

VOICES

FOR CREATIVE NONVIOLENCE

December, 2014

vcnv.org

Dear Friends,

The community of activists on Jeju Island, Korea continues to challenge and inspire us at Voices here in Chicago. Their nonviolent witness resists militarism with profound courage and insists on preserving the cultural and material wealth of the local environment for ordinary Jeju residents. Their commitment to sharing resources, living simply, and bravely serving others is evident throughout the beautiful village of Gangjeong. Now, they are linking up with other island activists in the Pacific working to preserve local community and global security against, among other impinging factors, the United States' "Asia pivot" against its long term rival China. It's especially encouraging to see election results in Okinawa where the governor, mayor and three members of the Prefecture are all firmly committed to closing the U.S. Futenma naval base.

Our friends in Afghanistan are likewise drawn to the spirit and activism on Jeju Island. In their landlocked setting, they're working hard to overcome borders between communities divided by war, and work towards a borderfree world. In harsh Afghan winters the gap between rich and poor is like a polar sea covered in ice, and this year their "Duvet Project" will employ sixty impoverished seamstresses, equally representing Kabul's Hazara, Tajik, and Pashto ethnicities, enabled by foreign contributions to create 3,000 warm "duvet" comforters for free distribution to some of Kabul's most desperate. This December, Voices activists Patrick Kennelly and Billy Malloy will head to Kabul to work alongside the APVs, followed by a UK delegation led by Maya Evans. The APVs will also welcome Carolyn Coe of Maine, who will train some of them in radio broadcasting.

Kathy Kelly, who has eagerly made the December trip to Kabul for the past three years, will instead be heading, accompanied by Buddy, Brian and Cassandra, to Jefferson City, Missouri. Along with Georgia Walker, Kathy will be tried for having taken a few steps onto Whiteman Air Force Base to protest the drones being piloted there.

When Brian last stood before Judge Whitworth for this offense, he was sentenced to six months in prison, the term Kathy expects to start serving later this winter. Preparing this newsletter has helped us get ready for the trial set for December 10, International Human Rights Day.

All of us have opportunities to put U.S. military policies and war making on trial in the court of public opinion. Please let us know if there are any ways that we could be of help to you and your community in that joint endeavor.

On behalf of the APVs and numerous other friends who benefit from the generosity of our supportive network, we extend fond greetings, warm good wishes and sincere thanks.



Brian carried the banner of resistance from Gangjeong Village in Korea to the annual vigil to close the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia on November 23. He and Buddy travelled there with student members of the Kalamazoo Peace Center in Michigan. Photo by Jessica Clark

Buddy Bell, Cassandra Dixon, Joe Jondreau, Kathy Kelly, Sean Reynolds, Brian Terrell

Palestinian Families Persevere in Israeli Firing Zones

by Cassandra Dixon

1000 Palestinians, all civilians and nearly half of them children, face imminent forced expulsion from their homes in Masafer-Yatta at the southern tip of the West Bank. They are residents of eight Palestinian villages that lie inside of Israeli Firing Zone 918.

The Israeli military, claiming the need to train with live ammunition in the region, has issued demolition orders for the region's two primary schools and clinic, and for homes, mosques, agricultural buildings and wells. The villagers are currently in mediation with the Israeli civil administration, after winning a temporary court injunction prohibiting demolitions pending the outcome of mediation. However the current mediation period will expire soon and the future of the process is unknown.

Families in Masafer Yatta share a unique way of life, subsisting on a form of dry land agriculture that has



sustained them for generations. They depend on sheep and goats, which they graze carefully in the dry rocky terrain of the South Hebron Hills. Israeli proposals to forcibly relocate the villages have failed to take into account this complete

dependence on livestock and grazing land. The residents steadfastly refuse these evictions.

Israeli soldiers conduct frequent military exercises in the region, occupying homes and villages, shooting across fields of crops, preventing shepherds from accessing grazing land, and destroying crops by driving over them with large military vehicles. Helicopters often hover low over schools and grazing livestock, and children regularly find leftover ordnance near their homes or as they walk to school.

Israeli firing zones occupy roughly 18 percent of the West Bank, or approximately 392 square miles. About 5000 Palestinian civilians live inside the firing zones, in 38 small communities.

Cassandra Dixon runs a house of hospitality in Oxford, Wisconsin. She has been a frequent volunteer at the Voices office in Chicago.

The Challenge of The Islamic State and U.S. Policy

by Karl Meyer and Kathy Kelly

How should anyone respond to the political mess in the Middle East, the rise of the Islamic State and related political movements?

Shortly after the end of World War II, the world began to recognize that the age of colonial domination was over, and dozens of former colonies became independent.

It is well past time for the United States and other world powers to recognize that today's neo-colonial age of military, political, and economic domination, especially in the Islamic Middle East, is also, decisively, coming to a close.

Attempts to maintain this domination by military force have been disastrous for ordinary people trying to survive in the affected countries. There are powerful cultural and political forces in motion in the Middle East that will not tolerate it. Thousands of people are prepared to die rather than accept continued domination.

U.S. policymakers will find no successful military fix for this reality.

Stopping Communism by militarily imposing a subservient government did not work in Vietnam. Even the presence of a half million U.S. troops, the sacrifice of millions of Vietnamese lives, the death of 55,000 U.S. soldiers, and hundreds of thousands of U.S. physical and mental casualties (including people still suffering today) did not stop it.

Creating, through force, a stable, democratic, friendly government has not worked in Iraq even with the deployment during the war of at least a hundred thousand U.S. personnel at any given time, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi casualties and deaths, the loss of 4,000 U.S. troops, and the suffering of thousands more who will bear physical and mental traumas for many years. The U.S. military solution has led to fratricidal civil war, economic disaster and misery for millions of ordinary Iraqis.

The results in Afghanistan are proving similar: dysfunctional government, massive corruption, civil war, economic disruption, and misery for millions of ordinary people at a cost of tens of thousands of deaths, and uncounted thousands of casualties suffered by the Afghan people, and by U.S. and coalition forces. Many, if not most, of these individuals will continue to manifest symptoms for decades to come.

The U.S./European military intervention in the Libyan revolt left Libya with a dysfunctional government and a civil war.

The Western response to the rebellion in Syria, encouraging and fostering civil war, at the cost of death or misery for millions of Syrian refugees, has only made the

situation worse for most Syrians.

We need to think, above all, about the terrible costs of these military interventions for ordinary people trying to live, raise families and survive in each of these countries.

These terrible failures of U.S. and European military intervention have led to immense cultural resentment among millions of people in countries of the Middle East. The evolution and emergence of the Islamic State and other militant movements is one of the challenging responses to the realities of economic and political chaos. Now the United States is engaging in another military intervention, bombing targets in areas under Islamic State control, and trying to persuade surrounding Arab states and Turkey to enter the fray by putting their troops at risk on the ground. The expectation that this will work out better than the interventions cited above seems to us another unrealistic idea that will be equally disastrous for ordinary people caught in the middle.

It is time for the U.S. and Europe to recognize that, like it or not, civil wars in the Middle East will be resolved only by the emergence of the most powerful and best organized local movements. Such wars may also lead to the rearrangement of national boundaries in the Middle East that were arbitrarily set by European colonial powers at the end of World War I. This has already occurred in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and other eastern European countries.

Morally, the U.S. should acknowledge that its past interventions have devastated other countries, exacerbated violence, and, in many cases, contributed to actual and potential civil wars. The humanitarian business of the U.S. in the Middle East is not further invasions but instead massive reparation for decades of warfare in the region, paid out to each of the countries mentioned above.

What U.S. Policies Might Foster Political Stability and Economic Recovery in Areas of Conflict?

1) The U.S. should end its current provocative drive toward military alliances and encirclement of Russia and China with missiles. It should accept pluralism of economic and political power in the contemporary world. Present U.S. policies are provoking a return to Cold War with Russia and possibly beginning one with China. This is a lose/lose proposition for all countries involved.

2) By a resetting of policy focused on cooperation with Russia, China and other influential countries within the framework of the United Nations, the United States could foster international mediation. It could also encourage political pressure from a broad consensus of countries to resolve the civil wars in Syria and other countries by negotiation, devolution of power, and other political solutions. The U.S. might also reset its relationship toward friendly cooperation with Iran in the Middle East and resolve the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation in Iran, North Korea and any other potential nuclear weapons states. There is no inherent reason why the U.S. needs to continue a hostile relationship with Iran. The U.S. should

abandon the double standard which tolerates U.S. and Israeli nuclear arsenals and instead insist on an entirely, equitably nuclear-free world.

3) The U.S. should offer generous medical and economic aid and technical expertise wherever in the world these may be helpful and thus build a reservoir of international goodwill and positive influence.

4) It's time to embrace a post-neo-colonial period of international cooperation through diplomatic institutions, international organizations, and non-governmental initiatives.

Karl Meyer, Nashville Greenlands, 615-322-9523

Not Again, on a 'More Expansive Mission' in Afghanistan!

by Dr. Hakim

President Obama has authorized 'a more expansive mission for the military in Afghanistan in 2015 than originally planned'.

Imagine that, like the late U.S. war veteran Jacob George, you're sent on this 'more expansive mission'. Your military helicopter is landing on farmland amidst mud-house villages, like a futuristic war machine inserted into an agricultural community in the Middle Ages.

There are no women to be seen.

They are in their kitchens or rooms, pleading for you, as well as the Taliban, not to come.

"The things that I participated in over there surely brought the farmers terror when we landed in their fields, crashing their crop. I remember running off a helicopter and looking into a man's eyes, and terror was what was looking back at me. It was as if a 'devil' had just stumbled into his life. Actually, most of us are poor farmers killing poor farmers while people in our nations starve," Jacob had shared.



Jacob George with Ali and Abdulhai in Kabul, 2011

"Not Again!" continued on page 6

Redefining “Imminent” -- How the U.S. Department of Justice Makes Murder Respectable

by Brian Terrell

Political language can be used, George Orwell said in 1946, “to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.” In order to justify its global assassination program, the Obama administration has had to stretch words beyond their natural breaking points. For instance, any male 14 years or older found dead in a drone strike zone is a “combatant” unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving him innocent. We are also informed that the constitutional guarantee of “due process” does not imply that the government must precede an execution with a trial. I think the one word most degraded and twisted these days, to the goriest ends, is the word “imminent.”

Just what constitutes an “imminent” threat? Our government has long taken bold advantage of the American public's willingness to support lavish spending on armaments and to accept civilian casualties in military adventures abroad and depletion of domestic programs at home, when told these are necessary responses to deflect precisely such threats. The government has vastly expanded the meaning of the word “imminent.” This new definition is crucial to the U.S. drone program, designed for projecting lethal force throughout the world. It provides a legal and moral pretext for the annihilation of people far away who pose no real threat to us at all.

The use of armed remotely controlled drones as the United States' favored weapon in its “war on terror” has been increasing exponentially in recent years, raising many disturbing questions. Wielding 500 pound bombs and Hellfire missiles, Predator and Reaper drones are not the precise and surgical instruments of war so effusively praised by President Obama for “narrowly targeting our action against those who want to kill us and not the people they hide among.” It is widely acknowledged that the majority of those killed in drone attacks are unintended,

collateral victims. The deaths of the drones' intended targets and how they are chosen should be no less troubling.

Those deliberately targeted by drones are often far from conflict zones. Often they are in countries where the U.S. is not at war and on some occasions those targeted have been U.S. citizens. They are rarely “taken out” in the heat of battle or while engaged in hostile actions and are more likely to be killed (with anyone in their vicinity) at a wedding, at a funeral, at work, hoeing in the garden, driving down the highway or enjoying a meal with family and friends. These deaths are counted as something other than murder only because of the curious insistence by the government's lawyers that each of these victims represent an “imminent” threat to our lives and safety here at home in the U.S.

In February 2013, a U.S. Department of Justice White Paper, “Lawfulness of a Lethal Operation Directed Against a U.S. Citizen Who Is a Senior Operational Leader of Al-Qa’ida or an Associated Force,” was leaked by NBC News. This paper sheds some light on the legal justification for drone assassinations and explains the new and more flexible definition of the word “imminent.” “First,” it declares, “the condition that an

operational leader present an ‘imminent’ threat of violent attack against the United States does not require the United States to have clear evidence that a specific attack on U.S. persons and interests will take place in the immediate future.”

Before the Department of Justice lawyers got a hold of it, the meaning of the word “imminent” was unmistakably clear. Various dictionaries of the English language are all in agreement that that the word “imminent” explicitly denotes something definite and immediate, about to happen right now. Nor has the legal definition of the word left room for ambiguity. After World War II, the Nuremberg Tribunal reaffirmed a 19th-century formulation of customary international law written by Daniel Webster, which said that the necessity for preemptive use of force in self-



The “Creech 14” respond to the imminent threat of drone murders perpetrated at Creech Air Force base in April, 2009.

Photo by Jeff Leys

defense must be "instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation." That was in the past. Now, any possible future threat – and any person on earth arguably might pose one – however remote, can satisfy the new definition. As far as the Justice Department is concerned, an “imminent” threat is now whomever an “informed high-level U.S. government official” determines to be such, based on evidence known to that official alone, never to be made public or reviewed by any court.

The breadth of the government’s definition of “imminent” is murderous in its enormity. It is all the more ironic that the same Department of Justice, when prosecuting antiwar protestors, will use the word so narrowly as to deny them the use of the defense of necessity. Law abiding and responsible citizens are arrested and imprisoned when they act peacefully to defend the innocent from genuinely imminent harm by the actions of the U.S. government.

The defense of necessity, that one has not committed a crime if an act that is otherwise illegal is done to prevent a greater harm or crime from being perpetrated, is recognized by the Supreme Court as a part of the common law. It is not an exotic or even a particularly unusual defense. “The rationale behind the necessity defense is that sometimes, in a particular situation, a technical breach of the law is more advantageous to society than the consequence of strict adherence to the law,” says West's Encyclopedia of American Law “The defense is often used successfully in cases that involve a Trespass on property to save a person's life or property.”

Those of us who have been arrested at drone bases and accused of trespass are never allowed this defense because, we are told in case after case, “the requisite imminence was lacking.” The right to rush into a burning house to save children In other words, burning children in a house in Afghanistan cannot be cited to excuse a trespass in Nevada or New York or Missouri. No court recognizes that while the victims of drones are indeed in faraway places, the actual harm is perpetrated by remote control in our midst. Even after the publication of its White Paper, the Department of Justice continues to block defendants accused of trespass from even mentioning the fact that they were arrested while responding to an imminent threat to innocent life, and the courts obligingly accept this contradiction.

The defense of necessity does not simply justify actions that technically violate the law. “Necessity,” says West's Encyclopedia of American Law, is “a defense asserted by a criminal or civil defendant that he or she had no choice but to break the law.” Five years ago, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark testified at the trial of the “Crech 14,” the first Americans prosecuted for trespass at a drone base. , “To have a baby burn to death,” Ramsey Clark said, “because of a ‘no trespass sign’ would be poor public policy to put it mildly.” In a time of burning children, the “no

trespassing” signs attached to the fences that protect the crimes perpetrated with drones and other instruments of terror hold no potency and they do not command our obedience. The courts that do not recognize this reality allow themselves to be used as instruments of governmental malfeasance.

Abridged from an original article that can be found at <http://vcnv.org/redefining-imminence>

AT ISSUE:

Whether the outer perimeter of Whiteman US Air Force Base (Defendants never entered the Base Proper; never went past the main entry Spirit Gate, the identification check-point) is more protected by law than Defendant’s First Amendment rights of Free Speech, Right to Petition, and Free Exercise of Religion at a Base that commandeers on-site killer drones which have killed non-combatants in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

From a NOTICE OF MOTION IN LIMINE filed in U.S. District Court in Jefferson City, MO, by attorney Henry Stoeber in the case of:

UNITED STATES, PLAINTIFF
VS.
KATHLEEN F. KELLY,
GEORGIA K. WALKER, DEFENDANTS



What’s Wrong with Granting Immunity to U.S. Troops in Afghanistan?

An analysis of of Amnesty International’s report, “Left in the Dark”

by Joe Jondreau

Afghanistan’s newly elected government swiftly signed the Bilateral Security Agreement which grants immunity to U.S. military troops, no matter what atrocities are committed.

On August 11, 2014 Amnesty International issued a report entitled “Left in the Dark” in which it cited 10 case studies of events which took place in Afghanistan over a 5-year span, and which involved international military operations (or, more precisely, attacks on civilians), including the

central role played by U.S. Special Forces. Many thousands of Afghan civilians have been killed in international military operations since 2001, with at least 1,800 of the deaths occurring between 2009 and 2013.

The following excerpts from this report emphasize the brutality, ruthlessness and inhumanity of the attacks described.

Ø In September 2012 a group of women from an impoverished village in mountainous Laghman province were collecting firewood when a U.S. plane dropped at least two bombs on them, killing seven and injuring seven others, four of them seriously. One villager, Mullah Bashir, told Amnesty, "...I started searching for my daughter. Finally I found her. Her face was covered with blood and her body was shattered."

Ø A US Special Operations Forces unit was responsible for extrajudicial killing, torture and enforced disappearances during the period of December, 2012 to February, 2013. Included among those tortured was 51 year old Qandi Agha, "a petty employee of the Ministry of Culture." He was told that he would be tortured using "14 different types of torture." These included: beatings with cables, electric shock, prolonged, painful stress positions, repeated head first dunking in a barrel of water, and burial in a hole full of cold water for entire nights. He said that both US Special Forces and Afghans participated in the torture and often smoked hashish while doing so.

Ø On March 26, 2013 the village of Sajawand was attacked by joint Afghan—ISAF(International Special Assistance Forces). Between 20-30 people were killed including children. After the attack, a cousin of one of the villagers visited the scene and stated, "The first thing I saw as I entered the compound was a little child of maybe three years old whose chest was torn apart; you could see inside her body. The house was turned into a pile of mud and poles and there was nothing left. When we were taking out the bodies we didn't see any Taliban among the dead, and we didn't know why they were hit or killed."

The entire report can be found on the Voices website: <http://vcnv.org/left-in-the-dark-international-military-operations-in-afghanistan>.

Finally, Voices recommends participation in the Witness Against Torture actions which will take place in Washington D.C. between January 5-13. Participants will fast, gather for public witness and have many opportunities for education, reflection, outreach and networking. Visit witnessagainsttorture.org for more information.

Joe Jondreau is a retired teacher living in California who volunteered in the Voices office in November.

Not Again!

Continued from page 3

Like most people, my Afghan and American friends also wish for the Afghan conflict to be resolved, but not in this way:

Not through a "more expansive mission" to kill.

In 2011, Jacob George flew into Kabul, this time on Safi Airways.

"Please forgive me for my participation in the war," Jacob had asked of Ali and Abdulhai, two of the Afghan Peace Volunteers Jacob had met. He had pledged to ride his bicycle across the States, singing with his banjo, reaching out to people to end the war. It was going to be "A Ride to the End", with his songs put together in an album called "Soldier's Heart."

Three years later, on 19th of September 2014, Jacob George committed suicide.

Not again, only one option

An American official was quoted as saying that "the military pretty much got what it wanted", the 'more expansive mission'.

Obama is repeating the same mistake he made in 2009, when he ordered a troop surge for Afghanistan. Since the troop surge, the United Nations and the people of Afghanistan have experienced worsening security in Afghanistan. The number of civilian casualties, mainly children, has increased.

In Bob Woodward's book, "Obama's Wars", Obama had asked his war cabinet in 2009, "So what's my option?... You have essentially given me one option.... It's unacceptable."

For 13 years in Afghanistan, literally only one option, an unacceptable option, has been exercised.

Imagine that you have heavy equipment strapped on your body and your adrenaline mixed with tender thoughts of loved ones back home.

You dare not ask whether there are any other options to the longest U.S. war in history.

You approach the impoverished homes of the 'enemies'.

Not again, ignoring public opinion

In 2009, 60 percent of Americans in an ABC News-Washington Post poll said that the war in Afghanistan is not worth fighting. Hillary Clinton had explained the troop surge then, "I'm well aware of the popular concern, and I understand it. But I don't think leaders -- and certainly this president will not -- make decisions that are matters of life and death and the future security of our nation based on polling."

In a CNN poll in December 2013, 82% of Americans opposed the Afghan War, making it even less popular than

the disastrous Vietnam War!

Imagine soldiers in your own squadron gun down several Afghan 'Fighting Age Males', and you briefly see little children dashing bare-footed across their paths, looking as if they have just seen ghosts.

You're aware that your own people no longer support the mission you're engaged in. You think, for just a moment: What is the Afghan public opinion about my military mission?

You don't know. No one has ever asked Afghans.

Not again, continuing the failed 'war against terrorism'

Despite spending more than US\$4,000,000,000 in the 'war against terror', a Global Terrorism Database maintained by the U.S. government and the University of Maryland showed that the number of terror attacks in Afghanistan had been increasing over recent years.

The war against terror has failed!

In the book 'Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars', Lieutenant-General Daniel Bolger said, "I am a United States Army general, and I lost the Global War on Terrorism. It's like Alcoholics Anonymous; step one is admitting you have a problem. Well, I have a problem. So do my peers. And thanks to our problem, now all of America has a problem, to wit: two lost campaigns and a war gone awry."

You crouch low against a crumbling wall of a village house compound. You let your bullets fly, as bullets also fly at you.

You steel your nerves amidst bated breath and the unintelligible screams of Afghan women, wondering in another lucid moment if your actions will make Afghans less 'terrorist-like', less angry?

Not again, failing to see the suffering of Afghans, and American soldiers

You don't have time to digest the dire statistics.

Why is it that after 13 years of Operation Enduring Freedom, more than 4000 Afghans have set themselves on fire in 2014, and another 4000 have tried to poison themselves?

You recall some principles drilled into your training, that if necessary, you ought to 'shoot everything that moves'.

You get irritated because a few boisterous-looking teenage boys appear too defiant, standing in front of women in burqas and girls who are crying quietly.

You hear some shuffles in the next room, and you instinctively pull the trigger.

Back in the military camp, you're aware of the crisis of up to 22 U.S. veterans committing suicide every day.

Your heart, like the "Soldier's Heart" Jacob George describes in his music album, begins to suffer.

At a memorial service for Jacob in Arkansas, last

October, a friend delivered this message from the Afghan Peace Volunteers:

"When Jacob came to visit us in Kabul, he sang his heart out for us, just like he did across the States for you. We may not remember the song, but his voice and spirit is what each of us wants, a spirit seizing peace within and without.

Jacob, thank you! Jacob, thank you for your kindness in asking forgiveness from the people of Afghanistan. Jacob, thank you for throwing your war medals back to NATO because you understood that those medals opposed the meaning of life! To Jacob's family, thank you for raising your child as a man who would not pretend that our world is okay.

Our world is not okay. That's why we in Afghanistan will try our best to continue Jacob's tune and ride so that our next generation can see an end not only to war in Afghanistan, but to war as a human method in the world."



Girl with a Rooster, Chaman e Barak refugee camp in Kabul, Afghanistan, January 2014 photo by Maya Evans

In 2011, Jacob gave this message to Ali, Abdulhai, Afghans and Americans, "To be perfectly honest, I feel that the U.S. government might not have the best interests of the people of Afghanistan in mind, although the soldiers are human, and there are charitable acts that come from being human. The ultimate goal does not look like peace. It resembles perpetual war."



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VOICES

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"Each of us only lives once. It sometimes appears, however, that the covert US Kill List allows a man to die twice. Public reports suggest some men on the Kill List have 'died' as many as seven times... "

from: You Never Die Twice, Multiple Kills in the U.S. Drone Program, a report published by "Reprieve," based in the UK, Nov 24th, 2014



**How Many Would Know
My Name...**

**If I Was Murdered By A
U.S. Drone Strike?**