Peter Osborne’s Diary – The Dark Shadow of Fascism,’ *Byline Times*, July 2024) **CT**

*David Edwards is co-editor of Medialens, the UK media watchdog. This article was first published at [www.medialens.org](http://www.medialens.org)*



**"Donkeys in Gaza have a better memory of the place than Western leaders"**

► JAMAL KANJ

## Gaza: The donkey and the fate of western civilisation

It is a clear case of cognitive dissonance when Western powers provide food aid to alleviate the Israeli-made famine while supplying Israel the means to perpetuate a starvation regime, and the bombs to burn children alive

**B**lackened smoke in the background, the raging inferno ripped through tents long after Israel had bombed another designated "safe" zone for evacuated civilians from north of Gaza. A charred body, of a boy or a girl, pulled from the wreckage, still burning. It's the "bigger shoah," the bigger Holocaust, Matan Vilnai, Is-

rael's deputy defence minister had promised Gaza in 2008.

In the same scene, three children helped their mother place their tattered floor mattresses on a cart. The middle-aged woman's face was grooved like newly tilled rows of arid soil. The scrawny donkey hobbled in the sand, struggling to pull the cart. He appeared as hungry and thirsty as the gaunt children trying

to climb on top of the mattresses.

The donkey seemed confused as the woman ordered him to move toward the centre of Gaza. The poor animal was directed to the same location from which he had moved the family days earlier. Donkeys in Gaza have a better memory of the place than many Western leaders.

The load this time was lighter, perhaps due to the loss of a husband or



---

---

child. The same family was on the move from one “safe” place to another Israeli-designated “safe” area. Like all the people of Gaza, families were ordered to move from the north and to evacuate the south to the middle of Gaza, even as the Israeli army bombs Al Mawasi, Nuseirat, and Bureij in the centre of the Strip.

The four-legged creature trudged slowly. The TV camera focused on his expressive, glossy wide eyes. Even the donkey had realised what President Joe Biden had yet to recognise: there was no safe place in Gaza. Until then, I didn’t realise donkeys could have emotional reactions. I was mistaken; the famished donkey had more heart than Joe Biden, Emmanuel Macron, Rishi Sunak, Justin Trudeau, and Olaf Scholz combined.

**T**he donkey is not the product of the “values” of Western civilization. He does not make a 2000-pound bomb and drop it over the most densely populated area on planet earth, such as Jabalia camp, nor does he possess the mental capacity to exploit Artificial Intelligence for more efficient mass assassination factory. Most importantly, the donkey does not understand the ingrained white Western racism toward non-white cultures.

U officials waste no time condemning the killing of an Israeli but are over-cautious when addressing the murder of less-than-equal human beings at the hands of Israel. In response to a question about the Israeli Shoah in Rafah, the US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller justified the burning of children telling the reporters that “Israel has a right to go after the Hamas ... as appears to have been Israel’s aim here.”

At the White House, John Kirby took offence when CBS News Senior White House Correspondent Ed

## The donkey is not the product of Western ‘values.’ He does not make a 2000-pound bomb and drop it over the most densely populated area on planet earth

O’Keefe confronted him with, “How many more charred corpses does he have to see?” Kirby replied in part that Israel is investigating the attack, suggesting that it should be given time to complete its investigation before reaching any conclusion. The democratisation of self-investigation is such a novel idea: allowing the criminal to investigate their own crimes. While we’re at it, the US Department of Justice should consider allowing Donald Trump to investigate January 6 and see what he comes up with.

It is this American absurdity that emboldens Netanyahu’s belligerence, allowing him to ignore Biden and other Western leaders’ movable red line. Israeli tanks have reached the centre of Rafah, forcing UNRWA and the World Central Kitchen (WKC) to cease food aid operations as the bodies of Palestinian civilians pile up. Yet, Israel has not crossed Biden’s line in the sand.

Israel has investigated previous murders, such as the killing of WCK aid workers, claiming that the killing was not intentional. Israeli army Chief of General Staff Herzi Halevi declared it a “grave mistake.” Similarly, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu described the latest massacre in Rafah with similar lexicon, calling it a “tragic mishap.”

In explaining the large number of killed journalists, circa 140, an Israeli army spokesman stated that they “never . . . deliberately target journalists.” Regarding the mur-

der and injury of more than 100,000 Palestinian civilians, Israel claims they were unintended causality because it “takes all operationally feasible measures to mitigate harm to civilians.”

In the last seven months, Israel has “mistakenly” murdered more than 225 humanitarian aid workers, “three times as many humanitarian aid workers killed in any single conflict recorded in a single year.” Additionally, over 700 healthcare professionals lost their lives, and hundreds of hungry people were killed waiting for food aid trucks at Gaza roundabouts. In all these cases, Israel denied responsibility and blamed the victims for their deaths.

It is a clear case of cognitive dissonance when Western powers provide food aid to alleviate the Israeli-made famine while supplying the means for Israel to perpetuate a starvation regime, and the bombs to burn children alive. Gaza has become not just the tombs of famished children, but the graveyard of the values of Western Civilization.

The outcome of past Israeli investigations is evident in a boilerplate of mistakes despite the writ-large evidence suggesting otherwise. Yet, if we take the Israeli assertions at face value and accept, they all were “mistakes,” it raises the question: how many mistakes can one make before they become either liars or are certified as stupid? Or, are Western leaders who continue to believe these “Israeli mistakes,” the real fools? **CT**

*Jamal Kanj is the author of “Children of Catastrophe,” Journey from a Palestinian Refugee Camp to America, and other books. He writes frequently on Arab world issues for various national and international commentaries. This article was first published by the Palestine Chronicle at [www.palestinechronicle.org](http://www.palestinechronicle.org)*

► JEFFREY D. SACHS

# Why won't US help negotiate a peaceful end to war in Ukraine?

The 30-year US project, hatched by Dick Cheney and the neocons, and carried forward consistently since then, has been to weaken or even dismember Russia

For the fifth time since 2008, Russia has proposed to negotiate with the US over security arrangements, this time in proposals made by President Vladimir Putin on June 14, 2024. Four previous times, the US rejected the offer of negotiations in favor of a neocon strategy to weaken or dismember Russia through war and covert operations. The US neocon tactics have failed disastrously, devastating Ukraine in the process, and endangering the whole world. After all the warmongering, it's time for Biden to open negotiations for peace with Russia

Since the end of the Cold War, the US grand strategy has been to weaken Russia. As early as 1992, then Defense Secretary Richard Cheney opined that following the 1991 demise of the Soviet Union, Russia too should be dismembered. Zbigniew Brzezinski opined in 1997 that Russia should be divided into three loosely confederated entities in Russian Europe, Siberia, and the far

east. In 1999, the US-led NATO alliance bombed Russia's ally, Serbia, for 78 days in order to break Serbia apart and install a massive NATO military base in breakaway Kosovo. Leaders of the US military-industrial complex vociferously supported the Chechen war against Russia in the early 2000s.

To secure these US advances against Russia, Washington aggressively pushed NATO enlargement, despite promises to Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin that NATO would not move one inch eastward from Germany. Most tentatively, the US pushed NATO enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia, with the idea of surrounding Russia's naval fleet in Sevastopol, Crimea with NATO states: Ukraine, Romania (NATO member 2004), Bulgaria (NATO member 2004), Turkey (NATO member 1952), and Georgia, an idea straight from the playbook of the British Empire in the Crimean War (1853-6).

Brzezinski spelled out a chronology of NATO enlargement in 1997,

including NATO membership of Ukraine during 2005-2010. The US in fact proposed NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia at the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit. By 2020, NATO had in fact enlarged by 14 countries in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union (Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in 1999; Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004; Albania and Croatia, 2009; Montenegro, 2017; and Northern Macedonia, 2020), while promising future membership to Ukraine and Georgia.

In short, the 30-year US project, hatched originally by Cheney and the neocons, and carried forward consist-







**Protester confronts a line of police at a barricade during the Kiev uprising in 2014**

Sasha Maksymenko

ary 2014 plotting the change of government in Ukraine. Meanwhile, US Senators went personally to Kiev to stir up the protests (akin to Chinese or Russian political leaders coming to DC on January 6, 2021 to rile up the crowds). On February 21, 2014, the Europeans, US, and Russia brokered a deal with Yanukovich in which Yanukovich agreed to early elections. Yet the coup leaders renege on the deal the same day, took over government buildings, threatened more violence, and deposed Yanukovich the next day. The US supported the coup and immediately extended recognition to the new government.

**I**n my view, this was a standard CIA-led covert regime change operation, of which there have been several dozen around the world, including sixty-four episodes between 1947 and 1989 meticulously documented by Professor Lindsey O'Rourke. Covert regime-change operations are of course not really hidden from view, but the US government vociferously denies its role, keeps all documents highly confidential, and systematically gaslights the world: "Do not believe what you see plainly with your own eyes! The US had nothing to do with this." Details of the operations eventually emerge, however, through eyewitnesses, whistleblowers, the forced release of documents under the Freedom of Information Act, declassification of papers after years or decades, and memoirs, but all far too late for real accountability.

In any event, the violent coup induced the ethnic-Russia Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine to break from the coup leaders, many of whom were extreme Russophobic nationalists, and some in violent groups with a history of Nazi SS links in the past. Almost immediately, the coup leaders took steps to

ently since then, has been to weaken or even dismember Russia, surround Russia with NATO forces, and depict Russia as the belligerent power.

It is against this grim backdrop that Russian leaders have repeatedly proposed to negotiate security arrangements with Europe and the US that would provide security for all countries concerned, not just the NATO bloc. Guided by the neocon game plan, the US has refused to negotiate on every occasion, while trying to pin the blame on Russia for the lack of negotiations.

In June 2008, as the US prepared to expand NATO to Ukraine and Georgia, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev proposed a European Security Treaty, calling for collective security and an end to NATO's unilateralism. Suffice it to say, the US

showed no interest whatsoever in Russia's proposals, and instead proceeded with its long-held plans for NATO enlargement.

The second Russian proposal for negotiations came from Putin following the violent overthrow of Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014, with the active complicity if not outright leadership of the US government. I happened to see the US complicity up close, as the post-coup government invited me for urgent economic discussions. When I arrived in Kiev, I was taken to the Maidan, where I was told directly about US funding of the Maidan protest.

The evidence of US complicity in the coup is overwhelming. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland was caught on a phone line in Janu-

repress the use of the Russian language even in the Russian-speaking Donbas. In the following months and years, the government in Kiev launched a military campaign to retake the breakaway regions, deploying neo-Nazi paramilitary units and US arms.

In the course of 2014, Putin called repeatedly for a negotiated peace, and this led to the Minsk II Agreement in February 2015 based on autonomy of the Donbas and an end to violence by both sides. Russia did not claim the Donbas as Russian territory, but instead called for autonomy and the protection of ethnic Russians within Ukraine. The UN Security Council endorsed the Minsk II agreement, but the US neocons privately subverted it. Years later, Chancellor Angela Merkel blurted out the truth. The Western side treated the agreement not as a solemn treaty but as a delaying tactic to “give Ukraine time” to build its military strength. In the meantime, around 14,000 people died in the fighting in Donbas between 2014 and 2021.

Following the definitive collapse of the Minsk II agreement, Putin again proposed negotiations with the US in December 2021. By that point, the issues went even beyond NATO enlargement to include fundamental issues of nuclear armaments. Step by step, the US neocons had abandoned nuclear arms control with Russia, with the US unilaterally abandoning the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002, placing Aegis missiles in Poland and Romania in 2010 onwards, and walking out of the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty in 2019.

In view of these dire concerns, Putin put on the table on December 15, 2021 a draft “Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees.” The most immediate issue on the table (Article 4



Aleksey Maishev, RIA Novosti, Kremlin

**Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks on June 14, at a meeting with Foreign Ministry senior officials**

of the draft treaty) was the end of the US attempt to expand NATO to Ukraine. I called US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan at the end of 2021 to try to convince the Biden White House to enter the negotiations. My main advice was to avoid a war in Ukraine by accepting Ukraine’s neutrality, rather than NATO membership, which was a bright red line for Russia.

**T**he White House flatly rejected the advice, claiming remarkably (and obtusely) that NATO’s enlargement to Ukraine was none of Russia’s business! Yet what would the US say if some country in the Western hemisphere decided to host Chinese or Russian bases? Would the White House, State Department, or Con-

**My main advice was to avoid a war in Ukraine by accepting Ukraine's neutrality, rather than NATO membership**

gress say, “That’s just fine, that’s a matter of concern only to Russia or China and the host country?” No. The world nearly came to nuclear Armageddon in 1962 when the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles in Cuba and the US imposed a naval quarantine and threatened war unless the Russians removed the missiles. The US military alliance does not belong in Ukraine any more than the Russian or Chinese military belongs close to the US border.

The fourth offer of Putin to negotiate came in March 2022, when Russia and Ukraine nearly closed a peace deal just weeks after the start of Russia’s special military operation that began on February 24, 2022. Russia, once again, was after one big thing: Ukraine’s neutrality, i.e., no NATO membership and no hosting of US missiles on Russia’s border.

Ukraine’s President Vladimir Zelensky quickly accepted Ukraine’s neutrality, and Ukraine and Russia exchanged papers, with the skillful mediation of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey. Then suddenly, at the end of March, Ukraine abandoned the negotiations.



---

---

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, following in the tradition of British anti-Russian war-mongering dating back to the Crimean War (1853-6), actually flew to Kiev to warn Zelensky against neutrality and the importance of Ukraine defeating Russia on the battlefield. Since that date, Ukraine has lost around 500,000 dead and is on the ropes on the battlefield.

Now we have Russia's fifth offer of negotiations, explained clearly and cogently by Putin himself in his speech to diplomats at the Russian Foreign Ministry on June 14. Putin laid out Russia's proposed terms to end the war in Ukraine.

"Ukraine should adopt a neutral, non-aligned status, be nuclear-free, and undergo demilitarization and de-nazification," Putin said. "These parameters were broadly agreed upon during the Istanbul negotiations in 2022, including specific details on demilitarization such as the agreed numbers of tanks and other military equipment. We reached consensus on all points.

"Certainly, the rights, freedoms, and interests of Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine must be fully protected," he continued. "The new territorial realities, including the status of Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, Kherson, and Zaporozhye regions as parts of the Russian Federation, should be acknowledged. These foundational principles need to be formalized through fundamental international agreements in the future. Naturally, this entails the removal of all Western sanctions against Russia as well."

Let me say a few words about negotiating.

Russia's proposals should now be met at the negotiating table by proposals from the US and Ukraine. The White House is dead wrong to evade negotiations just because of disagreements with Russia's pro-

## The Ukrainian people have been lied to time and again by Zelensky and Biden and other leaders of NATO countries

posals. It should put up its own proposals and get down to the business of negotiating an end to the war.

There are three core issues for Russia: Ukraine's neutrality (non-NATO enlargement), Crimea remaining in Russian hands, and boundary changes in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. The first two are almost surely non-negotiable. The end of NATO enlargement is the fundamental *casus belli*. Crimea is also core for Russia, as Crimea has been home to Russia's Black Sea fleet since 1783 and is fundamental to Russia's national security.

The third core issue, the borders of Eastern and Southern Ukraine, will be a key point of negotiations. The US cannot pretend that borders are sacrosanct after NATO bombed Serbia in 1999 to relinquish Kosovo, and after the US pressured Sudan to relinquish South Sudan. Yes, Ukraine's borders will be redrawn as the result of the 10 years of war, the situation on the battlefield, the choices of the local populations, and tradeoffs made at the negotiating table.

**B**iden needs to accept that negotiations are not a sign of weakness. As Kennedy put it, "Never negotiate out of fear, but never fear to negotiate." Ronald Reagan famously described his own negotiating strategy using a Russian proverb, "Trust but verify."

The neocon approach to Russia, delusional and hubristic from the start, lies in ruins. NATO will nev-

er enlarge to Ukraine and Georgia. Russia will not be toppled by a CIA covert operation. Ukraine is being horribly bloodied on the battlefield, often losing 1,000 or more dead and wounded in a single day. The failed neocon game plan brings us closer to nuclear Armageddon.

Yet Biden still refuses to negotiate. Following Putin's speech, the US, NATO, and Ukraine firmly rejected negotiations once again. Biden and his team have still not relinquished the neocon fantasy of defeating Russia and expanding NATO to Ukraine.

The Ukrainian people have been lied to time and again by Zelensky and Biden and other leaders of NATO countries, who told them falsely and repeatedly that Ukraine would prevail on the battlefield and that there were no options to negotiate. Ukraine is now under martial law. The public is given no say about its own slaughter.

For the sake of Ukraine's very survival, and to avoid nuclear war, the President of the United States has one overriding responsibility today: Negotiate. **CT**

*Jeffrey D. Sachs is a University Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, where he directed The Earth Institute from 2002 until 2016. He has been advisor to three United Nations Secretaries-General, and currently serves as an SDG Advocate under Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Sachs is the author, most recently, of "A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism" (2020). Other books include: "Building the New American Economy: Smart, Fair, and Sustainable" (2017) and "The Age of Sustainable Development," (2015) with Ban Ki-moon. This article was first published at [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org)*

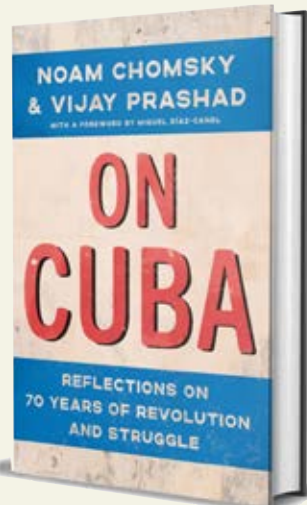
# TARGETING CASTRO

In their important new book, **Noam Chomsky** and **Vijay Prashad** shed new light on the complex and controversial relationship between the United States and Cuba, a story of embargo, invasion and resistance. The following excerpt covers events that led up to the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion by the US in April, 1961

## Covert Action

**T**he most striking fact about the US policy toward Cuba has been the astonishing frenzy and hysteria. It is the emotional content that is quite remarkable, starting right from the beginning, even before the Batista dictatorship had been overthrown. By May 1959 the CIA had begun to arm counterrevolutionaries within Cuba and to assemble the Cuban exiles in Florida into a political and military bloc. The US government – often through the CIA – egged on the Cuban exiles to attack Cuban institutions outside the country (embassies in Haiti and the Dominican Republic were attacked as early as June 7, 1959) and to conduct attacks on Cuban soil (with aerial bombing of Havana on October 21, 1959, and bombing with napalm on sugarcane fields on January 12, 1960). These incendiary attacks were all CIA initiated and supervised. The aircraft were piloted by exiled

Cubans from Florida. The Miami CIA operations center – JMWAVE – ran these terrorist attacks as well as began to shape the armed force that would try to invade Cuba in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs. Cuba’s first intelligence chief – Fabian Escalante – documented that the CIA tried to assassinate Fidel Castro at least 634 times.



**ON CUBA: Reflections on 70 Years of Revolution and Struggle, .by Noam Chomsky and Vijay Prashad**  
Published by The New Press  
Price \$24.99

In March 1960, the Eisenhower administration authorized the CIA to overthrow the government in Cuba. The CIA document said that goal was the “replacement of the Castro regime with one more devoted to the true interests of the Cuban people and more acceptable to the US.” It is unlikely that there was any interest in the Cuban people, who had come out in historic numbers on January 8, 1959, to greet Castro as he rode into Havana with the Freedom Caravan. This goal to create a government with “the true interests of the Cuban people” was invalidated by the CIA’s own task of creating – out of nothing – an “appealing” Cuban opposition, and of





course by the CIA's terror campaign that impacted the lives of the Cuban people. Keith Bolender, a Canadian journalist, published a book in 2010 that collects the testimonies of Cubans who survived the US terror campaign that took the lives of at least three thousand Cubans.

**Noam Chomsky:** *The US government sponsored terrorism. Robert Kennedy warned that if there was a full-scale invasion of Cuba, it would kill an awful lot of people. A member of the National Security Council staff suggested that if there were raids on Cuba that were haphazard and killed innocents, it might mean bad press in some*

*friendly countries. That's the one moral objection that was raised in the US establishment. The problem with killing an awful lot of people when you invade a country is that you take a lot of heat for it. That's the problem. Not the killing itself. In 1971, President Nixon's administration introduced an African swine fever virus, causing an outbreak of disease, whose impact would have been worse for Cuba had not the nutrition levels improved over the previous twelve years and had not the Cuban health care system been significantly transformed.*

The two most famous Cuban exile terrorists in the



## *Cuba reacted to these early terrorist attacks in a way that was unknown to the United States: the Cubans responded by adhering to international law*

pay and control of the CIA were Luís Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch. Carriles had been in Batista's police service and worked for the CIA from 1960 to 1963, while Bosch was a thug who intimidated with violence anyone who spoke against the overthrow of the Cuban Revolution. Both these men were involved in the 1976 bombing of the Cubana Airlines flight 455 from Barbados to Jamaica that killed all seventy-three on board including the Cuban Olympic fencing team. These are well-established facts and yet they do not have an impact on how people within the United States see either the US itself – which is seen as largely blameless – or Cuba, which is seen largely as a dictatorship that should be overthrown. The United States acts violently, with terrorist intent, but its reputation remains unsullied; Cuba acts to establish the well-being of its people and to spread that policy around the world, and it is disparaged. Consent is manufactured very effectively.

Cuba reacted to these early terrorist attacks in a way that was unknown to the United States: the Cubans responded by adhering to international law, namely by approaching the United Nations Security Council in July 1960, with a request for assistance. The Cuban government provided the UN with records of the bombings, showed the registration numbers of the aircraft, named the pilots, and provided details of the damage. Interestingly, the Cuban government sought to resolve this conflict by diplomatic means. These records of the details are now buried in the United Nations system. The United Nations Security Council responded by urging the two countries to “refrain from any action which might increase the existing tensions between Cuba and the United States of America.” The UN said that this matter would be better resolved at the Organization of American States (OAS). When the US National Security Council gathered a few days later, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said that “the calling of the UN Security Council into session to hear the Cuban charges had startled and disturbed Latin American Governments. Many of them were being driven away from their previous attitude of aloofness. They would prefer that the question of Cuba be handled in the OAS rather in the UN.” On August 8, 1960, the US ambassador to the UN Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. gave the UN his “assurance [that] the United States has no aggressive purpose against Cuba,” a statement

that seems quaint given the record of US aggression against Cuba (and his own president's March decision to overthrow the Cuban government). Lodge's statement to the UN suggested that “the proper forum for the discussion of any controversies between the Government of Cuba and the governments of the American Republics is the Organization of American States.”

The reference to the OAS – set up with Cuba as a founding member in 1948 – is interesting. The OAS, from its first meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, was intended to be Washington's instrument to fight against communism in the hemisphere. US Secretary of State George Marshall stayed at the conference and indeed in Bogotá for only as long as it took for him to force the other representatives to agree to the resolution on “the Preservation and Defense of Democracy in America,” which claimed that the “anti-democratic nature” of communism made it “incompatible with the concept of American freedom, which rests upon two undeniable postulates: the dignity of man as an individual and the sovereignty of the nation as a state.” These phrases are comical. The coup in Guatemala in 1954 put paid to their sanctimoniousness, and the attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Cuba after 1959 hardly burnished the liberal credentials of the OAS. To suggest that the OAS – whose mandate was to snuff out communism – was the legitimate place for a communist government to take its grievances showed the lack of seriousness and sincerity of the US government toward Cuba's attempt to use international law to settle its dispute with the United States. Washington wanted to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and it used every means – covert and overt – to do so, including armed action. And it ran a diplomatic and information campaign to obscure its own actions and to paint Cuba – because of the communist process on the island – as the villain.

### **A Black Operation**

**E**isenhower's March 1960 directive said that the CIA operation against Cuba must be “in such a manner as to avoid any appearance of US intervention.” This was so because of the anticipated reaction in Latin America, which would have been very much against





**Fidel Castro and other liberation fighters at a camp in the Sierra Maestra Mountains during the revolution, 1956**

any US regime change in Cuba. That is why a pretext needed to be created to build legitimacy for the US project. The Guatemala case from 1954 was instructive for the US government.

President Arbenz of Guatemala knew that if he was to defend himself from a US invasion or even a coup attempt, he would need to modernize his army. In 1953, Arbenz sought to get arms from Latin America (Argentina and Mexico) as well as Western Europe (Great Britain and Italy), but the US blockade of his country prevented him from getting access to weapons from reliable Western suppliers. This forced Arbenz to procure arms from Czechoslovakia, a country that at that time was part of the Communist state system of Eastern Europe. When a Swedish ship, the *Alfhem*, arrived in Puerto Barrios (Guatemala) with weapons from Czechoslovakia, the CIA was jubilant. The next day, Allen Dulles told the Intelligence Advisory Committee that with these weapons Arbenz could invade all of Central America, including threaten the Panama Canal (none of which was true, since the shipment contained weapons that would only have been useful to defend Guatemala's borders). On May 17, John Foster Dulles circulated a US State Department memorandum that exaggerated the entire shipment, saying that this was part of a Soviet plan to annex the Americas. This provided the fig leaf for the coup. A similar fig leaf was sought for Cuba.

*Noam Chomsky: The most striking fact about US policy toward Cuba has been the astonishing frenzy and hysteria. It's the emotional content that is quite remarkable, starting right from the beginning when the Batista dictatorship was overthrown in January 1959. By March, the National Security Council of the United States started to consider means to institute regime change immediately.*

Britain had agreed to provide arms to the Cuban Revolution. The United States intervened – via CIA chief Allen Dulles – to stop the British from making any such deal with the Cubans. Dulles's “main reason,” the British ambassador Alfred Fordham told London, “was that this might lead the Cubans to ask for Soviet or Soviet bloc arms.” Such a move, Dulles noted, “would have a tremendous effect” and would allow Washington to portray Cuba as a security threat to the hemisphere, following the script that had worked so well in Guatemala. Kennedy's close adviser the liberal scholar Arthur Schlesinger was not far from Dulles's schemes. He suggested that it would be good for the United States to trap Castro in some action that could be used as a pretext for invasion, writing the following in a memorandum to Kennedy on February 11, 1961.

“Would it not be possible to induce Castro to take offensive action first? He has already launched ex-



## *Those who fought the invasion, Castro said, were the “humble children of the people” and not the “landowners, millionaires, thieves, criminals, or exploiters”*

peditions against Panama and against the Dominican Republic. One can conceive a black operation in, say, Haiti, which might in time lure Castro into sending a few boatloads of men on to a Haitian beach in what could be portrayed as an effort to overthrow the Haitian regime. If only Castro could be induced to commit an offensive act, then the moral issue would be clouded, and the anti-US campaign would be hobbled from the start.”

Schlesinger refers here to the government of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, who had come to power in Haiti through a coup in 1957 and whose murderous regime had the country in a grip of fear. The general orientation of Schlesinger’s view is that the attempt to overthrow Duvalier’s ghastly regime would be a crime, whereas backing that regime and that of Duvalier’s son Jean-Claude (or “Baby Doc”) till 1986 is legitimate. There was no embarrassment from the liberal to suggest something to induce the Cuban Revolution into an action that would be merely to provide the United States with the pretext for a military invasion of Cuba. That was in February 1961. A small-scale invasion was tried in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs.

### Playa Girón

In November 1998, Kennedy’s secretary of defense Robert McNamara was interviewed by the National Security Archive about the Bay of Pigs invasion and its defeat by the Cuban people. The invasion, which he called a “total failure,” was driven not by the antagonism of any one president (either Eisenhower or Kennedy) toward Cuba, but “it was an antagonism of the American people toward what appeared to be happening in Cuba.” McNamara told the interviewer, decades after the fact and after the Soviet Union had collapsed, that what the “American people” feared was that “Cuba was under the control of the Soviets” and that “the Soviets were likely to use Cuba as a base.” In fact, at the time, none of the serious assessments by US intelligence suggested that Cuba was “under the control” of the Soviets, but this impression manufactured by political elites and driven by legacy media outlets remained, and still remains. There was little factual basis for it in 1959, and still none by April 1961.

In the interview, McNamara recalls that the en-

tire operation was run by the CIA, led by Richard “Dick” Bissell, one of the more storied CIA officers. “Bissell,” McNamara said, “believed that the military force would be far more effective than it turned out to be. He believed that the Cuban resistance would be far less than it was. He believed that the Cuban people would rise up and welcome this expatriate Cuban force. And he believed that if those beliefs were wrong, that the expatriate Cuban force, having landed at the Bay of Pigs, could infiltrate into the mountains, and survive as a guerrilla force.” It turned out that Bissell’s entire analysis was flawed. In fact, by blaming Bissell, who died in 1994, McNamara was trying to exculpate, in his typical fashion, himself primarily, and then the entire US establishment – few of the senior leaders having expressed any real hesitation about this operation in the documents available in the archive. None of the high officials of the Kennedy administration – except perhaps Chester Bowles – objected to this ruthless disregard for international law.

The region of the Zapata Swamp, where the Bay of Pigs is located, had an infant mortality rate of 59 per 1,000 live births before the Cuban Revolution. The population of the area, mostly engaged in subsistence fishing and in the charcoal trade, lived in great poverty. Fidel Castro had known of this area, which is just a few hours’ drive outside Havana. In 1959, Fidel spent the first Christmas after the Revolution with the newly formed cooperative of charcoal workers, listening to them talk about their problems and working with them to find a way to exit the condition of hunger, illiteracy, and ill health. A large-scale project of transformation had been set in motion a few months earlier, which drew in hundreds of very poor people into a process to lift themselves up from the wretched conditions that afflicted them. So, when the representatives of the expropriated landlords and the mafia henchmen and former police officers – Kennedy’s mercenary army – tried to land at Playa Girón, the Bay of Pigs, the people of the Zapata Swamp rallied to Fidel – who hastily drove down to personally lead the fight against the invasion. It was the presence of this new dynamism – which the CIA had not been willing to see – that defeated the invasion.

On April 20, 1961, President Kennedy took to the airwaves to talk about the defeat of his endeavour “on that unhappy island.” His speech is awash in





**President Kennedy described the 1961 Bay of Pigs debacle as if the Cubans were doing the invading, but in reality it was the US that had tried to invade Cuba**

ideology, reckless about the invasion and sure, de, although it was the United States that tried to invade Cuba. Despite the failure, that communist experiments or national liberation experiments were to be swept away with the debris of history. It was the United States that tried to invade Cuba, but Kennedy described the Bay of Pigs as if this were the Cuban Revolution doing the invading. “It is not the first time that Communist tanks have rolled over gallant men and women fighting to redeem the independence of their homeland,” Kennedy said, when in fact the “independence of the homeland” was being defended by the men and women of the Zapata Swamp against an invasion from Florida. Unwilling to recognize the depth of Cuban support for their new government, Kennedy yoked in the deep-seated Cold War anxiety in the United States: “The American people are not complacent about Iron Curtain tanks and planes less than 90 miles from our shores.” The actual fact was that despite landing five M41 Walker Bulldog tanks taken from the US Army, the counterrevolutionaries faced not “Iron Curtain planes” but Cuban AirForce T-33 Shooting Stars (made by Lockheed), B-26 Invaders (made by Douglas), and Hawker Sea Furies (made by the UK’s Hawker Aircraft), as well as a handful of Soviet-made T-34 tanks that had been used in Operation Barbarossa against the Nazis in 1941.

*Noam Chomsky: McNamara later testified before the US Senate that the Bay of Pigs invasion was undertaken in an atmosphere, in his* <sup>words,</sup>

*that was almost savage. This was reflected in Kennedy’s public pronouncements after the failure of Bay of Pigs. They went totally berserk. Kennedy made a speech in which he said that these sorts of socialist societies are about to be swept away with the debris of history. Only the strong can survive, so we cannot let the Cuban Revolution continue. Kennedy privately conceded that some of his associates were slightly demented on the subject of Cuba, which was pretty accurate.*

Two weeks before the invasion, Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles wrote a memorandum in which he agreed with the goal of such an invasion (overthrow the Cuban Revolution) but disagreed with the methods. Two points from Bowles are worth registering. First, that by “sponsoring the Cuban operation,” the United States “would be deliberately violating the fundamental obligations we assumed in the Act of Bogotá establishing the Organization of American States.” Secondly, that “those most familiar with the Cuban operation seem to agree that as the venture is now planned, the chances of success are not greater than one out of three. This makes it a highly risky operation.” After the defeat at Playa Girón, Bowles conceded privately that there was an almost frantic reaction for an action, a totally emotional reaction, with a lack of moral integrity among the participants.

On May 2, 1961, Castro reflected at a public rally of victory on the invasion and why it had been defeated. Those who fought the invasion, he said, were the “humble children of the people” and not the “landowners, millionaires, thieves, criminals, or exploiters.”

“The invaders came to fight for free enterprise! Imagine, at this time for an idiot to come here to say that he fought for free enterprise! As if these people did not know what free enterprise is! It was slums, unemployment, begging. One hundred thousand families working the land to turn over 25 percent of their production to shareholders who never saw that land. How can they come to speak about free enterprise to a country where there was unemployment, illiteracy, and where one had to beg to get into a hospital? The people knew that free enterprise was social clubs, and bathing in mud for the children”.

**CT**

*Copyright © 2024 by Noam Chomsky and Vijay Prashad. This excerpt originally appeared in*  
**On Cuba: Reflections on 70 Years of Revolution and Struggle**, published by *The New Press*.  
 Reprinted here with permission

# If the wars go on

Desperadoes do desperate things. In Biden and Netanyahu we have two blood-thirsty nihilists at the end of their ropes

I suppose my title for this essay could have been couched in the singular form, as Hermann Hesse, the Nobel Prize winning German/Swiss author, did with his collection of anti-war essays about World War I (the war to end all wars that didn't), *If The War Goes On...*

Or more appropriately, I might have eliminated that conditional "If" since it seems Pollyannaish.

It's a long hard road, this anti-war business. During the first Cold War and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis in the early sixties when Kennedy and Khrushchev narrowly avoided blowing the world to smithereens, Bob Dylan put it right in his fierce song, *Masters of War*:

*Come, you masters of war  
You that build the big guns  
You that build the death planes  
You that build all the bombs  
You that hide behind walls  
You that hide behind desks  
I just want you to know  
I can see through your masks  
Like Judas of old  
You lie and deceive  
A world war can be won  
You want me to believe  
But I see through your eyes  
And I see through your brain  
Like I see through the water  
That runs down my drain*

Indeed there is a system of war that guarantees that the various wars go on and on ad infini-

tum, and they are linked. It is why the warfare state has killed our anti-war leaders, first and foremost JFK for turning against war in the last year of his presidency. Then in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy in quick succession.

It is why if you dare to look around the world today, you will see that there is a series of wars happening, not only in the obvious places like Ukraine and Gaza, but in places that you may never have heard of, and if you peek a bit further into their causes, you will discover that a familiar culprit with 750 plus military bases around the world has its hand in most of them – the United States of America.

These wars have their cold and hot phases.

There are days when the corporate media let them sleep and other times when the same media wake them a bit, but never enough to wake their readers up to the reality of the deadly game. That is the media's job as stenographers for the warfare state. Wars being essentially the health of the state, as Randolph Bourne wrote long ago, they provide vast profits for the military-industrial complex/Wall St., whether they are in preparation or in operation, awake or asleep, hot or cold.

Ray McGovern, the former CIA analyst with a moral conscience, has aptly named this vast interlock-

ing propaganda apparatus the military-industrial-congressional-intelligence-media-academia-think-tank complex, MICIMATT. It is a complex that blatantly serves the interests of the masters of war who "ain't worth the blood/that runs in [their] your veins," in Dylan's words.

The preparation for war is war. What is prepared must be used up, so other weapons can be prepared to be used up, so other weapons can be prepared to be used up, and on and on until one day no one is left to use anything, for the world will be used up in a nuclear conflagration.

These weapons are produced in nice clean factories that pay good wages to people who take their pay and go their way, giving their souls to the killers. For the US economy is built on the waging of wars so continuous that it is nearly impossible to find a break between its hot and cold phases, or what seems like decent employment and the diabolic. They are so intertwined. It is a system of capitalistic finance, a revolutionary system that builds to destroy.

The US spends nearly \$900-billion dollars annually on "defense" spending; this is more than China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Germany, France, South Korea, and Japan combined. The USA is a warfare state; it's as simple as that. And whether they choose to be aware of it or not, the vast majority of Americans support this killing machine by their insouciance and silence. That their country is spending up to 2-tril-





lion dollars on modernising its nuclear weapons disturbs them not. It is a death cult.

Some – as I have done mistakenly – talk about the “deep state” or some other deceptive phrase that conceals the truth that the official state is the “deep state.” It stares us in the face, but many refuse to stare it back down. It is too obvious, standing, as it does, in the way of a life of illusions.

And what is equally apparent today – or should be if one is not asleep – is that because of the war policies of the US, the chances of another world war and the use of nuclear weapons is rising by the day. Despite all its denials to the contrary, the US/NATO is pushing for open warfare with Russia that will involve the use of nuclear weapons.

Our masters of war are pushing us toward a nuclear abyss.

In a recent perceptive article, “Russia and China Have Had Enough,” Pepe Escobar writes

truths many prefer not to hear. That there is no split between Russia and China but the opposite – a rock solid Russia-China strategic partnership and a determination to oppose and defeat the US/UK/NATO hybrid war tactics across Eurasia and the Middle East.

That the more these US-led forces attempt to destroy Russia, the more the expanding alliances involved in the Shanghai Cooperative Agreement (SCO) and the expanding BRICS partnerships of emerging economies (originally just Brazil, Russia, India, and then South Africa; now also Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, with many more countries waiting to join) will gain in power.

In Escobar’s words, “. . . the Global Majority is on the move: Russia is closely cooperating, increasingly, with scores of nations in West Asia, wider Asia, Africa and Latin America.”

Despite this fact, the United States

and its allies blithely continue as if their control of the world order is secure. That they can butcher and badger the world into submission. The insane are usually deluded, but when they control nuclear weapons, the people of the world need to awaken.

Ray McGovern, a Russia expert, (see [www.raymcgovern.com](http://www.raymcgovern.com)) has echoed Escobar on the absurdity of the Russian China split; has emphasized how Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians has made it an isolated but desperate pariah state; and how the US war against Russia in Ukraine is leading to the increased use of US tactical nuclear weapons that could lead to full-scale nuclear war. He is not alone in this warning.

There are many signs that we are moving toward a nuclear war with calls for US/NATO to support more strikes inside Russia, crossing a very dangerous Russian red line. Russia has made it very clear they will respond.

As politicians of various stripes – French President Macron, NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, et al. have ecstatically been urging the Biden administration, which needs no urging, to escalate the war in Ukraine by attacking Russia proper (“The time has come for allies to consider whether they should lift some of the restrictions they have put on the use of weapons they have donated to Ukraine,” Stoltenberg told *The Economist*), Mike Whitney has written about a recent such attack that should send chills down everyone’s spines – “Washington Attacks Key Elements of Russia’s Nuclear Umbrella Threatening Entire Global Security Architecture.” – but since the corporate media ignore it, most will dream away and get their barbecues ready for Fourth of July celebrations.

They and the flag-dressed Dolly Parton can sing all they want about when Johnny comes marching home

again, but Dolly and no one will be jolly if there are no homes to march to, no Johnnies marching anywhere but to death, no anything. Just a wasteland.

Michel Chossudovsky, Ray McGovern, Eva Bartlett, Craig Murray, Patrick Lawrence, Vanessa Beeley, Pepe Escobar, Oliver Stone, Andrew Napolitano, Craig Paul Roberts, Scott Ritter, Chris Hedges, Alastair Crooke, Caitlin Johnstone, Peter Koenig, Finian Cunningham, Diana Johnstone, Lew Rockwell, and so many other sane but marginalised writers whose names I am omitting as I write quickly, are warning us of our closeness to nuclear annihilation. Cassandras all, I fear. Marginalised prophets such as writer and antinuclear activist James W. Douglass (*Lightning East to West, JFK and the Unspeakable*, etc.) have been issuing such warnings for decades. It is understandable that so many turn away from such warnings, for the thought of a nuclear war induces deep anxiety hard to control. But unless the vast majority can break through such reticence and see through the official propaganda, the world will be destroyed by madmen sooner or later. The signs today all point to sooner, for we are on the edge of the abyss.

Former British diplomat Alistair Crooke, in a recent article, *The brink of dissolution: Neurosis in the West as the levee breaks*, – writes about how the Biden administration’s policy toward Russia-China, not to say Israel-Palestine, being nothing more than more of the same, is stupid, self-defeating, and very dangerous. Rather than accepting that its proxy war against Russia in Ukraine is a disaster, the US is escalating the conflict to a terrifying level. Rather than accepting the obvious deep alliance between China and Russian exemplified in the recent hug between Putin and Xi and their joint 8,000-

## More of the same, yes, that is Biden’s approach, inflamed regularly by the anti-Russian hatred spewed by the *New York Times* and its ilk

word joint statement, Biden has said, “Russia is in a very, very difficult spot right now. They are being squeezed by China.”

It doesn’t get any stupider. But when more of the same doesn’t work and you can’t accept the reality of a changing world order, you do more of the same.

Crooke, writes: “The paradox is that Team Biden – wholly inadvertently – is midwifing the birth of a ‘new world’. It is doing so by dint of its crude opposition to parturition. The more the western élites push against the birthing – through ‘saving Zionism’; ‘saving European Ukraine’ and by crushing dissent – perversely they accelerate the foundering of Leviathan.

“President Xi’s double farewell hug for President Putin following their 16-17 May summit nonetheless sealed the birth – even the *New York Times*, with customary self-absorption, termed the warm embrace by Xi as ‘defiance of the West.’

“The root of the coming dissolution stems precisely from the shortcoming that the *NY Times* headline encapsulates in its disdainful labelling of the seismic shift as base anti-westernism.”

More of the same, yes, that is Biden’s approach, inflamed regularly by the anti-Russian hatred spewed by the *New York Times* and its ilk. It is an obsession bordering on full-fledged madness, yet it is integral to the belief that the US is an empire and will remain one while the rest of the world can go to hell. Such a mindset is behind the US’s

abrogating all the nuclear weapons treaties that provided a semblance of security that nuclear weapons would not be used.

Crooke ends his piece with these sobering words:

“Put plainly, with the US unable to exit or to moderate its determination to preserve its hegemony, Lavrov [Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister] sees the prospect for increased western weapons provision for Ukraine. The discourse of military escalation is in fashion in Europe (of that there is no doubt); but both in the Middle East and Ukraine, western policy is in deep trouble. There must be doubts whether the West has either the political will, or the internal unity, to pursue this aggressive course. Dragging wars are not traditionally thought to be ‘voter friendly’ when campaigning reaches its peak.”

Let me repeat that last understated sentence: “Dragging wars are not traditionally thought to be ‘voter friendly’ when campaigning reaches its peak.” And so? More of the same?

Ray McGovern suggests what is more likely: “Israel [is] becoming a dangerous pariah; Ukraine/US/NATO a dangerous loser. As Israel defies the UN, and as the “exceptional” geniuses around Biden ignore Kremlin warnings regarding provocations re Ukraine, the likelihood increases for US use of tactical nukes.”

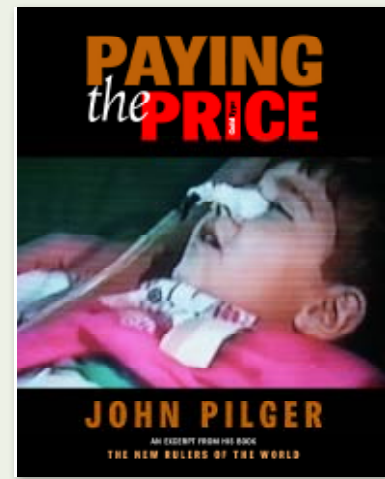
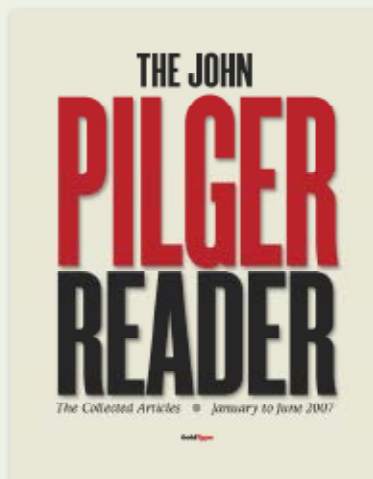
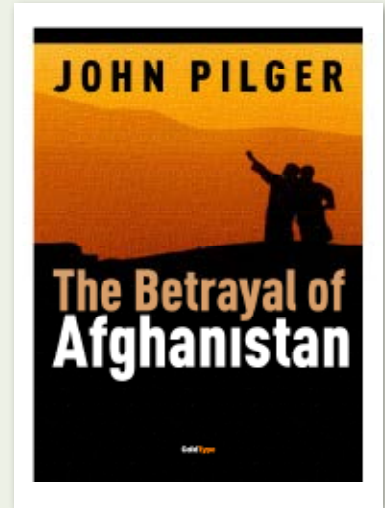
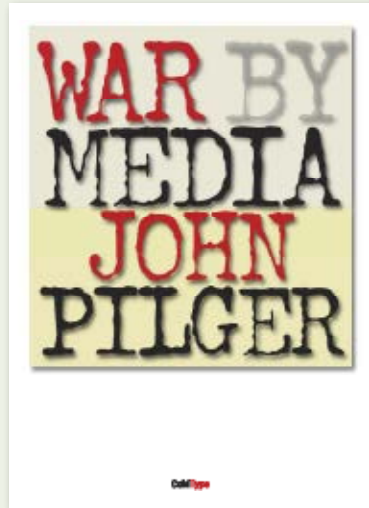
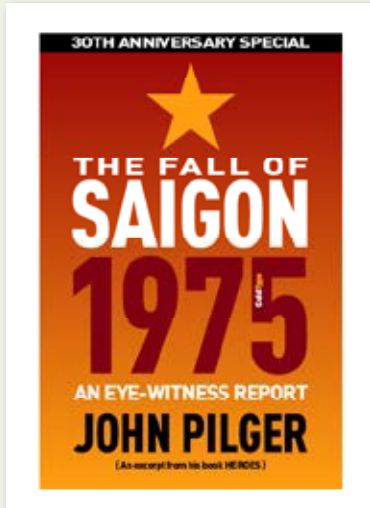
Desperadoes do desperate things. In Biden and Netanyahu we have two blood-thirsty nihilists at the end of their ropes. These masters of war make me think that a better title for this piece would have been:

If the World Goes On ... **CT**

*Edward J. Curtin is an independent writer whose work has appeared widely over many years. His website is [edwardcurtin.com](http://edwardcurtin.com) and his latest book is ‘Seeking Truth in a Country of Lies’*



# Read these Special Reports by **JOHN PILGER** from the **ColdType** archives



Download and read them at  
[www.coldtype.net/pilgerbooks.html](http://www.coldtype.net/pilgerbooks.html)

Find more of his ColdType work at [www.coldtype.net/find.html](http://www.coldtype.net/find.html)

---

---

► MARK CURTIS

# Battle-tested in Gaza: Britain's next drones?

New Israeli drone technology – “just like a computer game” – undergoes trials before senior military figures in army exercises on Salisbury Plain

Britain is experimenting with new drone technology that Israel's military uses in Gaza. The British army conducted exercises on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire to test a drone made by Israeli tech firm Xtend in December.

Hundreds of Xtend's small drones are being used by Israeli forces in Gaza. They enable soldiers to launch grenades and scan tunnels and buildings without having to risk their own lives. Xtend's drones are being used for the first time in the war and the company is reported to be collaborating with an Israeli military unit, the Yiftah, to develop “special weapons”.

A “warhead has been developed that is mounted on these drones thus transforming them into a weapon (suicide drone)”, one report notes. The Israeli military describes the Yiftah as a “top-secret” unit comprising “a small team of innovative scientists and engineers” that “have been key to our success over the years”.

Xtend's drone technology comes complete with a virtual reality headset and hand-held controller to operate the drone. “It's just like a computer game,” says Matteo Shapira, Xtend's co-founder.

“It's very easy to operate, and they don't need to know anything

about the machine, how it behaves or what it needs to do,” he adds.

The company's drones are reported by mainstream Western and Israeli media as enabling Israel to target Hamas terrorists in an urban warfare setting. Yet Israel's war in Gaza has been devastating to ordinary Palestinians, including intentionally targeting civilians.

*The Times of Israel* reports that Xtend's technology was initially developed to help the Israeli army shoot down incendiary balloons launched by Palestinian militant groups on the border with Gaza.

Before the current war in the territory, Xtend's biggest client was the US Department of Defense which has bought hundreds of the company's drones, many for use by US special forces.

The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) exercises with Xtend's drones are part of its Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE), which is the “flagship experimentation programme for the British army”.

The latest AWE, which runs from 2022-24, explores “innovative technologies and tactics to prepare our soldiers for future battlefields”, the army says.

Xtend noted that its participation

in “exclusive British army experiments and demonstrations” was “an opportunity we deeply appreciated and cherished”.

The company said that its “innovative systems” were assessed by the British army's Infantry Trials and Development Unit, adding that Xtend's drones were in the “capable hands” of the Royal Air Force and army.

The MoD's second permanent secretary, Paul Lincoln, was one of those who attended the event, listing Xtend as one of the companies he “met with...to discuss their defence products”.

Earlier this year, Xtend wrote on LinkedIn that it was “honored” to take a significant part in the British army's “AWE annual conclusion event”.

It added: “The pinnacle of a year long process was seeing our technology tested in action with British soldiers along with many NATO and ally [sic] countries in complex multi force urban scenarios”.

Xtend acknowledges that its staff include active Israeli soldiers. It has written: “We would like to express our appreciation to our UK partners for their collaboration and agility required to work with Israeli companies in these challenging times where many of our employees are still under active reserve duty”.





Xtend's operating systems include small drones used with a portable virtual reality headset and a gestures-based hand-held controller

The army conducted an earlier exercise with Xtend's products in May 2023, again on Salisbury Plain. One of those to witness a demonstration of the company's drones was then defence secretary Ben Wallace, among other senior military figures.



Xtend's Ido Bar-On: "honored and thankful"

Wallace did not appear to publicise the event. But "Xtend was honored and thankful to have taken part in the invite-only British army exercise", wrote the company's chief business officer, Ido Bar-On.

During the manoeuvres, Xtend's drones "were operated by British

soldiers testing Xtend's unique operating system and multi-mission capabilities for urban warfare", he added.

The company described itself as "working closely with the UK MoD" and is clearly seeking to expand in the UK military market.

Declassified has not been able to establish the full extent of Xtend's relations with

the British MoD. In both September 2023 and 2022 the company was invited to the annual London arms fair, one of the biggest in the world.

Xtend, which was founded in 2018, is also advised by General Sir Paul

Newton, a former assistant chief of defence staff in the UK who is now a military consultant.

The Gaza war is profitable for Xtend which has just secured \$40m in new funding from investors.

Its CEO, Aviv Shapira, said: "Before the war it was difficult to raise money but suddenly everything has opened up. We decided to wait with the fund raising during the war, and the amount of our orders increased greatly".

An MoD spokesperson told us: "We do not hold any procurement contracts with Xtend." **CT**

*Mark Curtis is the director of Declassified UK, and the author of five books and many articles on UK foreign policy. This article was first published at [www.declassifieduk.org](http://www.declassifieduk.org)*

**O**n a warm evening almost a decade ago, I sat under the stars with Daniel Ellsberg while he talked about nuclear war with alarming intensity. He was most of the way through writing his last and most important book, *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*. Somehow, he had set aside the denial so many people rely on to cope with a world that could suddenly end in unimaginable horror. Listening, I felt more and more frightened. Dan knew what he was talking about.

After working inside this country's doomsday machinery, even drafting nuclear war plans for the Pentagon during President John F. Kennedy's administration, Dan Ellsberg had gained intricate perspectives on what greased the bureaucratic wheels, personal ambitions, and political messaging of the warfare state. Deceptions about arranging for the ultimate violence of thermonuclear omnicide were of a piece with routine falsehoods about American war-making. It was easy enough to get away with lying, he told me: "How difficult is it to deceive the public? I would say, as a former insider, one becomes aware: it's not difficult to deceive them. First of all, you're often telling them what they would like to believe – that we're better than other people, we're superior in our morality and our perceptions of the world."

Dan had made history in 1971 by revealing the top-secret Pentagon Papers, exposing the constant litany of official lies that accompanied the US escalation of the Vietnam War. In response, the government used the blunderbuss of the World War I-era Espionage Act to prosecute him. At age 41, he faced a possible prison sentence of more than 100 years. But his trial ended abruptly with all charges dismissed when the Nixon administration's illegal interfer-

► NORMAN SOLOMON

# The absence – and presence – of Daniel Ellsberg

A year after his death, he's still with us warning of the dangers of the political grandstanding that continues to threaten the world with all-out nuclear war

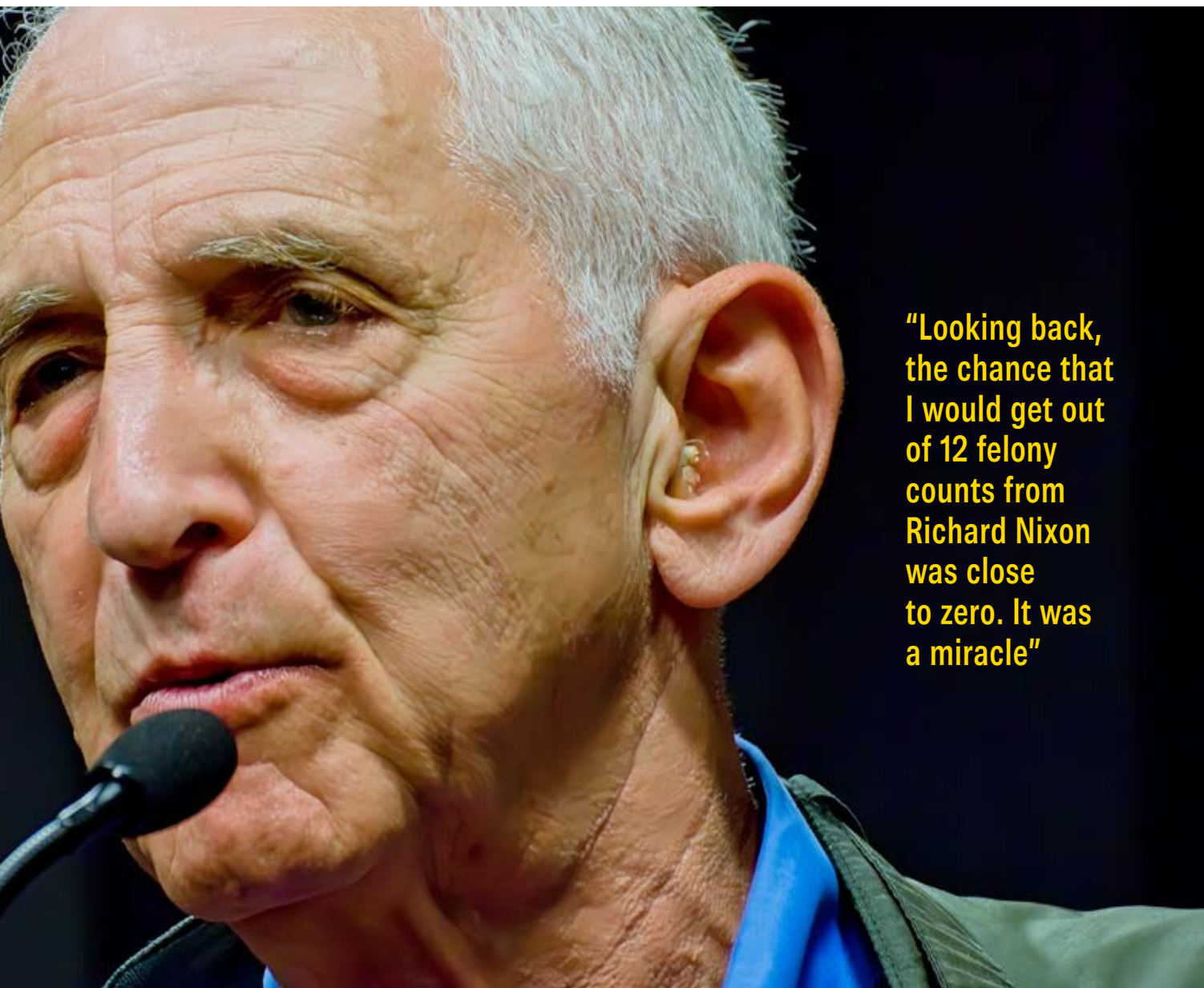
ence in the case came to light in mid-1972. Five decades later, he reflected: "Looking back, the chance that I would get out of 12 felony counts from Richard Nixon was close to zero. It was a miracle."

That miracle enabled Dan to keep on speaking, writing, researching, and protesting for the rest of his life. (In those five decades, he averaged nearly two arrests per year for civil disobedience.) He worked tirelessly to prevent and oppose a succession of new American wars. And he consistently gave eloquent public support as well as warm personal solidarity to heroic whistleblowers

– Thomas Drake, Katharine Gun, Daniel Hale, Matthew Hoh, Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden, Jeffrey Sterling, Mordechai Vanunu, Ann Wright, and others – who sacrificed much to challenge deadly patterns of official deceit.

**D**an often spoke out for freeing WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange, whose work had revealed devastating secret US documents on America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. At the end of a visit in June 2015, when they said goodbye inside Ecuador's em-





**“Looking back, the chance that I would get out of 12 felony counts from Richard Nixon was close to zero. It was a miracle”**

bassy in London, I saw that both men were on the verge of tears. At that point, Assange was three years into his asylum at that embassy, with no end in sight.

Secretly indicted in the United States, Assange remained in the Ecuadorian embassy for nearly four more years until London police dragged him off to prison. Hours later, in a radio interview, Dan said: “Julian Assange is the first journalist to be indicted. If he is extradited to the US and convicted, he will not be the last. The First Amendment is a pillar of our democracy and this is an assault on it. If freedom of

speech is violated to this extent, our republic is in danger. Unauthorised disclosures are the lifeblood of the republic.”

Unauthorised disclosures were the essence of what WikiLeaks had published and what Dan had provided with the Pentagon Papers. Similarly, countless exposés about US government war crimes became possible due to the courage of Chelsea Manning, and profuse front-page news about the government’s systematic violations of the Fourth Amendment resulted from Edward Snowden’s bravery. While gladly publishing some of their rev-

elations, major American newspapers largely refused to defend their rights.

Such dynamics were all too familiar to Dan. He told me that the attitude toward him of the *New York Times*, which won a Pulitzer Prize with its huge Pentagon Papers scoop, was akin to a district attorney’s view of a “snitch” – useful but distasteful.

**I**n recent times, Dan detested the smug media paradigm of “Ellsberg good, Snowden bad.” So, he pushed

back against the theme as rendered by *New Yorker* staff writer Malcolm Gladwell, who wrote a lengthy piece along those lines in late 2016. Dan quickly responded with a letter to the editor, which never appeared.

The *New Yorker* certainly could have found room to print Dan's letter, which said: "I couldn't disagree more with Gladwell's overall account." The letter was just under 300 words; the Gladwell piece had run more than 5,000. While promoting the "Ellsberg good, Snowden bad" trope, the *New Yorker* did not let readers know that Ellsberg himself completely rejected it:

"Each of us, having earned privileged access to secret information, saw unconstitutional, dangerously wrong policies ongoing by our government. (In Snowden's case, he discovered blatantly criminal violations of our Fourth Amendment right to privacy, on a scale that threatens our democracy.) We found our superiors, up to the presidents, were deeply complicit and clearly unwilling either to expose, reform, or end the wrongdoing.

"Each of us chose to sacrifice careers, and possibly a lifetime's freedom, to reveal to the public, Congress, and the courts what had long been going on in secret from them. We hoped, each with some success, to allow our democratic system to bring about desperately needed change.

"The truth is there are no whistleblowers, in fact no one on earth, with whom I identify more closely than with Edward Snowden.

"Here is one difference between us that is deeply real to me: Edward Snowden, when he was 30 years old, did what I could and should have done – what I profoundly wish I had done – when I was his age, instead of 10 years later."

As he encouraged whistleblowing, Dan often expressed regret that he hadn't engaged in it sooner. Dur-

## "The truth is there are no whistleblowers, in fact no one on earth, with whom I identify more closely than with Edward Snowden"

ing the summer of 2014, a billboard was on display at bus stops in Washington, DC, featuring a quote from Dan – with big letters at the top saying "DON'T DO WHAT I DID. DON'T WAIT," followed by "until a new war has started, don't wait until thousands more have died, before you tell the truth with documents that reveal lies or crimes or internal projections of costs and dangers. You might save a war's worth of lives." Two whistleblowers who had been US diplomats, Matthew Hoh and Ann Wright, unveiled the billboard at a bus stop near the State Department.

**A**bove all, Daniel Ellsberg was preoccupied with opposing policies that could lead to nuclear war. "No policies in human history have more deserved to be recognised as immoral. Or insane," he wrote in *The Doomsday Machine*. "The story of how this calamitous predicament came about and how and why it has persisted for over half a century is a chronicle of human madness."

It's fitting that the events for Dan-

iel Ellsberg Week that (ended on June 16th, the first anniversary of when Dan passed away) included at least one protest at a Northrop Grumman facility. That company has a \$13.3-billion contract to develop a new version of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which – as Dan frequently emphasized – is the most dangerous of all nuclear weapons. He was eager to awaken Congress to scientific data about "nuclear winter" and the imperative of shutting down ICBMs to reduce the risks of nuclear war.

Five years ago, several of us from the Institute for Public Accuracy hand-delivered paperbacks of *The Doomsday Machine* – with a personalized letter from Dan to each member of the House and Senate – to all 535 congressional offices on Capitol Hill. "I am concerned that the public, most members of Congress, and possibly even high members of the Executive branch have remained in the dark, or in a state of denial, about the implications of rigorous studies by environ-

mental scientists over the last dozen years," Dan wrote near the top of his two-page letter. Those studies "confirm that using even a large fraction of the existing US or Russian nuclear weapons that are on high alert would bring about nuclear winter, leading to global famine and near extinction of humanity."

Dan's letter singled out the urgency of one "immediate step" in particular: "to eliminate entirely our redundant, vulnerable, and destabilising land-based ICBM force." Unlike air-launched and sea-based nuclear weapons, which are



"Edward Snowden, when he was 30 years old, did what I could and should have done – what I profoundly wish I had done – when I was his age, instead of 10 years later."



---

---

not vulnerable to attack, the ICBMs are vulnerable to a preemptive strike and so are “poised to launch” on the basis of “ten-minute warning signals that may be – and have been, on both sides – false alarms, which press leadership to ‘use them or lose them.’”

As Dan pointed out, “It is in the power of Congress to decouple the hair-trigger on our system by defunding and dismantling the current land-based Minuteman missiles and rejecting funding for their proposed replacements. The same holds for lower-yield weapons for first use against Russia, on submarines or in Europe, which are detonators for escalation to nuclear winter.”

In essence, Dan was telling members of Congress to do their job, with the fate of the earth and its inhabitants hanging in the balance:

“This grotesque situation of existential danger has evolved in secret in the almost total absence of congressional oversight, investigations, or hearings. It is time for Congress to remedy this by preparing for first-ever hearings on current nuclear doctrine and ‘options,’ and by demanding objective, authoritative scientific studies of their full consequences including fire, smoke, nuclear winter, and famine. Classified studies of nuclear winter using actual details of existing attack plans, never yet done by the Pentagon but necessarily involving its directed cooperation, could be done by the National Academy of Sciences, requested and funded by Congress.”

But Dan’s letter was distinctly out of sync with Congress. Few in office then – or now – have publicly acknowledged that such a “grotesque situation of existential danger” really exists. And even fewer have been willing to break from the current Cold War mindset that continues to fuel the rush to global annihilation. On matters of foreign policy and nu-

## Dan most wanted to talk about the unhinged momentum of the nuclear arms race and the ominous US frenzy of antagonism toward Russia and China

clear weapons, the *Congressional Record* is mainly a compendium of arrogance and delusion, in sharp contrast to the treasure trove of Dan’s profound insights preserved at [www.ellsberg.net](http://www.ellsberg.net).

Clear as he was about the overarching scourge of militarism embraced by the leaders of both major parties, Dan was emphatic about not equating the two parties at election time. He understood that efforts like Green Party presidential campaigns are misguided at best. But, as he said dryly, he did favour third parties – on the right (“the more the better”). He knew what some self-described progressives have failed to recognise as the usual reality of the US electoral system: right-wing third parties help the left, and left-wing third parties help the right.

Several weeks before the 2020 election, Dan addressed voters in the swing state of Michigan via an article he wrote for the *Detroit Metro Times*. Appearing under a headline no less relevant today – “Trump Is an Enemy of the Constitution and Must Be Defeated” – the piece said that “it’s now of transcendent importance to prevent him from gaining a second term.” Dan warned that “we’re facing an authoritarian threat to our democratic system of a kind we’ve never seen before,” making votes for Joe Biden in swing states crucial.

Dan’s mix of deep humanism and

realism was in harmony with his aversion to contorting logic to suit rigid ideology. Bad as current realities were, he said, it was manifestly untrue that things couldn’t get worse. He had no intention of ignoring the very real dangers of nuclear war or fascism.

During the last few months of his life, after disclosing a diagnosis of inoperable pancreatic cancer, Dan reached many millions of people with an intensive schedule of interviews. Journalists were mostly eager to ask him about events related to the Pentagon Papers. While he said many important things in response to such questions, Dan most wanted to talk about the unhinged momentum of the nuclear arms race and the ominous US frenzy of antagonism toward Russia and China lacking any sense of genuine diplomacy.

While he can no longer speak to the world about the latest developments, Dan Ellsberg will continue to speak directly to hearts and minds about the extreme evils of our time – and the potential for overcoming them with love in action.

A free documentary film premiering now, *A Common Insanity: A Conversation with Daniel Ellsberg About Nuclear Weapons*, concludes with these words from Dan as he looks straight at us: “Can humanity survive the nuclear era? We don’t know. I choose to act as if we have a chance.” **CT**

*Norman Solomon is co-founder of RootsAction.org and executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include War Made Easy, Made Love, Got War, and most recently War Made Invisible: How America Hides the Human Toll of Its Military Machine (The New Press). He lives in the San Francisco area. This article was first published at [www.tomdispatch.com](http://www.tomdispatch.com)*

# What's next for Battlefield America?

## Israel's high-tech tactics point the way

It's not just military weapons that Israel is exporting. They're also helping to transform local police agencies into extensions of the military

*"I did not know Israel was capturing or recording my face. [But Israel has] been watching us for years from the sky with their drones. They have been watching us gardening and going to schools and kissing our wives. I feel like I have been watched for so long."*

*Mosab Abu Toha, Palestinian poet*

If you want a glimpse of the next stage of America's transformation into a police state, look no further than how Israel – a long-time recipient of hundreds of billions of dollars in foreign aid from the US – uses high-tech military tactics, surveillance and weaponry to advance its authoritarian agenda.

Military checkpoints. Wall-to-wall mass surveillance. Predictive policing. Aerial surveillance that tracks your movements wherever you go and whatever you do. AI-powered facial recognition and biometric programmes carried out with the knowledge or consent of those targeted by it. Cyber-intelligence. Detention centres. Brutal

interrogation tactics. Weaponised drones. Combat robots.

We've seen many of these military tactics and technologies deployed on American soil and used against the populace, especially along the border regions, a testament to the heavy influence Israel's military-industrial complex has had on US policing. Israel has become one of the main developers and exporters of military weapons and technologies of oppression worldwide.

Journalist Antony Loewenstein has warned that Pegasus, one of Israel's most invasive pieces of spyware, which allows any government or military intelligence or police department to spy on someone's phone and get all the information from that phone, has become a favourite tool of oppressive regimes around the world. The FBI and NYPD have also been recipients of the technology which promises to turn any "target's smartphone into an intelligence gold mine."

Yet it's not just military weapons that Israel is exporting. They're also helping to transform local po-

lice agencies into extensions of the military. According to *The Intercept*, thousands of American law enforcement officers frequently travel for training to Israel, "one of the few countries where policing and militarism are even more deeply intertwined than they are here," as part of an ongoing exchange programme that largely flies under the radar of public scrutiny.

A 2018 investigative report concluded that imported military techniques by way of these exchange programmes that allow police to study in Israel have changed American policing for the worse. "Upon their return, US law enforcement delegates implement practices learned from Israel's use of invasive surveillance, blatant racial profiling, and repressive force against dissent," the report states. "Rather than promoting security for all, these programmes facilitate an exchange of methods in state violence and control that endanger us all."

"At the very least," notes journalist Matthew Petti, "visits to Israel





have helped American police justify more snooping on citizens and stricter secrecy. Critics also assert that Israeli training encourages excessive force.”

Petti documents how the NYPD set up a permanent liaison office in Israel in the wake of 9/11, eventually implementing “one of the first post-9/11 counterterrorism programmes that explicitly followed the Israeli model. In 2002, the NYPD tasked

a secret ‘Demographics Unit’ with spying on Muslim-American communities. Dedicated ‘mosque crawlers’ infiltrated local Muslim congregations and attempted to bait worshippers with talk of violent revolution.”

That was merely the start of American police forces being trained in martial law by foreign nations under the guise of national security theatre. It has all been

downhill from there.

As Alex Vitale, a sociology professor who has studied the rise of global policing, explains, “The focus of this training is on riot suppression, counterinsurgency, and counterterrorism – all of which are essentially irrelevant or should be irrelevant to the vast majority of police departments. They shouldn’t be suppressing protest, they shouldn’t be engaging in counterinsurgency, and

almost none of them face any real threat from terrorism.”

This ongoing transformation of the American homeland into a techno-battlefield tracks unnervingly with the dystopian cinematic visions of Steven Spielberg’s *Minority Report* and Neill Blomkamp’s *Elysium*, both of which are set 30 years from now, in the year 2054.

In *Minority Report*, police agencies harvest intelligence from widespread surveillance, behaviour prediction technologies, data mining, precognitive technology, and neighbourhood and family snitch programmes in order to capture would-be criminals before they can do any damage.

While Blomkamp’s *Elysium* acts as a vehicle to raise concerns about immigration, access to healthcare, workers’ rights, and socioeconomic stratification, what was most striking was its depiction of how the government will employ technologies such as drones, tasers and biometric scanners to track, target and control the populace, especially dissidents.

With Israel in the driver’s seat and *Minority Report* and *Elysium* on the horizon, it’s not so far-fetched to imagine how the American police state will use these emerging technologies to lock down the populace, root out dissidents, and ostensibly establish an “open-air prison” with disconcerting similarities to Israel’s technological occupation of present-day Palestine.

For those who insist that such things are celluloid fantasies with no connection to the present, we offer the following as a warning of the totalitarian future at our doorsteps.

## Drones

**Fiction:** In another *Elysium* scene, Max is hunted by four drones while attempting to elude the authorities. The drones, equipped with x-ray cameras, biometric readers,



## Not even those indoors will be safe from these aerial spies, which can be equipped with technology capable of peering through walls

*scanners and weapons, are able to scan whole neighbourhoods, identify individuals from a distance – even through buildings, report their findings back to police handlers, pursue a suspect, and target them with tasers and an array of lethal weapons.*

**Fact:** Drones, some deceptively small and yet powerful enough to capture the facial expressions of people hundreds of feet below them, have ushered in a new age of surveillance. Not even those indoors, in the privacy of their homes, will be safe from these aerial spies, which can be equipped with technology capable of peering through walls. IDrones can also be equipped with automatic weapons, grenade launchers, tear gas, and tasers.

## Biometric scanners and national IDs

**Fiction:** Throughout *Elysium*, citizens are identified, sorted and dealt with by way of various scanning

*devices that read their biometrics – irises, DNA, etc. – as well as their national ID numbers, imprinted by a laser into their skin. In this way, citizens are tracked, counted, and classified. Likewise, in *Minority Report*, tiny sensory-guided spider robots converge on a suspected would-be criminal, scan his biometric data and feed it into a central government database. The end result is that there is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide to escape the government’s all-seeing eyes.*

**Fact:** Given the vast troves of data that various world governments, including Israel and the US, is collecting on its citizens and non-citizens alike, we are not far from a future where there is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

In fact, between the facial recognition technology being handed out to law enforcement, licence plate readers being installed on police cruisers, local police creating DNA databases by extracting DNA from non-criminals, including the victims of crimes, and police collecting more and more biometric data such as iris scans, we are approaching the end of anonymity. It won’t be long before police officers will be able to pull up a full biography on any given person instantaneously, including their family and medical history, bank accounts, and personal peccadilloes. It’s already moving in that direction in more authoritarian regimes.

## Facial recognition

**Fiction:** One of the most jarring scenes in *Elysium* occurs towards the beginning of the film, when the protagonist Max Da Costa waits to board a bus on his way to work. While standing in line, Max is approached by two large robotic police officers, who quickly scan Max’s biometrics, cross-check his data



against government files, and identify him as a former convict in need of close inspection. They demand to search his bag, a request which Max resists, insisting that there is nothing for them to see. The robotic cops respond by manhandling Max, throwing him to the ground, and breaking his arm with a police baton. After determining that Max poses no threat, they leave him on the ground and continue their patrol. Likewise, in *Minority Report*, police use holographic data screens, city-wide surveillance cameras, dimensional maps and database feeds to monitor the movements of its citizens and preemptively target suspects for interrogation and containment.

**Fact:** We now find ourselves in the unenviable position of being monitored, managed, corralled and controlled by technologies that answer to government and corporate rulers. This is exactly how Palestinian poet and *New Yorker* contributor Mosab Abu Toha found himself, within minutes of passing through an Israeli military checkpoint in Gaza with his wife and children in tow, asked to step out line, only to be blindfolded, handcuffed, interrogated, then imprisoned in an Israeli detention centre for two days, beaten and further interrogated. Toha was finally released in what Israeli soldiers chalked up to a “mistake,” yet there was no mistaking the AI-powered facial recognition technology that was used to pull him out of line, identify him, and label him (erroneously) as a person of interest.

## Predictive policing

**Fiction:** In *Minority Report*, John Anderton, Chief of the Department of Pre-Crime, finds himself identified as the next would-be criminal and targeted for preemptive measures by the very technology that he



## Israel has erected the world's first open-air prison, and in the process, has made itself a model for the United States

relies on for his predictive policing. Consequently, Anderton finds himself not only attempting to prove his innocence but forced to take drastic measures in order to avoid capture in a surveillance state that uses biometric data and sophisticated computer networks to track its citizens.

**Fact:** Pre-crime, which aims to prevent crimes before they happen, has justified the use of widespread surveillance, behaviour prediction technologies, data mining, precognitive technology, and snitch programmes. As political science professor Anwar Mhajne documents, Israel has used all of these tools in its military engagements with Palestine: deploying AI surveillance and predictive policing systems in Palestinian territories; utilizing facial recognition technology to monitor and regulate the movement of Palestinians; subjecting Palestinians to facial recognition scans at checkpoints, with a colour-coded mechanism to dictate who should

be allowed to proceed, subjected to further questioning, or detained.

## Making the leap from fiction to reality

When Aldous Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in 1931, he was convinced that there was “still plenty of time” before his dystopian vision became a nightmare reality. It wasn’t long, however, before he realised that his prophecies were coming true far sooner than he had imagined.

Israel’s military influence on the United States, its advances in technological weaponry, and its rigid demand for compliance are pushing us towards a world in chains.

Through its oppressive use of surveillance technology, Israel has erected the world’s first open-air prison, and in the process, has made itself a model for the United States.

What we cannot afford to overlook, however, is the extent to which the American Police State is taking its cues from Israel.

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People* and in its fictional counterpart *The Erik Blair Diaries*, we may not be an occupied territory, but that does not make the electronic concentration camp being erected around us any less of a prison. **CT**

**John W. Whitehead** is founder and president of *The Rutherford Institute*. His most recent books are the ‘*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*,’ ‘*A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*,’ and a dystopian fiction novel, ‘*The Erik Blair Diaries*’. Whitehead can be contacted at [staff@rutherford.org](mailto:staff@rutherford.org).

**Nisha Whitehead** is the Executive Director of *The Rutherford Institute*. Information about *The Rutherford Institute* is available at [www.rutherford.org](http://www.rutherford.org)

---

---

► MICHELLE HAMADECKE

# Post-colonial prophet or an advocate of ‘barbaric justice?’

New book offers a fresh look  
at the life and times of  
revolutionary writer Frantz Fanon

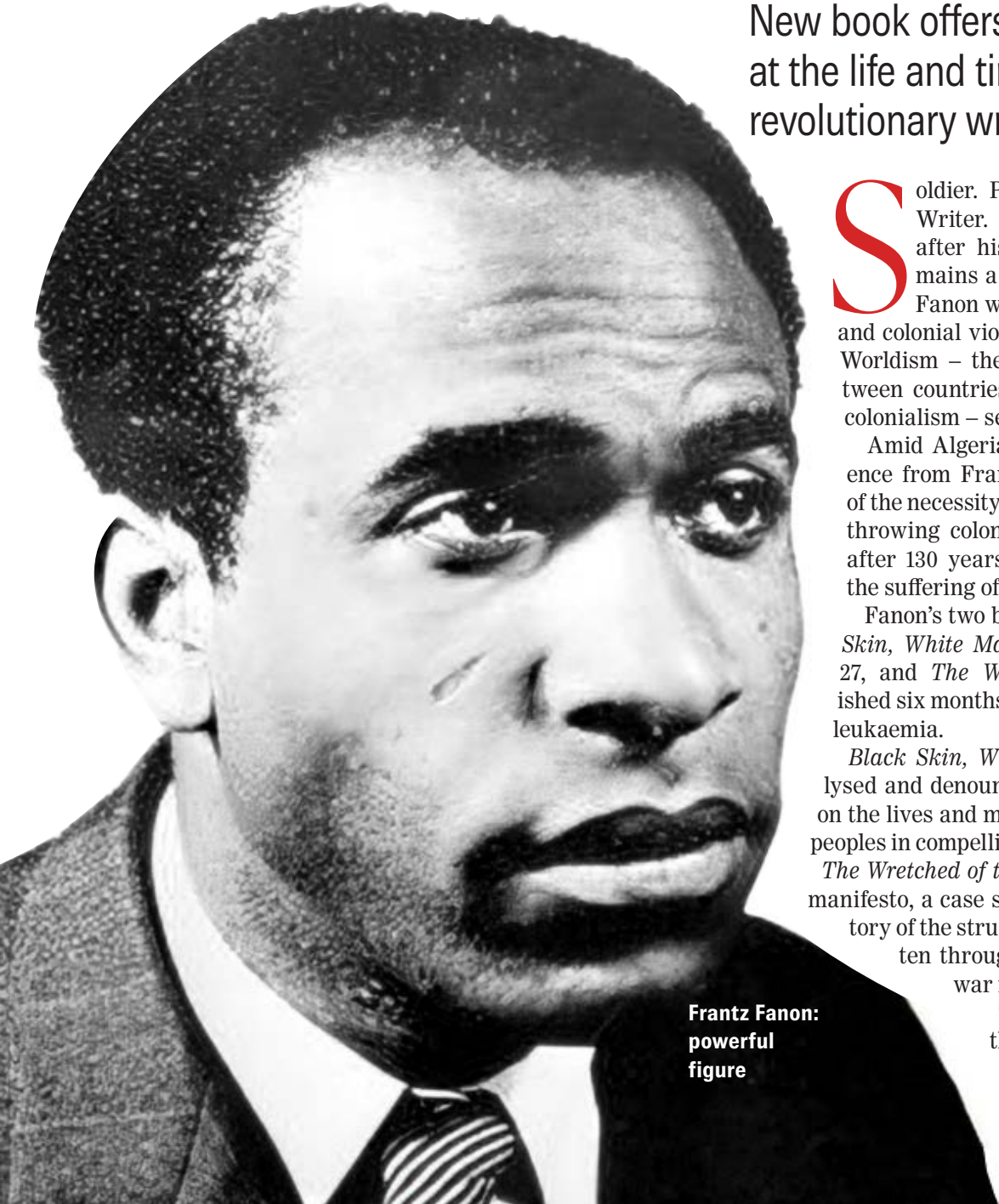
**S**oldier. Psychiatrist. Revolutionary. Writer. More than half a century after his death, Frantz Fanon remains a powerful, polemical figure. Fanon wrote fiercely against racism and colonial violence at a time when Third Worldism – the idea of a united front between countries and peoples exploited by colonialism – seemed possible.

Amid Algeria’s brutal war of independence from France (1954-62), Fanon wrote of the necessity of counter-violence in overthrowing colonial rule. In Algeria’s case, after 130 years of French indifference to the suffering of Algerians, he was right.

Fanon’s two best known books are *Black Skin, White Masks*, written when he was 27, and *The Wretched of the Earth*, finished six months before his death at 36 from leukaemia.

*Black Skin, White Masks* identified, analysed and denounced the impact racism had on the lives and minds of Black and colonised peoples in compelling, uncompromising terms. *The Wretched of the Earth* is an anti-colonial manifesto, a case study of violence, and a history of the struggle for decolonisation written through the lens of the Algerian war for independence.

The searing language of these books, along with Fanon’s embrace of vio-



Frantz Fanon:  
powerful  
figure



lence as a means to an end, have helped forge his reputation either as prophet – *The Wretched of the Earth* is sometimes referred to as the bible of decolonisation – or as an advocate of “barbaric justice”, in the words of Fanon’s contemporary the French author and journalist Jean Daniel Bensaid.

Fanon’s work has informed political movements and academic disciplines, from Black liberation movements and African decolonisation to post-colonialism and critical race theory.

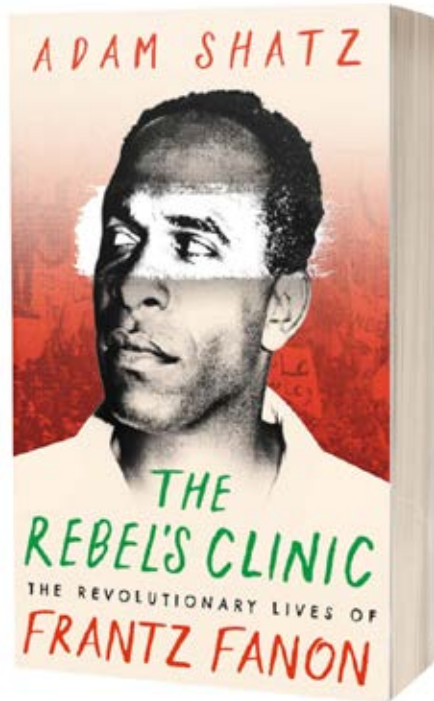
In *The Rebel’s Clinic*, Adam Shatz examines the life and times of Fanon. Shatz is the US editor of the *London Review of Books* and a contributor to the *New Yorker*. His extensive research and analysis makes *The Rebel’s Clinic* as much a comprehensive guide to an era, as a biography of man.

For Shatz, Fanon – the man and his work – are of increasing relevance and importance today. Indeed the headline of a *New York Times* essay he wrote earlier this year was: “The World Has Caught Up to Frantz Fanon.”

For Shatz, in “an age consumed with racism, police violence and the legacy of European colonialism in the Middle East and Africa,” Fanon is all too relevant.

**B**orn in the West Indian island of Martinique, a French *department*, Fanon left the island in March 1944 to fight in the second world war for a “free France.” He was 19. Believing in the values of the French republic – equality, brotherhood and liberty – Fanon was shocked at the racial hierarchy he encountered in the French army. Race determined a person’s rank, role and how they were treated.

Having grown up middle-class and “French educated” in Martinique, Fanon had anticipated



Cover of Adam Shatz's new biography of Frantz Fanon

being welcomed as a full French citizen, especially since he had chosen to fight. Wounded in the chest while fighting, he returned to Martinique briefly. He then went to France to study medicine, where he trained to become a psychiatrist.

Working in Lyon, Fanon encountered North African migrant workers whose “phantom pains” had been dismissed by French psychiatrists. Fanon saw the psychological impact of racism on these workers. This informed his practice as a psychiatrist, but also his thinking as a theorist and philosopher. In his work on disalienation, the processes by which patients could be healed from states of alienation and/or psychosis, Fanon would look to the role social factors played in mental health.

His residency at Saint Albans hospital under François Tosquelles, a reformist, Marxist/Freudian Catalan psychiatrist, was a crucial early experience.

In 1953, Fanon accepted a post as director of a clinic in Blida, Algeria. Here, he became fully appraised

of the situation for Algerians living under French colonial rule. The founder of the Algiers psychiatry school Antoine Porot had described the Algerian Muslim as hysterical, predisposed to criminality, and intellectually inferior: a primitive being driven by instinct and incapable of rational thought.

The French colonial apparatus had created a radical, deliberate system of inequality. Yet in the Algerian people, Fanon saw an unrelenting resistance to assimilation to French values and culture. He admired this quality, joining the National Liberation Front (FLN). A resistance movement and the political branch of the Armed Liberation Front the FLN eventually rose to primacy in the war against France. It remains the ruling party in Algeria today.

**W**hile running the Blida clinic, Fanon was known for treating torturers, often French, in the morning, and their victims in the evening. Though his political loyalty lay with Algerians, his practice as a doctor was to treat whoever was in need: French or Algerian, torturer or tortured.

Eventually, however, Fanon was expelled from Algeria by the French for his revolutionary work. This included sedating battle-weary, resistance fighters for days at a time to help them return to the field.

Shatz describes Fanon as the FLN’s “roving ambassador” and “chief theoretician.” He spent the last years of his life running a clinic in Tunisia, taking part in military manoeuvres and political activities with the FLN and attending congresses in Africa and Europe, lobbying for the decolonisation of Africa.

Fanon was such an important figure in the struggle for decolonisation he was flown to Russia for medical treatment when first diagnosed

with leukaemia. Later, with the assistance of the CIA, he went to the United States for a last ditch effort to save his life. The CIA's role in trying to save Fanon was, according to the Shatz, "a friendly overture" to the future government of Algeria. It was clear to the CIA, by then, that independence was inevitable.

Fanon died in the US in December 1961, just a few months before Algeria achieved independence from France.

According to his wishes, he was buried on Algerian soil. He spoke none of the languages of Algeria other than French; had lived in Algeria for a handful of years, yet saw this as no obstacle to national identity – his own as Algerian.

**F**anon's works meld philosophy, psychiatry, lived experience and literature into a unique prose, oratorical in style. This is unsurprising given he dictated his early writing, firstly to his wife Josie Fanon, and later to a social worker at the clinic, Marie-Jeanne Manuellan.

Shatz wants to emphasise what is productive and relevant about Fanon's work in our present moment. Fanon's vision of nation-building, for instance, was one that went beyond identity politics.

Shatz reassembles the parts of Fanon's life often overshadowed by his reputation as an apologist for violence. He acknowledges what is difficult about Fanon. His admiration for him is "not unconditional," and Fanon's memory "is not well served by sanctification." Indeed in 2001, reviewing an earlier biography of Fanon, Shatz observed,

"Fanon's apocalyptic aphorisms have not aged well [...] While his faith in the therapeutic value of violence is now hard to fathom, much of what he wrote was eerily prescient."

Fanon is known for writing about



**Fanon, foreground, at a writers' conference in Tunisia in 1959**

the "cleansing" nature of violence in societies where colonialism wreaked existential and material destruction on colonised peoples. Revolutionary violence, he believed would recreate society, and "man," from the ground up.

In his book, however, Shatz offers a different translation of Fanon's French, substituting "cleansing" with the softer "dis-intoxicating." Whether the latter word, with its suggestions of freeing from intoxication or enchantment, is any less morally loaded than "cleansing" is up for debate.

But Fanon's prose and thinking are also characterised by homophobic and misogynistic language. In his case studies in *The Wretched of the Earth*, which include the rape of women, there is little to no consideration of the subjectivity of women. He deploys the idea of repressed homosexuality as an insult, and the

**Shatz reassembles the parts of Fanon's life often overshadowed by his reputation as an apologist for violence**

language he uses to consider both the colonial and decolonised world focuses on men: both white and black. The gendering runs deep.

While there's no doubt Fanon sought a new sense of nationhood, providing equality for all citizens, regardless of gender or race, this doesn't mean it's necessary or desirable to sidestep what is problematic in his work.

Rather, it calls for the kind of reading Fanon himself was gifted at: a reading against the grain, as well as with it. Shatz certainly doesn't ignore the problematic elements in Fanon's work, but his emphasis remains on what was remarkable and productive about Fanon, rather than unpacking or navigating the difficult elements.

Still, Shatz's framing of Fanon is sophisticated and erudite. He reconstructs an intellectual, political and cultural history of the mid-20th century. In the final chapters, he situates Fanon's work amidst contemporary thinkers and movements, from Black Lives Matter to the struggles of the Palestinian people.

Very occasionally, Shatz teeters on the edge of trying to say more than is possible about Fanon given



how little there is to recover about his private life. Fanon eschewed diaries. His wife Josie, who is largely absent from the biography, died in the late 1980s. (One of the few primary living resources Shatz had access to was Marie-Jeanne Manuelan to whom Fanon dictated *The Wretched of The Earth*.)

Shatz seems awkward when talking about Fanon's affair with Elaine Klein, a Jewish woman and activist. Critic Jennifer Szalai, in her *New York Times* review of *The Rebel's Clinic*, has criticised Shatz for not tackling the charge of Fanon's violence towards his wife Josie, which came up in interviews conducted by scholar Félix Germain for his book *Decolonising the Republic*. In interviews with poet and journalist Paulin Joachim and Guadeloupean writer and academic Maryse Condé, Fanon was accused of being a violent man, of slapping his wife in public and private. And it's possible to sense uncertainty in Shatz's treatment of Fanon's affairs. Shatz seems to suggest, but not declare outright, that the marriage was an open one, with Josie also having an affair.

Occasionally, Shatz leans into Fanon's Martinican heritage and its place in his thought in ways that one feels Fanon himself might have resented, given his often disparaging remarks about Martinican culture.

In an earlier study of Fanon published in 2001, his biographer David Macey writes of Fanon's notion of nationhood as based on a willing to be, rather than the place of one's birth. In some respects, Macey allows Al-

geria's story to both speak for and overshadow Fanon's.

Shatz's approach is to emphasise Fanon the man: the psychiatrist, the writer, the theorist, the anti-colonialist, drawing in Algeria's history, alongside other influences on him. These included French existentialism, decolonisation, and Négritude, a literary movement whose chief proponents were the authors, poets and eventually politicians, Léopold Sédar Senghor (former president of Senegal) and Aimé Césaire (former president of the regional council of Martinique).

These two men influenced Fanon, however he diverged from the movement's more essentialist ideas about black identity.

**B**oth Shatz and Macey capture the extreme violence of both French and Algerian forces during the war of independence. Both sides planted bombs and massacred and tortured men and women, using techniques such as waterboarding and genital mutilation. The FLN severed limbs,

lips and noses of villagers who broke bans on smoking – smoking is haram in Islam – as a way of demanding absolute loyalty to a future Arabic Islamic Algerian identity. The French guillotined captured Algerians, often without trial.

Fanon wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* knowing the Algerian revolutionaries he supported were matching the violence of

the French, blow-for-blow.

If we read Fanon against the grain, not just to grapple with the limitations of his misogyny and homophobia, we can also see his life was one of complicity with the violence of the oppressed. Any act, from the severing of arms to the massacre of rivals, he argues, is justified if it results in overthrowing the oppressor. No matter the cost.

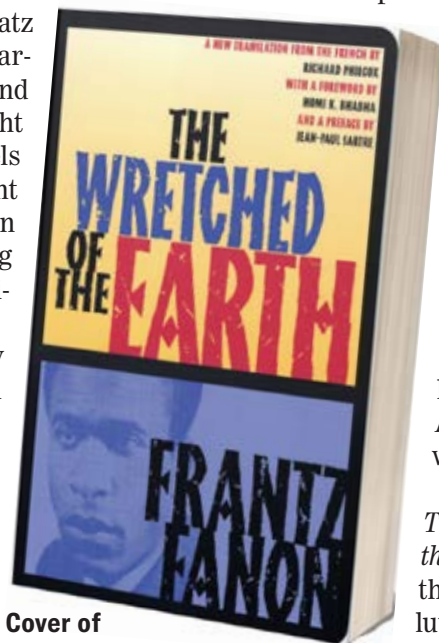
On the one hand, Fanon was a passionate advocate of the violence that would free colonised peoples from the oppressive degradation of the yoke of colonialism. On the other, he was in no way deluded about the psychic devastation caused by violence, whether experienced as perpetrator or victim.

This complicated nexus produced some of his most powerful insights into the social formation of the psyche. His was an almost devout belief in the necessity of striving towards a way of being that resisted traditionalism, particularities, and tribalisms.

He warned, too, of the prospect of a violent, class colonialism in which a "native elite" might take the place of their colonial masters. Shatz writes that Fanon anticipated the "Mobutus and the Mugabes" of the future, the "big men" who would "drape themselves in African garb," yet rule by corruption and exploitation of power.

How we read Fanon – whether as literature, history, philosophy, psychiatric case study, or manifesto – will shape our views on his thoughts about violence. Good reading is itself a work in progress, a work requiring the kinds of exhaustive research and thinking Shatz brings to Fanon. **CT**

*Michelle Hamadache is Lecturer, Literature and Creative Writing, at Macquarie University in Australia. This article was first published at [www.theconversation.org](http://www.theconversation.org)*



Cover of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon's 'anti-colonial manifesto'

# Subscribe to ColdType



For your FREE subscription,  
email [editor@coldtype.net](mailto:editor@coldtype.net)  
(Write Subscribe in Subject Line)