

Rock Creek Free Press

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A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Washington, D.C.

America's Disappeared

By CHRIS HEDGES / TRUTHDIG

Dr. Silvia Quintela was "disappeared" by the death squads in Argentina in 1977 when she was four months pregnant with her first child. She reportedly was kept alive at a military base until she gave birth to her son and then, like other victims of the military junta, most probably was drugged, stripped naked, chained to other unconscious victims and piled onto a cargo plane that was part of the "death flights" that disposed of the estimated 20,000 disappeared. The military planes with their inert human cargo would fly over the Atlantic at night and the chained bodies would be pushed out the door into the ocean. Quintela, who had worked as a doctor in the city's slums, was 28 when she was murdered.

A military doctor, Maj. Norberto Atilio Bianco, who was extradited July 22 from Paraguay to Argentina for baby trafficking, is alleged to have seized Quintela's infant son along with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of other babies. The children were handed to military families for adoption. Bianco, who was the head of the clandestine maternity unit that functioned during the "Dirty War" in the military hospital of Campo de Mayo, was reported by eyewitnesses to have personally carried the babies out of the military hospital. He also kept one of the infants. On July 21, Argentina convicted retired Gen. Hector

See DISAPPEARED p. 5

Gaza Flotilla: Neo-cons Fume Over US Boat to Gaza

By RAY MCGOVERN / INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE

My co-passengers and I of the US Boat to Gaza have now gone from "High-Seas Hippies," according to the right-wing *Washington Times*, to participants in a flotilla full of "fools, knaves, hypocrites, bigots, and supporters of terrorism," says Alan Dershowitz in his usual measured prose.

Poor Alan. He seems upset at our audacity not only to hope for humane treatment of the 1.6 million Gazans, who currently live under a cruel blockade, but to force the issue. To stop our boat before it could leave Greek waters, Israel's Likud government gave itself a self-inflicted black eye and again brought the oppression of Gazans to worldwide attention.

This time, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government did not even have to kill people to add to Israel's growing "delegitimization" before the civilized world. Facing growing international condemnation, Netanyahu and his allies have reason to worry.

In recognition of our modest accomplishments, we US boaters have now made it onto Dershowitz's "Dishonor Roll!" At first reading of his intended insults, my laughter was uncontrollable. I've been called a lot of things before, but I cannot remember being labeled a "knave."

Anyone know what a knave is? Does it have something to do with what Damon Runyon used to call "the Harvards," among whom Dershowitz has long toiled as a law professor?

Dershowitz also lashes out at the American Jews onboard, including 86-year-old Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein, with the shopworn epithet for Jews who dare to criticize Israel's government as "self-hating."

I suppose if I had criticized some of the ugly extremism in Ireland a few decades back, I would

See GAZA p. 8

Pentagon Hacks Social Media for Propaganda Purposes



By WASHINGTON'S BLOG

Wired magazine reported in July:

"The Pentagon is looking to build a tool to sniff out social media propaganda campaigns and spit some counter-spin right back at it.

"On Thursday [July 21], Defense Department extreme technology arm DARPA unveiled its Social Media in Strategic Communication (SMISC) program. It's an attempt to get better at both detecting and conducting propaganda campaigns on social media. SMISC has two goals. First, the program needs to help the military better understand what's going on in social media in real time — particularly in areas where troops are deployed. Second, DARPA wants SMISC to help the military play the social media propaganda game itself.

"This is more than just checking the trending

See HACKS p. 5

Anthrax Attacks: Justice Dept. Destroys FBI Case Then Does a 180 Reversal

Government confirms Bruce Ivins did not have access to necessary lab equipment

By STEVE WATSON / INFOFARS.COM

In a remarkable turn of events that has been relatively buried in the headlines this week [July 18-22], the Justice Department called into serious question a key pillar of the criminal case against the FBI's prime suspect in the 2001 anthrax attacks, before completely reversing its own conclusion just days later.

As reported by the *New York Times* on July 20, 2011:

"Embarrassed Justice Department officials rushed on Tuesday [July 19] to correct their own filing in a lawsuit over the 2001 anthrax letters after learning that it appeared to contradict the Federal

Bureau of Investigation's conclusion that Bruce E. Ivins, an Army scientist, prepared the deadly powder in his Army laboratory."

In the filing dated July 15, Justice Department lawyers noted that the Army's biodefense center at Fort Detrick, Md., "did not have the specialized equipment in a containment laboratory that would be required to prepare the dried spore preparations that were used in the letters."

In other words, Ivins' lab, often referred to as the "hot suite", did not contain the equipment needed to turn liquid anthrax into the refined powder that ended up being mailed to members of the Senate and reporters in the fall of 2001.

See ANTHRAX p. 2



Webster Tarpley: Ground Truth in Libya

PRESS TV INTERVIEW WITH WEBSTER TARPLEY, JULY 17, 2011

Heavy clashes between forces loyal to Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi and revolutionaries have broken out as anti-regime forces are pushing toward the capital, Tripoli.

Meanwhile, the embattled Libyan ruler has once again rejected calls to resign and

leave the country, saying that he will never leave the land of his ancestors who fought Italian and British colonialists.

This comes one day after officials from some 40 countries met in Turkey to discuss ways to force out Gaddafi and reinforce opposition fighters.

Press TV has conducted an interview with American author and historian, Webster

Tarpley, just back from Libya, to further discuss the situation there.

Press TV: Dr. Tarpley, first of all let's start with the direction NATO has taken with regard to the War in Libya. If you can, please open that up for us a little bit. It has been quite a while, but yet the opposition fighters still are not making advances in a more rapid

See TARPLEY p. 7

How Your Social Security Money Was Stolen – Where Did the \$2.5 Trillion Surplus Go?

INTRODUCTION BY DAVID DEGRW, REPORTS BY DR. ALLEN SMITH

As I've been reporting for quite some time now, trillions of our tax dollars have been looted by Wall Street, wars, global corporations and the richest one-tenth of one percent of the population. The economic crisis has made this blatant fact much more evident to the average person. Now that these elaborate schemes are coming undone and major cuts to vital social programs are beginning to be implemented, the American public is going to get a harsh wake-up call.

With cuts to Social Security on the horizon, and Obama's recent comments saying he cannot guarantee that Social Security checks will go out if the debt ceiling doesn't get raised, it's time to take a closer look at why politicians are pushing to cut this vital program.

The Social Security Trust Fund should currently have \$2.5 trillion in surplus. So, how is it that these checks could stop being issued if the debt ceiling isn't raised? Economics professor Dr. Allen Smith, author of *The Looting of Social Security: How The Government is Draining America's Retirement*

Account, has been reporting on the theft of Social Security funds for years. He sums it up as follows:

"The government's \$2.5 trillion debt to Social Security is the real reason that so many politicians want to cut benefits. They are trying to find a way to avoid having to repay the looted money.... Given the fact that much of the surplus revenue from the 1983 payroll tax hike ended up in the pockets of the super rich in the form of income tax cuts, I propose a special tax on this group of taxpayers to recoup the missing Social

See SOCIAL SECURITY p. 4

One Million Dead in Iraq?

Six Reasons the Media Hide the True Human Toll of War — and Why We Let Them

Most Americans turn a blind eye to the violent acts being carried out in their name.

By JOHN TIRMAN / ALTERNET

As the US war in Iraq winds down, we are entering a familiar phase, the season of forgetting—forgetting the harsh realities of the war. Mostly we forget the victims of the war, the Iraqi civilians whose lives and society have been devastated by over eight years of armed conflict. The act of forgetting is a social and political act, abetted by the American news media. Throughout the war,

but especially now, the minimal news we get from Iraq consistently devalues the death toll of Iraqi civilians.

Why? A number of reasons are at work in this persistent evasion of reality. But forgetting has consequences, especially as it braces the obstinate right-wing narrative of "victory" in the Iraq war. If we forget, we learn nothing.

I've puzzled over this habit of reaching for the lowest possible estimates of the number of Iraqis who, since March 2003, died unnecessarily. The habit is now deeply

entrenched. Over a period of about two weeks in May, I encountered in major news media three separate references to the number of people who had died in the Iraq war. Anderson Cooper, on his CNN show, Steven Lee Myers in the *New York Times Magazine* and Brian MacQuarrie in the *Boston Globe* all pegged the number in the tens of thousands, sometimes adding "at least." But the number that sticks is this "tens of thousands."

Cooper, Myers and MacQuarrie — all skillful reporters — are scarcely alone. It's very rare to hear anything approximating the

See MILLION DEAD p. 8

Nuclear-armed Israel: Impediment to a Nuclear-Free Middle East

By KOUROSH ZIABARI / THE PUBLIC RECORD

You might have frequently heard of the Western mainstream media's claims that Iran is pursuing a military nuclear program which is aimed at developing atomic weapons. Actually, spreading falsehood and untruth about the nature of Iran's peaceful nuclear program has been a constant, unchanging and recurring theme of the Western corporate media's coverage of Iran's events.

Over the past years, the world mainstream media, funded and fueled by certain Western governments to derail Iran's position in the international community, through their unyielding black propaganda have laboriously and persistently attempted to pretend that Iran's nuclear program poses a serious threat to global peace and security and that Tehran is taking steps to create atomic bombs to drop on Israel and European countries.

Unfortunately, the people who believe such claims are unaware of the fact that those who accuse Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons are themselves the largest possessors of state-of-the-art nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

Iran has always been at the forefront of combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and has also been a victim of such weapons during the 8-year imposed war with the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein; that war claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iranians, and it was the United States that equipped Saddam with such weapons to use against the Iranian people in an unequal and

See ISRAEL p. 4

Iran Opens Oil Bourse

Harbinger of Trouble for New York and London?

By JOHN DALY / OIL PRICE

The last three years of global recession have dealt a major blow to American capitalist ideas trumpeted throughout the world on the value of "free markets." Wall St has been revealed as a form of casino economy, with the banker insiders gambling with other people's, and eventually, the government's money in the form of bailouts. As the Republicans in Congress, scenting victory in the 2012 presidential elections, hold a gun to the Obama administration's head and rating agencies consider downgrading US government bonds in light of Washington's possible defaulting, many ideas around the world that previously seemed implausible because of the dominance of the US economy are garnering renewed interest.

See BOURSE p. 7

Has America Become a Nation of Psychotics?

You'd certainly think so; based on the medications we're taking

Antipsychotics are the single top-selling therapeutic class of prescription drugs in the United States.

story page 2.

INSIDE

Health p. 2
Paul Craig Roberts p. 3
Ron Paul p. 3
Dennis Kucinich p. 3
Editorial Cartoons p. 3
History's Lessons p. 6
News Bites p. 8

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Anthrax Attacks: Justice Dept. Destroys FBI Case Then Does a 180 Reversal

Government admits Bruce Ivins did not have access to necessary lab equipment

ANTHRAX from p. 1

The filing was made as part of a government defense against a lawsuit brought by the family of Robert Stevens, Photo Editor of *The Sun* in Florida and the first victim who died as a result of the attack. The court papers containing the Justice Department contradiction were discovered and reported last week by a reporter for the PBS program *Frontline*, which is working on a forthcoming documentary on the case with McClatchy Newspapers and ProPublica.

The report also notes: "In excerpts from one of more than a dozen depositions made public in the case last week, the current chief of the Bacteriology Division at the Army laboratory, Patricia Worsham, said it lacked the facilities in 2001 to make the kind of spores in the letters."

Ivins, who was found dead in 2008 from an apparent suicide at the same time the government was about to indict him, was identified by the FBI's Amerithrax Task Force as the lone perpetrator of the attacks that killed five people and infected 17 others in the weeks immediately following 9/11.

The FBI based its entire case against Ivins on the fact that the microbiologist had access to the necessary equipment in the government lab at the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases where he worked.

When the Justice Department realized that the latest court filing cast serious doubt on these claims about the anthrax attack, it did a 180 flip flop and sent the court a "list of corrections".

"What the filing should have said, the department wrote, was that while the Army lab did not have a lyophilizer, a freeze-drying machine, in the space where Dr. Ivins usually worked, there was a lyophilizer and other equipment in the building that he could have used to dry the anthrax into powder."

Even if this was the case, which is still highly questionable, it still significantly weakens the case against Ivins as the lone assailant, because it means he would have had to have access to different areas of the building and use the equipment in those areas for some time without being noticed.

It also means that the fact that others who worked in the lab were not sickened becomes even more of a key indicator that Ivins did not prepare the anthrax spores as the FBI and the government has claimed he did.

Paul Kemp, Ivins' lead defense attorney, said Monday [July 18] that the department's concession that the equipment wasn't

available "is at direct variance to the assertions of the government on July 29, 2008," the day Ivins died, thus "invalidating one of the chief theories of their prosecution case."

This latest contradiction adds to the already voluminous unanswered questions and contradictory evidence surrounding the case.

Earlier this year a report produced by a panel of independent scientists asserted that there was not enough scientific evidence for the FBI to convict Ivins, vindicating those who have consistently pointed to a deeper conspiracy behind the case.

The \$1.1 million report, commissioned by the FBI and produced by The National Academies of Sciences, concluded that the FBI has overstated the science in its investigation into the microbiologist.

The report cast doubt on the supposed link between a flask of anthrax found in Ivins' office and letters containing the bacterial spores that were mailed to NBC News, the *New York Post*, and the offices of then-Sen. Tom Daschle and Sen. Patrick Leahy.

"The scientific link between the letter material and flask number RMR-1029 is not as conclusive as stated in the DOJ Investigative Summary," the 190 page report stated.

"Although the scientific evidence was supportive of a link between the letters and that flask, it did not definitively demonstrate such a relationship, for a number of reasons," said Dr. David Relman, a bioterrorism expert at Stanford University School of Medicine who served as vice chair of the review committee. "Our overarching finding was that it is not possible to reach a definitive conclusion about the origins of the *B. anthracis* in the mailings based on the available scientific evidence alone."

"This shows what we've been saying all along: that it was all supposition based on conjecture based on guesswork, without any proof whatsoever," lawyer Paul Kemp told the *Washington Post*.

"For years, the FBI has claimed scientific evidence for its conclusion that anthrax spores found in the letters were linked to the anthrax bacteria found in Dr. Ivins's lab," said Sen. Charles E. Grassley (Iowa). The report "shows that the science is not necessarily a slam-dunk. There are no more excuses for avoiding an independent review."

Of course, there will not be an independent review any time in the near future because, as Glenn Greenwald of *Salon* has pointed out, all efforts to move in that direction have been aggressively blocked by the Obama Administration:

"President Obama — in what I

think is one his most indefensible acts — actually threatened to veto the entire intelligence authorization bill if it included a proposed bipartisan amendment (passed by the House) that would have mandated an independent inquiry into the FBI's anthrax investigation.

"Indeed, the veto threat issued by the Obama White House was refreshingly (albeit unintentionally) candid about why it was so eager to block any independent inquiry: 'The commencement of a fresh investigation would undermine public confidence in the criminal investigation and unfairly cast doubt on its conclusions.'"

Ivins' death provided a neat tie up to the case, which was officially closed last year by The Justice Department. However, a clear motive was never determined, and no one ever reported seeing Ivins prepare anthrax spores or mail the supposed letters.

Previous assertions by a former colleague and friend of Bruce Ivins, and the original suspect in the FBI's investigation into the attacks, have also raised serious questions.

Shortly after Ivins' death, Dr. Ayaad Assaad, an Egyptian-born toxicologist at the US Environmental Protection Agency, declared that Ivins did not kill himself and was not behind the attack at all.

Assaad made the comments in an interview with a local Fort Detrick newspaper in September 2008.

The *Frederick News Post* reported:

"Assaad, who worked in a US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease lab at Fort Detrick from 1989 to 1997 developing a vaccine for ricin, said in an interview Saturday [September 6, 2008] that he does not believe Ivins was guilty."

"He's a great man. He's honorable, sincere, honest and most important, he didn't kill five people and he didn't kill himself," Assaad told the newspaper.

Assaad knew Ivins well — not only were they colleagues but their four children were all classmates in Frederick.

Assaad was extensively questioned by the FBI on October 1, 2001, a fortnight after the first anthrax letters were mailed. It later emerged that the FBI's lead, a letter from an unidentified person who claimed Assaad was planning a biological terrorist attack, was false.

The mystery letter identified Assaad as a former USAMRIID microbiologist and also pinpointed his time at the US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County, indicating that whoever sent it had access to detailed army records.

The anonymous letter was sent shortly after 9/11 but before anyone knew about the anthrax-laced letters. On October 5, 2001, about 10 days after the anonymous letter was mailed, Robert Stevens became the first of five individuals to die from an anthrax infection, indicating that someone had wanted to frame Assaad for the attacks.

"This anthrax issue is part of a much bigger issue," Assaad also commented. "The roots of corruption are so deep in (USAMRIID), and this is the thing that the people in Frederick don't understand."

Former government biological weapons legislator Dr Francis Boyle shares Assaad's view that Ivins has been used as a patsy in a larger cover up.

"Ivins is only the latest dead microbiologist." Boyle has previously stated, "You also have to tie into this the large numbers of dead microbiologists that have appeared since around the summer before these events, when the *New York Times* revealed the existence of the covert anthrax weapons programs run by the CIA, and that too is in the public record."

In September 2007, Ivins sent an e-mail to himself, in which he said he knew of the identity of the anthrax killer, without actually stating who he believed it to be. It is not known why he did this. Prior to his death in 2008, he told friends that government agents were hounding him and his family.

Steve Watson is the webmaster for independent journalist, political activist and documentary film maker Alex Jones at Infowars.net. He is also a regular contributor to and editor of *Jones' Prisonplanet.com*.

Has America Become a Nation of Psychotics?

Antipsychotics are the top-selling therapeutic class of prescription drugs in the United States.

By JAMES RIDGEWAY/AL JAZEERA ENGLISH

Has America become a nation of psychotics? You would certainly think so, based on the explosion in the use of antipsychotic medications. In 2008, with over \$14 billion in sales, antipsychotics became the single top-selling therapeutic class of prescription drugs in the United States, surpassing drugs used to treat high cholesterol and acid reflux.

Once upon a time, antipsychotics were reserved for a relatively small number of patients with hard-core psychiatric diagnoses - primarily schizophrenia and bipolar disorder - to treat such symptoms as delusions, hallucinations, or formal thought disorder. Today, it seems, everyone is taking antipsychotics. Parents are told that their unruly kids are in fact bipolar, and in need of anti-psychotics, while old people with dementia are dosed, in large numbers, with drugs once reserved largely for schizophrenics. Americans with symptoms ranging from chronic depression to anxiety to insomnia are now being prescribed anti-psychotics at rates that seem to indicate a national mass psychosis.

It is anything but a coincidence that the explosion in antipsychotic use coincides with the pharmaceutical industry's development of a new class of medications known as "atypical antipsychotics." Beginning with Zyprexa, Risperdal, and Seroquel in the 1990s, followed by Abilify in the early 2000s, these drugs were touted as being more effective than older antipsychotics like Haldol and Thorazine. More importantly, they lacked the most noxious side effects of the older drugs — in particular, the tremors and other motor control problems.

The atypical anti-psychotics were the bright new stars in the pharmaceutical industry's roster of psychotropic drugs — costly, patented medications that made people feel and behave better without any shaking or drooling. Sales grew steadily, until by 2009 Seroquel and Abilify numbered fifth and sixth in annual drug sales, and prescriptions written for the top three atypical antipsychotics totaled more than 20 million. Suddenly, antipsychotics weren't just for psychotics any more.

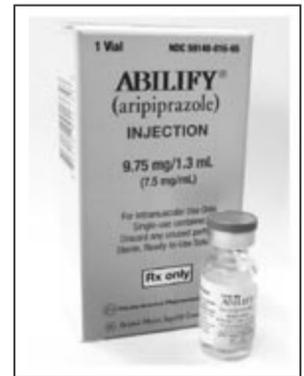
Not just for psychotics anymore

By now, just about everyone knows how the drug industry works to influence the minds of American doctors, plying them with gifts, junkets, ego-tripping awards, and research funding in exchange for endorsing or prescribing the latest and most lucrative drugs. "Psychiatrists are particularly targeted by Big Pharma because psychiatric diagnoses are very subjective," says Dr. Adriane Fugh-Berman, whose *PharmedOut* project tracks the industry's influence on American medicine, and who last month hosted a conference on the subject at Georgetown University. A shrink can't give you a blood test or an MRI to figure out precisely what's wrong with you. So it's often a case of diagnosis by prescription. (If you feel better after you take an anti-depressant, it's assumed that you were depressed.) As the researchers in one study of the drug industry's influence put it, "the lack of biological tests for mental disorders renders psychiatry especially vulnerable to industry influence." For this reason, they argue, it's particularly important that the guidelines for diagnosing and treating mental illness be compiled "on the basis of an objective review of the scientific evidence" - and not on whether the doctors writing them got a big grant from Merck or own stock in AstraZeneca.

Marcia Angell, former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* and a leading critic of the Big Pharma, puts it more bluntly: "Psychiatrists are in the pocket of industry." Angell has pointed out

that most of the [authors of the] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), the bible of mental health clinicians, have ties to the drug industry. Likewise, a 2009 study showed that 18 out of 20 of the shrinks who wrote the American Psychiatric Association's most recent clinical guidelines for treating depression, bipolar disorders, and schizophrenia had financial ties to drug companies.

In a recent article in *The New York Review of Books*, Angell deconstructs what she calls an apparent "raging epidemic of mental illness" among Americans. The use of



psychoactive drugs—including both antidepressants and antipsychotics—has exploded, and if the new drugs are so effective, Angell points out, we should "expect the prevalence of mental illness to be declining, not rising." Instead, "the tally of those who are so disabled by mental disorders that they qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) increased nearly two and a half times between 1987 and 2007 — from one in 184 Americans to one in seventy-six. For children, the rise is even more startling — a thirty-five-fold increase in the same two decades. Mental illness is now the leading cause of disability in children." Under the tutelage of Big Pharma, we are "simply expanding the criteria for mental illness so that nearly everyone has one." Fugh-Berman agrees: In the age of aggressive drug marketing, she says, "Psychiatric diagnoses have expanded to include many perfectly normal people."

What's especially troubling about the over-prescription of the new antipsychotics is its prevalence among the very young and the very old - vulnerable groups who often do not make their own choices when it comes to what medications they take. Investigations into antipsychotic use suggests that their purpose, in these cases, may be to subdue and tranquilize rather than to treat any genuine psychosis.

Carl Elliott reports in *Mother Jones* magazine: "Once bipolar disorder could be treated with atypicals, rates of diagnoses rose dramatically, especially in children. According to a recent Columbia University study, the number of children and adolescents treated for bipolar disorder rose 40-fold between 1994 and 2003." And according to another study, "one in five children who visited a psychiatrist came away with a prescription for an antipsychotic drug."

A remarkable true series published in the *Palm Beach Post* in May revealed that the state of Florida's juvenile justice department has literally been pouring these drugs into juvenile facilities, "routinely" doling them out "for reasons that never were approved by federal regulators." The numbers are staggering: "In 2007, for example, the Department of Juvenile Justice bought more than twice as much Seroquel as ibuprofen. Overall, in 24 months, the department bought

326,081 tablets of Seroquel, Abilify, Risperdal and other antipsychotic drugs for use in state-operated jails and homes for children...That's enough to hand out 446 pills a day, seven days a week, for two years in a row, to kids in jails and programs that can hold no more than 2,300 boys and girls on a given day." Further, the paper discovered that "One in three of the psychiatrists who have contracted with the state's Department of Juvenile Justice in the past five years have taken speaker fees or gifts from companies that make antipsychotic medications."

In addition to expanding the diagnoses of serious mental illness, drug companies have encouraged doctors to prescribe atypical antipsychotics for a host of off-label uses. In one particularly notorious episode, the drug maker Eli Lilly pushed Zyprexa on the caregivers of old people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, as well as agitation, anxiety, and insomnia. In selling to nursing home doctors, sales reps reportedly used the slogan "five at five" — meaning that five milligrams of Zyprexa at 5 pm would sedate their more difficult charges. The practice persisted even after FDA had warned Lilly that the drug was not approved for such uses, and that it could lead to obesity and even diabetes in elderly patients.

In a video interview conducted in 2006, Sharham Ahari, who sold Zyprexa for two years at the beginning of the decade, described to me how the sales people would wangle the doctors into prescribing it. At the time, he recalled, his doctor clients were giving him a lot of grief over patients who were "flipping out" over the weight gain associated with the drug, along with the diabetes. "We were instructed to downplay side effects and focus on the efficacy of drug...to recommend the patient drink a glass of water before taking a pill before the meal and then after the meal in hopes the stomach would expand" and provide an easy way out of this obstacle to increased sales. When docs complained, he recalled, "I told them, 'Our drug is state of the art. What's more important? You want them to get better or do you want them to stay the same — a thin psychotic patient or a fat stable patient.'"

For the drug companies, Shahrman says, the decision to continue pushing the drug despite side effects is a matter of cost/benefit analysis: Whether you will make more money by continuing to market the drug for off-label use, and perhaps defending against lawsuits, than you would otherwise. In the case of Zyprexa, in January 2009, Lilly settled a lawsuit brought by the US Justice Department, agreeing to pay \$1.4 billion, including "a criminal fine of \$515 million, the largest ever in a health care case, and the largest criminal fine for an individual corporation ever imposed in a United States criminal prosecution of any kind," the Department of Justice said in announcing the settlement." But Lilly's sales of Zyprexa in that year alone were over \$1.8 billion.

Turning people into zombies

A growing number of health professionals have come to think these drugs are not really as effective as older less expensive medicines which they have replaced, that they themselves produce side effects that cause other sorts of diseases such as diabetes and plunge the patient deeper into the gloomy world of serious mental disorder. Along with stories of success come reports of people turned into virtual zombies. As it turns out, the atypical antipsychotics may not even be the best choice for people with genuine, undisputed psychosis.

Elliott reports in *Mother Jones*: "After another large analysis in *The Lancet* found that most atypicals actually performed worse than older drugs, two senior British psychiatrists penned a damning editorial that ran in the same issue. Dr. Peter Tyrer, the editor of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, and Dr. Tim Kendall of the Royal College of Psychiatrists wrote: "The spurious invention of the atypicals can now be regarded as invention only, cleverly manipulated by the drug industry for marketing purposes and only now being exposed."

Bottom line: Stop Big Pharma and the parasitic shrink community from wantonly pushing these pills across the population.

James Ridgeway is a senior Washington correspondent with *Mother Jones Magazine*. He is the author of 16 books and has als.

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A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The Enemy Is Washington An economy destroyed

By PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS

Recently, the bond rating agencies that gave junk derivatives triple-A ratings threatened to downgrade US Treasury bonds if the White House and Congress did not reach a deficit reduction deal and debt ceiling increase. The downgrade threat is not credible, and neither is the default threat. Both are make-believe crises that are being hyped in order to force cutbacks in Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

If the rating agencies downgraded Treasuries, the company executives would be arrested for the fraudulent ratings that they gave to the junk that Wall Street peddled to the rest of the world. The companies would be destroyed and their ratings discredited. The US government will never default on its bonds, because the bonds, unlike those of Greece, Spain, and Ireland, are payable in its own currency. Regardless of whether the debt ceiling is raised, the Federal Reserve will continue to purchase the Treasury's debt. If Goldman Sachs is too big to fail, then so is the US government.

There is no budget focus on the illegal wars and military occupations that the US government has underway in at least six countries or the 66-year old US occupations of Japan and Germany and the ring of military bases being constructed around Russia.

The total military/security budget is in the vicinity of \$1.1-\$1.2 trillion, or 70% -75% of the federal budget deficit.

In contrast, Social Security is solvent. Medicare expenditures are coming close to exceeding the 2.3% payroll tax that funds Medicare, but it is dishonest for politicians and pundits to blame the US budget deficit on "entitlement programs."

Entitlements are funded with a payroll tax. Wars are not funded. The criminal Bush regime lied to Americans and claimed that the Iraq war would only cost \$70 billion at the most and would be paid for with Iraq oil revenues. When Bush's chief economic advisor, Larry Lindsey, said the Iraq invasion would cost \$200 billion, the White House Moron fired him. In fact, Lindsey was off by a factor of 20. Economic and budget experts have calculated that the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have consumed \$4,000 billion in out-of-pocket and already incurred future costs. In other words, the ongoing wars and occupations have already eaten up the \$4 trillion by which Obama hopes to cut federal spending over the next ten years. Bomb now, pay later.

As taxing the rich is not part of the political solution, the focus is on rewarding the insurance companies by privatizing Medicare at some future date with government subsidized insurance premiums, by capping Medicaid, and by loading the diminishing middle class with additional Social Security tax.

Washington's priorities and those of its pressites could not be clearer. President Obama, like George W. Bush before him, both parties in Congress, the print and TV media, and National Public Radio have made it clear that war is a far more important priority than health care and old age pensions for Americans.

The American people and their wants and needs are not represented in Washington. Washington serves powerful interest groups, such as the military/security complex, Wall Street and the bankers, agribusiness, the oil companies, the insurance companies, pharmaceuticals, and the mining and

timber industries. Washington endows these interests with excess profits by committing war crimes and terrorizing foreign populations with bombs, drones, and invasions by deregulating the financial sector and bailing it out of its greed-driven mistakes after it has stolen Americans' pensions, homes, and jobs; by refusing to protect the land, air, water, oceans and wildlife from polluters and despoilers; and by constructing a health care system with the highest costs and highest profits in the world.

The way to reduce health care costs is to take out gods of costs and profits with a single payer system. A private health care system can continue to operate alongside it for those who can afford it.

The way to get the budget under control is to stop the gratuitous hegemonic wars, wars that will end in a nuclear confrontation.

The US economy is in a deepening recession from which recovery is not possible, because American middle-class jobs in manufacturing and professional services have been offshored and given to foreigners. US GDP, consumer purchasing power, and tax base have been handed over to China, India, and Indonesia in order that Wall Street, shareholders, and corporate CEOs can earn more.

When the goods and services produced offshore come back into America, they arrive as imports. The trade balance worsens, the US dollar declines further in exchange value, and prices rise for Americans, whose incomes are stagnant or falling.

This is economic destruction. It always occurs when an oligarchy seizes control of a government. The short-run profits of the powerful are maximized at the expense of the viability of the economy.

The US economy is driven by consumer demand, but with 22.3% unemployment, stagnant and declining wages and salaries, and consumer debt burdens so high that consumers cannot borrow to spend, there is nothing to drive the economy.

Washington's response to this dilemma is to increase the austerity! Cutting back Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, forcing down wages by destroying unions and offshoring jobs (which results in a labor surplus and lower wages), and driving up the prices of food and energy by depreciating the dollar further erodes consumer purchasing power. The Federal Reserve can print money to rescue the crooked financial institutions, but it cannot rescue the American consumer.

As a final point, confront the fact that you are even lied to about "deficit reduction." Even if Obama gets his \$4 trillion "deficit reduction" over the next decade, it does not mean that the current national debt will be \$4 trillion less than it currently is. The "reduction" merely means that the growth in the national debt will be \$4 trillion less than otherwise. Regardless of any "deficit reduction," the national debt ten years from now will be much higher than it presently is.

Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury during President Reagan's first term. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal. He has held numerous academic appointments, including the William E. Simon Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, and Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Legalize It

By STEFANO R. MUGNAINI

I don't use marijuana, medical or otherwise. I don't plan to take it up. Still, like an increasing number of Americans, I am vehemently opposed to the war on drugs.

Several powerful arguments can be proffered in support of the notion that drug use is a poor life decision. It has a negative impact on health, like eating too much sugar or using tobacco. It can be well argued that it is a wasteful way to spend one's time, like playing disc golf. And it is mind numbing, just like watching Hannity or Hardball.

All of these choices are harmful to their practitioners. But should any of these decisions, however foolish, be illegal? Any harm they inflict is only upon their practitioners; not abstainers. No matter how much cherry-picked clinical data is used to argue otherwise, no one is harmed by another person's ignorance, poor health, or choice of hobbies.

I write from the perspective of someone who has shifted from conservatism to libertarianism; as such, I am at least passingly familiar with the conservative arguments against legalization, which reveal an inherent contradiction. Many who argue powerfully in favor of constitutionally limited government recoil in horror at the notion that the state might be limited in its war powers — especially as they relate to the war on drugs. They brand Ron Paul as an outlandish, extremist character for daring to suggest that the government should mind its own business every now and then. And many conservatives who generally argue for the limitation of the power and scope of government could not more heartily endorse the drug war — lending tacit approval to the virtually limitless power it grants law enforcement.

It is not legalization but rather prohibition that should be considered outlandish and offensive. This should be apparent to the constitutionalists among us, who define the primary purpose of government as the protection of individual rights. They see, whether accurately or not, the US Constitution as written for the purpose of permanently enshrining the Jeffersonian ideals embodied in the Declaration of Independence. "Federalist Number 5," ironically, cites an argument by British Queen Anne to contend that the union established by the Constitution would preserve our liberties:

An entire and perfect union will be the solid foundation of lasting peace: It will secure your religion, liberty, and property; remove the animosities amongst yourselves.... It must increase your strength, riches, and trade.... We most earnestly recommend to you calmness and unanimity in this great and weighty affair, that the union may be brought to a happy conclusion, being the only effectual way to secure our present and future happiness.

To the minarchist, the protection of these rights is the only legitimate function and purpose of government. Consider Bastiat's argument:

"It is not because men have made laws that personality, liberty, and property exist. On the contrary, it is because personality, liberty, and property exist beforehand that men make laws.... [Law] is the collective organization of the individual right to lawful defense.... So long as personal safety was ensured, so long as labor was free, and the fruits of labor secured against all unjust attacks, no one would have any difficulties to contend with in the State." In the Rothbardian tradition, government is the primary force undermining these rights.

See LEGALIZE p. 8



Blowing It: Democrats, Unable To Be a 'Party of the People', Are Sinking Themselves

By DAVE LINDORFF

The smoking ruin that is the Obama White House, and the rotting corpse that is the Democratic Party, have, incredibly, together been boxed into a corner by, of all things, the certifiably insane Republican Party.

This amazing situation has resulted not through any brilliant strategy on the part of the Republicans, but by the self-inflicted wounds of the Democrats.

Faced with a collapsing economy that is at serious risk of performing a reprise of the Great Depression, Congressional Democrats and President Obama were in a perfect position to grab the flag and run home with it by declaring war on unemployment and on the party that has unequivocally declared itself openly to be the standard bearer of the wealthy and powerful.

All the president and Congressional Democrats had to do was announce that

Social Security, Medicare, education and programs to protect the poor were all off limits in any discussion of the federal budget, and to declare an immediate 25% cut in military spending, as called for earlier by Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), the ranking member of the House Financial Services Committee.

How hard would that have been to do? The polls show it's what the public wants. Any elected official who did this,

See SINKING p. 6

Ron Paul: The Cut, Cap and Balance Fraud

By RON PAUL

Before the US House of Representatives, Statement on the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act, July 19, 2011

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against HR 2560, the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act. This bill only serves to sanction the status quo by putting forth a \$1 trillion budget deficit and authorizing a \$2.4 trillion increase in the debt limit.

When I say this bill sanctions the status quo, I mean it quite literally.

First, it purports to eventually balance the budget without cutting military spending, Social Security, or Medicare. This is impossible. These three budget items already cost nearly \$1 trillion apiece annually. This means we can cut every other area of federal spending to zero and still have a \$3 trillion budget. Since annual federal tax revenues almost certainly will not exceed \$2.5 trillion for several years, this Act cannot balance the budget under any plausible scenario.

Second, it further entrenches the ludicrous beltway concept of discretionary vs. nondiscretionary spending. America faces a fiscal crisis, and we must seize the opportunity once and for all to slay Washington's sacred cows — including defense contractors and entitlements. All spending must be deemed discretionary and reexamined by Congress each year. To allow otherwise is pure cowardice.

Third, the Act applies the nonsensical narrative about a "Global War on Terror" to justify exceptions to its spending caps. Since this war is undeclared, has no definite enemies, no clear objectives, and no metric to determine victory, it is by definition endless. Congress will never balance the budget until we reject the

concept of endless wars.

Finally, and most egregiously, this Act ignores the real issue: total spending by government. As Milton Friedman famously argued, what we really need is a constitutional amendment to limit taxes and spending, not simply to balance the budget. What we need is a dramatically smaller federal government; if we achieve this a balanced budget will take care of itself.

We do need to cut spending, and by a significant amount. Going back to 2008 levels of spending is not enough. We need to cut back at least to where spending was a decade ago. A recent news article stated that we pay 35 percent more for our military today than we did 10 years ago, for the exact same capabilities. The same could be said for the rest of the government. Why has our budget doubled in 10 years? This country doesn't have double the population, or double the land area, or double anything that would require the federal government to grow by such an obscene amount.

We need to cap spending, and then continue decreasing that cap so that the federal government grows smaller and smaller. Allowing government to spend up to a certain percentage of GDP is insufficient. It doesn't matter that the recent historical average of government outlays is 18 percent of GDP because in recent history the government has way overstepped its constitutional mandates. All we need to know about spending caps is that they need to decrease year after year.

We need to balance the budget, but a balanced budget amendment by itself will not do the trick. A \$4 trillion balanced budget is most certainly worse than a \$2 trillion unbalanced budget. Again, we should focus on the total size of the budget

more than outlays vs. revenues.

What we have been asked to do here is support a budget that only cuts relative to the President's proposed budget. It still maintains a \$1 trillion budget deficit for FY 2012 and spends even more money over the next 10 years than the Paul Ryan budget, which already passed the House.

By capping spending at a certain constant percentage of GDP, it allows for federal spending to continue to grow. Tying spending to GDP creates an incentive to manipulate the GDP figure, especially since the bill delegates the calculation of this figure to the Office of Management and Budget, an agency which is responsible to the President and not to Congress. In the worst case, it would even reward further inflation of the money supply, as increases in nominal GDP through pure inflation would allow for larger federal budgets.

Finally, this bill authorizes a \$2.4 trillion rise in the debt limit. I have never voted for a debt ceiling increase and I never will. Increasing the debt ceiling is an endorsement of business as usual in Washington. It delays the inevitable, the day that one day will come when we cannot continue to run up enormous deficits and will be forced to pay our bills.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, while I sympathize with the aims of this bill's sponsors, I must vote against HR 2560. It is my hope, however, that the looming debt ceiling deadline and the discussion surrounding the budget will further motivate us to consider legislation in the near future that will make meaningful cuts and long-lasting reforms.

Dr. Ron Paul is a Republican member of Congress from Texas.

Debt Political Theater Diverts Attention While Americans' Wealth Is Stolen

By REP. DENNIS KUCINICH

The rancorous debate over the debt belies a fundamental truth of our economy — that it is run for the few at the expense of the many, that our entire government has been turned into a machine which takes the wealth of a mass of Americans and accelerates it into the hands of the few. Let me give you some examples.

Take war. War takes the money from the American people and puts it into the hands of arms manufacturers, war profiteers, and private armies. The war in Iraq, based on lies: \$3 trillion will be the cost of that war. The war in Afghanistan; based on a misreading of history; half a trillion dollars in expenses already. The war against Libya will be \$1 billion by September.

Fifty percent of our discretionary spending goes for the Pentagon. A massive transfer of wealth into the hands of a few while the American people lack sufficient jobs, health care, housing, retirement security.

Our energy policies take the wealth

from the American people and put it into the hands of the oil companies. We could be looking at \$150 a barrel for oil in the near future.

Our environmental policy takes the wealth of the people — clean air, clean water — and puts it in the hands of the polluters. It's a transfer of wealth, not only from the present but from future generations as our environment is ruined.

Insurance companies, what do they do? They take the wealth from the American people in terms of what they charge people for health insurance and they put it into the hands of the few.

We have to realize what this country's economy has become. Our monetary policy, through the Federal Reserve Act of 1913, privatized the money supply, gathers the wealth, puts it in the hands of the few while the Federal Reserve can create money out of nothing, give it to banks to park at the Fed while our small businesses are starving for capital.

Mark my words — Wall Street cashes in whether we have a default or not. And the

same type of thinking that created billions in bailouts for Wall Street and more than \$1 trillion in giveaways by the Federal Reserve today leaves 26 million Americans either underemployed or unemployed. And nine out of ten Americans over the age of 65 are facing cuts in their Social Security in order to pay for a debt which grew from tax cuts for the rich and for endless wars.

There is a massive transfer of wealth from the American people to the hands of a few, and it's going on right now as America's eyes are misdirected to the political theater of these histrionic debt negotiations, threats to shut down the government, and willingness to make the majority of Americans pay dearly for debts they did not create.

These are symptoms of a government which has lost its way, and they are a challenge to the legitimacy of the two-party system.

Dennis Kucinich is a Democratic member of Congress from Ohio.

How Your Social Security Money Was Stolen

Where Did the \$2.5 Trillion Surplus Go?

SOCIAL SECURITY from p. 1
Security money. The government used revenue from the Social Security payroll tax hike to fund tax cuts for the rich because that was where the money was. I think the government should recover the 'embezzled' money by taxing the rich."

Associate Press writer, Stephen Ohlemacher, sent shock waves throughout the nation this week with his story, "Social Security to start cashing Uncle Sam's IOUs." Social Security has been running large surpluses ever since the enactment of the 1983 payroll tax hike and was projected to continue running surpluses until at least 2016. Instead, Ohlemacher reports, the cost of Social Security benefits will exceed payroll tax revenue by approximately \$29 billion this year. This is due to the severe recession which has reduced payroll tax revenue at the very time many unemployed Americans have been forced to retire early.

What it all boils down to is that, in order to pay full benefits this year, Social Security will have to come up with an extra \$29 billion to supplement the inadequate payroll tax revenue. Where will that money come from? It will have to come from increased taxes or from borrowed money. "Wait a minute!" some readers will say. Hasn't Social Security been receiving surplus revenue ever since the 1983 payroll tax hike? Isn't there supposed to be approximately \$2.5 trillion in the Social Security trust fund? The answer to both questions is yes. But there is a problem. Every dollar of that surplus Social Security revenue has already been spent by the government. Much of it went to fund wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The rest has been spent on other government programs.

Social Security Scam was a Secret

The American people were not supposed to find out about the great Social Security scam for another six years; and the government was hoping to continue to receive surplus money from the Social Security contributions of working Americans for at least that long. But the inevitable day of reckoning has come, six years sooner than anybody expected, because of the severe recession. And the government of the United States has been caught with its hand still in the empty Social Security cookie jar.

How Ronald Reagan and Alan Greenspan Pulled off one of the Greatest Frauds Ever Perpetrated against the American People

Ronald Reagan and Alan Greenspan pulled off one of the greatest frauds ever perpetrated against the American people in the history of this great nation, and the underlying scam is still alive and well, more than a quarter century later.

It represents the very foundation upon which the economic malpractice that led the nation to the great economic collapse of 2008 was built. Ronald Reagan was a cunning politician, but he didn't know much about economics. Alan Greenspan was an economist who had no reluctance to work with a politician on a plan that would further the cause of the right-wing goals that both he and President Reagan shared....

Too understand exactly what Reagan did, with the help of Alan Greenspan. Consider the following sequence of events:

1. President Reagan appointed Greenspan as chairman of the 1982 National Commission on Social Security Reform (aka The Greenspan Commission).

2. The Greenspan Commission recommended a major payroll tax hike to generate Social Security surpluses for the next 30 years, in order to build up a large reserve in the trust fund that could be drawn down during the years after Social Security began running deficits.

3. The 1983 Social Security amendments enacted hefty increases in the payroll tax in order to generate large future surpluses.

4. As soon as the first surpluses began to roll in, in 1985, the money was put into the general revenue fund and spent on other government programs. None of the surplus was saved or invested in anything. The surplus Social Security revenue, which was paid by working Americans, was used to replace the lost revenue from Reagan's big income tax cuts that went primarily to the rich.

5. In 1987, President Reagan nominated Greenspan as the successor to Paul Volcker as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Greenspan continued as Fed Chairman until January 31, 2006. (One can only speculate on whether the coveted Fed Chairmanship represented, at least in part, a payback for Greenspan's role in initiating the Social Security surplus revenue.)

6. In 1990, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, a member of the Greenspan Commission, and one of the strongest advocates for the 1983 legislation, became outraged when he learned that first, Reagan and then President George H.W. Bush used the surplus Social Security revenue to pay for other government programs instead of saving and investing it for the baby boomers. Moynihan locked horns with President Bush and proposed repealing the 1983 payroll tax hike. Moynihan's view was that if the government could not keep its hands out of the Social Security cookie jar, the cookie jar should be emptied, so there would be no surplus Social Security revenue for the government to loot. President Bush would have no part of repealing the

payroll tax hike. The "read-my-lips-no-new-taxes" president was not about to give up his huge slush fund.

Obama and the Social Security Time Bomb

The 1983 Social Security "fix" required the baby boomers to pay much higher payroll taxes so that they would prepay most of the cost of their own benefits. The higher taxes would generate Social Security surpluses for approximately 30 years, which were supposed to be saved and invested to build up a large reserve in the trust fund. Then, when the baby boomers began to retire in about 2010, the accumulated surpluses from the previous three decades would gradually be drawn down and used to supplement the payroll tax revenue, which was expected to become inadequate to pay full benefits by about 2015. The 1983 Social Security legislation laid the foundation for the greatest fraud ever perpetrated against the American people by their government. The \$2.54 trillion in surplus Social Security revenue, generated by the 1983 payroll tax hike, has all been "borrowed" or "stolen" by the government and used to fund tax cuts for the rich, continuous wars, and other government programs.

President Obama is the fifth president to participate in the great Social Security scam, but he has the dubious distinction of being the president, on whose watch the Social Security time bomb, activated 25 years ago by President Reagan, will run out of time. All of the previous administrations knew that spending Social Security revenue as if it were general revenue was wrong and was a violation of both federal law and the public trust. But, they all had the luxury of knowing that the raided Social Security money would not be needed to pay benefits while they were still in office. However, President Obama learned early in his presidency that, unless the government ended the raiding and began repaying the money that had already been raided, Social Security would face a major financial crisis during his presidency.

Beginning in 2015, and every year after that, payroll tax revenue will be insufficient to pay full benefits. This was known in 1983 when the Social Security "fix" was enacted. As noted the plan was to draw down the large reserve that was supposed to be in the trust fund and use that money to supplement payroll tax revenue so that full benefits could be paid until 2037. But that money has already been spent, so the government will have to come up with the money again to repay the \$2.54 trillion that it embezzled. This might be manageable in the early years, when the difference between benefit costs and payroll tax revenue is minimal. But, each year the amount of money needed to replace the looted money gets bigger and bigger. For example, Social Security will run a deficit of approximately \$41.4 billion in 2010. But in 2020, the Social Security deficit will have grown to \$101.4 billion. Five years later, in 2025, the Social Security shortfall will be \$274.6 billion. In 2035, the government would have to come up with an astronomical \$621.9 billion in order to pay full Social Security benefits.

When President Obama first saw these numbers, he must have almost gone into a state of shock. His predecessors left him with a lot of problems that can plainly be seen by the public—two wars, a collapsed economy, and a gigantic deficit and debt. But the embezzlement of the Social Security trust fund money was done without public knowledge, and it is doubtful that Obama knew anything about it prior to becoming a United States Senator; he may have not known about it until he entered the White House. President Obama cannot just kick the can farther down the road as his four predecessors have done. He must find a way to raise the money to repay the government's debt to Social Security or cut Social Security benefits so the money will not have to be repaid.

Embezzlement is a crime, and every participant (all the presidents and members of Congress who supported the practice) knew they were committing a crime against the American people as they used the people's Social Security money as general revenue over the past 25 years. Some individuals, such as the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, attempted to end the raiding 20 years ago. On September 27, 2000, I launched my decade-long campaign to expose the Social Security scam with an appearance on CNN News to discuss my then newly-published book, *The Alleged Budget Surplus, Social Security, and Voodoo Economics*. For the past 10 years, I have been warning, as forcefully as I could, that a day of reckoning would come, at which time the government might consider defaulting on its huge Social Security debt. But nobody wanted to listen. That day of reckoning is now upon us.

David DeGraw is an investigative journalist. He is the founder and editor of *AmpedStatus.com* and author of *The Economic Elite Vs. The People of the United States*.

For an extensive archive of Dr. Allen Smith's work, visit *Dissident Voice*.



Israel: Impediment to A Nuclear-Free Middle East

ISRAEL from p. 1

unjustifiable war in which the brutal Iraqi dictator was unconditionally supported by a strong coalition of the United States and its European allies.

Since the US and Israel manufactured controversy over Iran's nuclear program was ignited in the early 2000s, the White House and its cronies successfully distracted the international attention from the illegal, underground nuclear activities of the Israeli regime and helped Tel Aviv to secretly further its nuclear program and build more atomic weapons.

According to the Federation of American Scientists, Israel now possesses up to 200 nuclear warheads. Since it is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), it cannot be held accountable over its military nuclear program.

The US Congress Office of Technology Assessment has recorded Israel as a country generally reported as having undeclared chemical warfare capabilities and an offensive biological warfare program.

Since Israel started the development of nuclear weapons in the early 1950s, it adopted a so-called policy of "deliberate ambiguity" and concealed its nuclear activities under this counterfeit label to enjoy immunity and avoid responsibility over its nuclear program. While it neither confirms nor denies the possession of nuclear weapons, even the US-based scientific and research organizations have admitted that Israel has a perilous nuclear arsenal which is potentially able to obliterate the whole Middle East in a matter of seconds.

On June 19, 1981, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution which urgently called upon Israel to put its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); however, Israel never heeded the calls of the UN Security Council, and, following that resolution, no significant decision was ever made to crackdown on Israel and bring its dangerous nuclear facilities under control.

According to *Nuclear Weapons Archive* website, "the most specific and detailed information to be made public about Israel's nuclear program came from a former mid-level nuclear technician named Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu had worked for nine years at the Machon 2 facility, where plutonium is produced and bomb components fabricated, before his increasing involvement in left wing pro-Palestinian politics led to his dismissal in 1986. Due to lax internal security, prior to his departure, he managed to take about 60 photographs covering nearly every part of Machon 2."

He made contact with the *London Sunday Times* and began to write an exclusive story about the details of Israel's nuclear program. Unfortunately for Vanunu, "the Israeli government had found out about his activities and the Mossad arranged to kidnap him and bring him back to Israel for trial," the report added. [An American emigre in Israel, Cheryl "Cindy" Bentov, who had become a MOSSAD operative, met Vanunu and enticed him to fly with her to Rome on September 30, 1986. As they entered a hotel room, two MOSSAD agents pounced on him, injected him with a serum and flew him back to Israel. "Cindy" Bentov now lives in Florida.]

Now, Iran has hosted dozens of representatives and experts from over 40 countries in the Second International Nuclear Disarmament Conference in Tehran to discuss the most important nuclear threats which jeopardize international peace and security.

Last year, Iran hosted the first Nuclear Disarmament Conference

under the title of "Nuclear Energy for All, Nuclear Weapons for None."

According to the scholars and experts who took part in this years conference, the possession of nuclear weapons by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, along with Israel, which is the sole possessor of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. These countries not only thwart the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East but also portray an unquestionable exercise of double standards by the Western powers.

The Tehran conference concluded that all the non-NPT members should ratify this treaty and allow inspection of their nuclear facilities. The conference also proposed that Israel be disarmed as soon as possible because it

is the only owner of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

Despite the fact that even US intelligence services have confirmed that Iran does not intend to produce nuclear weapons, Tehran is lethally under the pressure of the United States and its European friends over its civilian nuclear program. This is while 9 countries in the world own more than 20,000 nuclear warheads, which leaves us with a basic question: who poses the real threat to international peace and security?

Kouroush Ziabari is an Iranian freelance journalist and writer. His work has been published in Tehran Times, Global Research, Foreign Policy Journal, Turkish Weekly Journal and Eurasia Review.

In 1975 Israel Offered to Sell Nuclear Weapons to Apartheid South Africa

Newly released apartheid-era papers provide more evidence of Israeli nuclear weapons and Israel's willingness to sell nuclear technology

By CHRIS MCGREAL / THE GUARDIAN (UK)

Secret South African documents reveal that Israel offered to sell nuclear warheads to the apartheid regime, providing some of the earliest documentary evidence of the state's possession of nuclear weapons.

The "top secret" minutes of meetings between senior officials from the two countries in 1975 show that South Africa's defense minister, P. W. Botha, asked for the warheads; and Shimon Peres, then Israel's defense minister and now its president, responded by offering them "in three sizes". The two men also signed a broad-ranging agreement governing military ties between the two countries that included a clause declaring that "the very existence of this agreement" was to remain secret.

The documents, uncovered by an American academic, Sasha Polakow-Suransky, in research for a book on the close relationship between the two countries, provide evidence that Israel has nuclear weapons despite its policy of "ambiguity" in neither confirming nor denying their existence.

They will also undermine Israel's attempts to suggest that, if it has nuclear weapons which it continues to deny, it is a "responsible" power that would not misuse them, whereas countries such as Iran cannot be trusted.

South African documents show that the apartheid-era military wanted the missiles as a deterrent and for potential strikes against neighboring states.

The documents show both sides met on March 31 1975. Polakow-Suransky writes in his book just published in the US this week, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's secret alliance with apartheid South Africa*. At the talks Israeli officials "formally offered to sell South Africa some of the nuclear-capable Jericho missiles in its arsenal".

South Africa eventually built its own nuclear bombs, albeit possibly with Israeli assistance. But the collaboration on military technology only grew over the following years. South Africa also provided much of the yellowcake uranium that Israel required to develop its weapons.

The existence of Israel's nuclear weapons program was revealed by Mordechai Vanunu to the *London Sunday Times* in 1986. He provided photographs taken inside the Dimona nuclear site and gave detailed descriptions of the processes involved in producing part of the nuclear material.

Israel pressured the present South African government not to declassify documents obtained by Polakow-Suransky. "The Israeli defense ministry tried to block my access to the Segment agreement on the grounds it was sensitive material, especially the signature and the date," he said. "The South Africans didn't seem to care; they blacked out a few lines and handed it over to me. The ANC government is not so worried about protecting the dirty laundry of the apartheid regime's old allies."



Mordechai Vanunu former Israeli nuclear technician revealed Israel's nuclear weapons program to the *Sunday Times* in 1986.



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Pentagon Hacks Social Media for Propaganda Purposes

HACKS from p. 1

topics on Twitter. The Defense Department wants to deeply grok social media dynamics. So SMISC algorithms will be aimed at discovering and tracking the “formation, development and spread of ideas and concepts (memes)” on social media, according to DARPA’s announcement.

“SMISC needs to be able to seek out persuasion campaign structures and influence operations developing across the social sphere. SMISC is supposed to quickly flag rumors and emerging themes on social media, figure out who’s behind it and what. Moreover, DARPA wants SMISC to be able to actually figure out whether this is a random product of the hivemind or a propaganda operation by an adversary nation or group.

“Of course, SMISC won’t be content to just

to hang back and monitor social media trends in strategic locations. It’s about building a better spin machine for Uncle Sam, too. Once SMISC’s latches on to an influence operation being launched, it’s supposed to help out in “countermessaging.”

“SMISC is yet another example of how the military is becoming very interested in what’s going on in the social media sphere.”

Indeed, as I wrote in February:

I noted in 2009, in an article entitled “Does The Government Manipulate Social Media?”:

The US government long ago announced its intention to “fight the net”.

As revealed by an official Pentagon report signed by Donald Rumsfeld called “Information Operations Roadmap”:

The roadmap [contains an] acknowledgement

America’s Disappeared

DISAPPEARED from p. 1

Gamen and former Col. Hugo Pascarelli of committing crimes against humanity at the “El Vesubio” prison, where 2,500 people were tortured in 1976-1978. They were sentenced to life in prison. Since revoking an amnesty law in 2005 designed to protect the military, Argentina has prosecuted 807 personnel for crimes against humanity, although only 212 people have been sentenced. It has been, for those of us who lived in Argentina during the military dictatorship, a painfully slow march toward justice.

Most of the disappeared in Argentina were not armed radicals but labor leaders, community organizers, leftist intellectuals, student activists, and those who happened to be in the wrong spot at the wrong time. Few had any connection with armed campaigns of resistance. Indeed, by the time of the 1976 Argentine coup, the armed guerrilla groups, such as the Montoneros, had largely been wiped out. These radical groups, like al Qaeda in its campaign against the United States, never posed an existential threat to the regime, but the national drive against terror in both Argentina and the United States became an excuse to subvert the legal system, instill fear and passivity in the populace, and form a vast underground prison system populated with torturers and interrogators, as well as government officials and lawyers who operated beyond the rule of law. Torture, prolonged detention without trial, sexual humiliation, rape, disappearance, extortion, looting, random murder and abuse have become, as in Argentina during the Dirty War, part of our own subterranean world of detention sites and torture centers.

We Americans have rewritten our laws, as the Argentines did, to make criminal behavior legal. John Rizzo, the former acting general counsel for the CIA, approved drone attacks that have killed hundreds of people, many of them civilians in Pakistan, although we are not at war with Pakistan. Rizzo has admitted that he signed off on so-called enhanced interrogation techniques. He told *Newsweek* that the CIA operated “a hit list.” He asked in the interview: “How many law professors have signed off on a death warrant?” Rizzo, in moral terms, is no different from the deported Argentine doctor Bianco, and this is why lawyers in Britain and Pakistan are calling for his [Rizzo’s] extradition to Pakistan to face charges of murder. Let us hope they succeed.

We know of at least 100 detainees who died during interrogations at our “black sites,” many of them succumbing to the blows and mistreatment of our interrogators. There are probably many, many more whose fate has never been made public. Tens of thousands of Muslim men have passed through our clandestine detention centers without due process. “We tortured people unmercifully,” admitted retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey. “We probably murdered dozens of them ..., both the armed forces and the CIA.”

Tens of thousands of Americans are being held in super-maximum-security prisons where they are deprived of contact and psychologically destroyed. Undocumented workers are rounded up and vanish from their families for weeks or months. Militarized police units break down the doors of some 40,000 Americans a year and haul them away in the dead of night as if they were enemy combatants. *Habeas corpus* no longer exists. American citizens can “legally” be assassinated. Illegal abductions, known euphemistically as “extraordinary rendition,” are a staple of the war on terror. Secret evidence makes it impossible for the accused and their lawyers to see the charges against them. All this was experienced by the Argentines. Domestic violence, whether in the form of social unrest, riots or another catastrophic terrorist attack on American soil, would, I fear, see the brutal tools of empire cemented into place in the homeland. At that point we would embark on our own version of the Dirty War.

Marguerite Feitlowitz writes in “The Lexicon of Terror” of the experiences of one Argentine prisoner, a physicist named Mario Villani. The collapse of the moral universe of the torturers is displayed when, between torture sessions, the guards take Villani and a few pregnant women prisoners to an amusement park. They make them ride the kiddie train and then take them to a cafe for a beer. A guard, whose *nom de guerre* is Blood, brings his 6- or 7-year-old daughter into the detention facility to meet Villani and other prisoners. A few years later, Villani runs into one of his principal torturers, a sadist known in the camps as Julian the Turk. Julian recommends that Villani go see another of his former prisoners to ask for a job. The way torture became routine, part of daily work, numbed the torturers to their own crimes. They saw it as a job. Years later they expected their victims to view it with the same twisted logic.

Human Rights Watch, in a new report, “Getting Away with Torture: The Bush Administration and Mistreatment of Detainees,” declared there is “overwhelming evidence of torture by the Bush administration.” President Barack Obama, the report went on, is obliged “to order a criminal investigation into allegations of detainee abuse authorized by former President George W. Bush and other senior officials.”

But Obama has no intention of restoring the rule of law. He not only refuses to prosecute flagrant war crimes, but has immunized those who orchestrated, led and carried out the torture. At the same time he has dramatically increased war crimes, including drone strikes in Pakistan. He continues to preside over hundreds of the offshore penal colonies, where abuse and torture remain common. He is complicit with the killers and the torturers.

The only way the rule of law will be restored, if it is restored, is piece by piece, extradition by extradition, trial by trial. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, former CIA Director George Tenet, Condoleezza Rice and John Ashcroft will, if we return to the rule of law, face trial. The lawyers who made legal what under international and domestic law is illegal, including not only Rizzo but Alberto Gonzales, Jay Bybee, David Addington, William J. Haynes and John Yoo, will, if we are to dig our way out of this morass, be disbarred and prosecuted. Our senior military leaders, including Gen. David Petraeus, who oversaw death squads in Iraq and widespread torture in clandestine prisons, will be lined up in a courtroom, as were the generals in Argentina, and made to answer for these crimes. This is the only route back. If it happens, it will happen because a few courageous souls such as the attorney and president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Michael Ratner, are trying to make it happen. It will take time—a lot of time; the crimes committed by Bianco and the two former officers sent to prison this month are nearly four decades old. If it does not happen, then we will continue to descend into a terrifying, dystopian police state where our guards will, on a whim, haul us out of our cells to an amusement park and make us ride, numb and bewildered, on the kiddie train, before the next round of torture.

Chris Hedges, whose column is published Mondays on Truthdig, spent nearly two decades as a foreign correspondent in Central America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. He has reported from more than 50 countries and has worked for The Christian Science Monitor, National Public Radio, The Dallas Morning News and The New York Times, for which he was a foreign correspondent for 15 years.

that information put out as part of the military’s psychological operations, or Psyops, is finding its way onto the computer and television screens of ordinary Americans.

“Information intended for foreign audiences, including public diplomacy and Psyops, is increasingly consumed by our domestic audience,” it reads.

“Psyops messages will often be replayed by the news media for much larger audiences, including the American public,” it goes on.

“Strategy should be based on the premise that the Department [of Defense] will ‘fight the net’ as it would an enemy weapons system.”

Indeed, the Pentagon publicly announced years ago that it was considering using “black propaganda” — in other words, knowing lies.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced in 2008 that a team of employees would be “[engaging] bloggers who are posting inaccurate or untrue information, as well as bloggers who are posting incomplete information.”

The Air Force is now also engaging bloggers. Indeed, an Air Force spokesman said:

“We obviously have many more concerns regarding cyberspace than a typical Social Media user,” Capt. Faggard says. “I am concerned with how insurgents or potential enemies can use Social Media to their advantage. It’s our role to provide a clear and accurate, completely truthful and transparent picture for any audience.”

In other words, the government is targeting “social media”, including popular user-ranked news sites.

In addition, when you look at what the Israeli lobby has done with Megaphone software to automatically vote stories questioning Israel down and to send pro-Israel letters to politicians and media, you can start to see how the US military — an even larger and better-funded organization — could substantially influence voting on social news sites with very little effort.

Moreover, the military has outsourced many projects to private contractors. For example, in Iraq, much of the fighting has been outsourced to Xe (formerly Blackwater). And governmental intelligence functions have largely been outsourced to private companies.

It is therefore not impossible that the government is hiring cheap labor to downvote stories on the social media sites which question the government, and to post pro-government comments.

I pointed out the same month:

Government propagandists, their hired private contractors and useful idiots are creating “downvote bots” or scripts to bury stories which question the government.

One free, simple scripting program to create automatic downvotes of certain topics or news posters is called “GreaseMonkey”, which is commonly used on large social news sites such as Reddit.

For example, there are some 2,480 hits [now past 9,000] for the Google search site: reddit.com greasemonkey downvote. This is some 2,480 times that Reddit users are publicly admitting to using GreaseMonkey.

Propaganda agents obviously aren’t going to publicly brag about what they are doing, and you can bet that their use of downvote bots is much greater. Moreover, they undoubtedly have more sophisticated software than GreaseMonkey.

Raw Story reports that the Air Force ordered software to manage an army of fake virtual people:

“Internet users would be well advised to ask another question entirely: Are my “friends” even real people?”

In the continuing saga of data security firm HBGary, a new caveat has come to light: not only did they plot to help destroy secrets outlet WikiLeaks and discredit progressive bloggers, they also crafted detailed proposals for software that manages online “personas,” allowing a single human to assume the identities of as many fake people as they’d like.

The revelation was among those contained in the company’s emails, which were dumped onto bittorrent networks after hackers with cyber protest group “Anonymous” broke into their systems.

In another document unearthed by “Anonymous,” one of HBGary’s employees also mentioned gaming geolocation services to make it appear as though selected fake persons were at actual events.

“There are a variety of social media tricks we can use to add a level of realism to all fictitious personas,” it said.

Government involvement

Eerie as that may be, more perplexing, however, is a federal contract from the 6th Contracting Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, located south of Tampa, Florida, that solicits providers of “persona management software.”

While there are certainly legitimate applications for such software, such as managing multiple “official” social media accounts from a single input, the more nefarious potential is clear.

Unfortunately, the Air Force’s contract description doesn’t help dispel their suspicions either. As the text explains, the software would require licenses for 50 users with 10 personas each, for a total of 500. These personas would have to be “replete with background, history, supporting details, and cyber presences that are technically, culturally and geographically consistent.”

It continues, noting the need for secure virtual private networks that randomize the operator’s Internet protocol (IP) address, making it impossible to detect that it’s a single person orchestrating all these posts. Another

entry calls for static IP address management for each persona, making it appear as though each fake person was consistently accessing from the same computer each time.

The contract also sought methods to anonymously establish virtual private servers with private hosting firms in specific geographic locations. This would allow that server’s “geosite” to be integrated with their social media profiles, effectively gaming geolocation services.

The Air Force added that the “place of performance” for the contract would be at MacDill Air Force Base, along with Kabul, Afghanistan and Baghdad. The contract was offered on June 22, 2010.

It was not clear exactly what the Air Force was doing with this software, or even if it had been procured.

Manufacturing consent

Though many questions remain about how the military would apply such technology, the reasonable fear should be perfectly clear. “Persona management software” can be used to manipulate public opinion on key information, such as news reports. An unlimited number of virtual “people” could be marshaled by only a few real individuals, empowering them to create the illusion of consensus.

That’s precisely what got DailyKos blogger Happy Rockefeller in a snit; the potential for military-run armies of fake people manipulating and, in some cases, even manufacturing the appearance of public opinion.

“I don’t know about you, but it matters to me what fellow progressives think,” the

unit operating in secret and with no oversight whatsoever is gathering massive amounts of data on every American and running artificial intelligence software to predict each American’s behavior, including “what the target will do, where the target will go, who it will turn to for help”.

The same governmental unit is responsible for suspending the Constitution ... in the event that anything is deemed by the White House in its sole discretion to constitute a threat to the United States. (this is formally known as implementing “Continuity of Government” plans).

Bear in mind that the Pentagon is also running an AI program to see how people will react to propaganda and to government-inflicted terror. The program is called Sentient World Simulation:

“US defense, intel and homeland security officials are constructing a parallel world, on a computer, which the agencies will use to test propaganda messages and military strategies.

Called the Sentient World Simulation (SWS), the program uses AI routines based upon the psychological theories of Marty Seligman, among others. (Seligman introduced the theory of ‘learned helplessness’ in the 1960s, after shocking beagles until they cowered, urinating, on the bottom of their cages.)

Yank a country’s water supply. Stage a military coup. SWS will tell you what happens next.

The sim will feature an AR (augmented reality) avatar for each person in the real



blogger wrote. “I consider all views. And if there appears to be a consensus that some reporter isn’t credible, for example, or some candidate for Congress in another state can’t be trusted, I won’t base my entire judgment on it, but it carries some weight.

“That’s me. I believe there are many people though who will base their judgment on rumors and mob attacks. And for those people, a fake mob can be really effective.”

“Team Themis” [tasked by the Chamber of Commerce to come up with strategies for responding to progressive bloggers and others] also included a proposal to use malware hacks against progressive organizations, and the submission of fake documents in an effort to discredit established groups.

HBGary was also behind a plot by Bank of America to destroy WikiLeaks’ technology platform, other emails revealed. The company was humiliated by members of “Anonymous” after CEO Aaron Barr bragged that he’d “infiltrated” the group.

Indeed, as I noted in 2008, the Pentagon is using artificial intelligence programs to try to predict how people will react to propaganda:

As a new article by investigative reporter Christopher Ketcham reveals, a governmental

world, based upon data collected about us from government records and the internet.”

Postscript: Gaming social media is only one propaganda technique employed by the government:

- Famed Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein says the CIA has already bought and paid for many successful journalists
- *The New York Times* discusses in a matter-of-fact way the use of mainstream writers by the CIA to spread messages
- A 4-part BBC documentary called the “Century of the Self” shows that an American — Freud’s nephew, Edward Bernays — created the modern field of manipulation of public perceptions, and the US government has extensively used his techniques
- *The Independent* discusses allegations of American propaganda
- And one of the premier writers on journalism says the US has used widespread propaganda.

You can read more of George Washington’s blogs at www.georgewashington.blogspot.com

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Blowing It: Democrats, Unable To Be a 'Party of the People', Are Sinking Themselves

SINKING from p. 3

particularly someone elected and re-elected as a Democrat, would have been hailed by voters for such a bold action.

According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted in late May and released June 11, 60% of Americans correctly attribute the nation's enormous deficit primarily to military spending, which eats up 52% of every tax dollar (Social Security and Medicare are entirely funded by separate payroll taxes, and not only have not contributed a single dollar to the federal deficit, but have been routinely borrowed from by the government to finance the deficit in the government's operating budget caused by military spending). Only 24% blame the deficit on domestic spending other than military (and probably every one of those is a Republican or right-wing independent who likely believes that the earth was created 6,000 years ago, and is flat, and who will never vote Democratic no matter what).

That same poll showed that the vast majority of Americans (73%) object to proposals to cut the budget by reducing federal funding for social programs, or federal funding to the states for education, or by reducing Social Security benefits (59%), for example by raising the retirement age.

What the Pew poll finds Americans do support is raising the cap on income subject to the Social Security Tax (FICA), from its current meager level of \$106,000, to cover all income (66% in favor). They also favor raising taxes on those households that earn more than \$250,000 a year (65% in favor), and they favor getting rid of tax deductions for corporations, which have allowed many wildly profitable companies like Bank of America, Exxon, GE and News Corp to pay no corporate taxes despite earning billions of dollars in profits (62% in favor). They also overwhelmingly favor reducing America's military operations overseas, where the US currently maintains over 1,000 bases in countries all over the world, including wealthy allies such as Europe and Japan (62% in favor).

After being deluged with poorly written, simplistic and often ideologically-driven news stories all year hyping the supposed budget "crisis," the percentage of Americans who say they are worried about the budget deficit has crept up from 24% to 28%, but far more Americans say they are worried about the jobs crisis (38%, up from 34% in March).

If you were a political advisor in the White House, the Democratic Congressional Committee or the Democratic National Committee, one would think that seeing those numbers, the strategy going forward would be obvious: declare the country to be facing a New Depression, call the Republican Party out as a bunch of know-nothings, end the wars, bring the troops home, slash military spending, call for higher taxes on the rich, and, in Congress, introduce a public jobs program every day of every week, forcing the Republicans to vote them down, one after another through the next election day.

But the Democratic Party is a rotting corpse and it certainly is not an organization that sees itself as fighting for the common man and woman.

As for the White House political team, and the president himself, they seem to have long since lost their grip on reality.

The president has been hanging around with Wall Street bankers, taking their money and their self-serving ideas for so long now, he actually thinks like them. Congressional Democrats, like their Republican colleagues, are so covetous of corporate campaign cash and lobbyist perks that, with a few exceptions, they can't imagine crossing any corporate interests.

This is not a case of Democrats being stupid. You'd have to be far worse than stupid not to see the correct political strategy to adopt at this point.

What has happened is that the Democratic Party is no more. It is, at this point, all about current incumbents gaining the favor of the corporate elite, lulling the public into an apathetic non-voting torpor or stupor, and of course, arguing that people worried about the nation's future should vote for them yet again because "the Republicans are worse."

In a press conference on July 15, President Obama made some incredible statements, all demonstrably untrue. He said "We are all part of the same country," and yet he surely knows that when it comes to the leaders of America's biggest corporations, including GE, whose chairman Jeffrey Immelt he appointed to head his Jobs Council, this is demonstrably false. While many of these leaders may be Americans by birth, the companies they run and represent earn the majority of their revenues and profits from operations abroad, and are thus, technically speaking, foreign enterprises, with foreign interests that trump any US interests. Obama said, "We are all in this together," speaking of the supposed debt "crisis," but of course, he has announced himself ready to cut Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid programs, upon which poor and working class families depend, while leaving the rich largely unscathed. He has said it is the "will of the people" to cut the budget, but to the extent that it is even true, which is highly debatable, the will of the people is actually to cut military spending, not to cut Social Security or Medicare or even budgets for education or Medicaid.

The good news is that an increasing number of Americans appear to be finally realizing that this president is a fraud — a shill for bankers the corporate interests and the neon military establishment who has just been posing as a man of the people.

The bad news is that there is little likelihood of any Third Party arising before 2012 that could seriously contest the national election, meaning that we are probably headed for either more of the same or for a Republican-led government.

The hope has to be that the blatant sell-out of the public interest and the national interest by both parties and by the president is becoming so self-evident that the American public will actually wake up from its media-induced somnolence and will abandon them both.

The institutional obstacles to such an unprecedented rebellion are of course enormous, but then, these are unprecedented times.

Dave Lindorff is a Philadelphia-based journalist and columnist. His latest book is The Case for Impeachment (St. Martin's Press, 2006 and now available at www.thisantihappening.net.

By JOHN S. CHAMBERLAIN

On July 13th, the president of the United States angrily walked out of ongoing negotiations over the raising of the debt ceiling from its legislated maximum of \$14.294 trillion dollars. This prompted a new round of speculation over whether the United States might default on its financial obligations. In these circumstances, it is useful to recall the previous instances in which this has occurred and the effects of those defaults. By studying the defaults of the past, we can gain insights into what future defaults might portend.

The Continental-Currency Default

The first default of the United States was on its first issuance of debt: the currency emitted by the Continental Congress of 1775. In June of 1775, the Continental Congress of the United States of America, located in Philadelphia, representing the 13 states of the union, issued bills of credit amounting to two million Spanish milled dollars to be paid four years hence in four annual installments.

The next month an additional one million was issued. A third issue of three million followed. The next year they issued an additional 13 million dollars of notes. These were the first of the "Continental dollars," which were used to fund the war of revolution against Great Britain. The issues continued until an estimated 241 million dollars were outstanding, not including British forgeries.

Congress had no power of taxation, so it made each of the several states responsible for redeeming a proportion of the notes according to population. The administration of these notes was delegated to a "Board of the Treasury" in 1776. To refuse the notes or receive them below par was punishable by having your ears cut off and other horrible penalties.

The notes progressively depreciated as the public began to realize that neither the states nor their Congress had the will or capacity to redeem them. In November of 1779, Congress announced a devaluation of 38.5 to 1 on the Continentals, which amounted to an admission of default. In that year, refusal to accept the notes became widespread, and trade was reduced to barter — causing sporadic famines and other privations.

Eventually, Congress agreed to redeem the notes at 1,000 to 1. At a rate of 0.82 troy ounces to the Spanish milled dollar, if we take the current (July 2011) price of silver, \$36 to the troy ounce, this first default resulted in a cumulative loss of approximately \$7 billion dollars to the American public.

Benjamin Franklin characterized the loss as a tax. Memory of the suffering and economic disruption caused by this "tax" and similar bills of credit issued by the states influenced the contract clause of the Constitution, which was adopted in 1789:

"No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts."

The Default on Continental Domestic Loans

In addition to its currency issuance, the Continental Congress borrowed money both domestically and abroad. The domestic debt totaled approximately \$11 million Spanish dollars. The interest on this debt was paid primarily by money received from France and Holland as

History's Lessons

A Short History Of US Credit Defaults



part of separate borrowings. When this source of funding dried up, Congress defaulted on its domestic debt, starting on March 1, 1782. Partial satisfaction of these debts was made later by accepting the notes for payments of taxes and other indirect considerations.

In an act of 1790, Congress repudiated these loans entirely, but offered to convert them to new ones with less favorable terms, thereby memorializing the default in the form of a Federal law.

The Greenback Default of 1862

After the Revolutionary War, the Congress of the United States made only limited issuance of debt and currency, leaving the problems of

After this failure, the Treasury made subsequent issues of greenbacks as "legal-tender" notes, which were not redeemable on demand, except through foreign exchange, and could not be used to pay customs duties. Depending on the fortunes of war, these notes traded for gold at a discount ranging from 20 percent to 40 percent. By the stratagem of monetizing this currency with bonds and paying only the interest on those bonds in gold acquired through customs fees, Lincoln's party financed the Civil War with no further defaults.

The Liberty Bond Default of 1934

The financing of the United States government stepped up to a whole new



the Greenback

public finance largely to the states and private banks. (These entities defaulted on a regular basis up to the Panic of 1837, in which a crescendo of state defaults led to the invention of the term "repudiation of debts.")

In August of 1861, this balance

level upon its entry into the Great War, now known as World War I. The new enterprises of the government included merchant-fleet maintenance and operation, production of ammunition, feeding and equipping soldiers entirely at its own expense, and many other



Continental dollars. 1/3 and 2/3 dollar bills shown

between local and federal finance switched forever; the Civil War induced Congress to create a new currency, which became known as the "greenback" due to the green color of its ink. The original greenbacks were \$60 million in demand notes in denominations of \$5, \$10, and \$20. These were redeemable in specie at any time at a rate of 0.048375 troy ounces of gold per dollar. Less than five months later, in January of 1862, the US Treasury defaulted on these notes by failing to redeem them on demand.

expensive things it had never done before or done only on a much smaller scale.

To finance these activities, Congress issued a series of debentures known as "Liberty Bonds" starting in 1917. The preliminary series were convertible into issues of later series at progressively more favorable terms until the debt was rolled into the fourth Liberty Bond, dated October 24, 1918, which was a \$7 billion dollar, 20-year, 4.25 percent issue, payable in gold at a rate of \$20.67 per troy ounce.

By the time Franklin Roosevelt

entered office in 1933, the interest payments alone were draining the treasury of gold; and because the treasury had only \$4.2 billion in gold, it was obvious there would be no way to pay the principal when it became due in 1938, not to mention meet expenses and other debt obligations.

These other debt obligations were substantial. Ever since the 1890s the Treasury had been gold short and had financed this deficit by making new bond issues to attract gold for paying the interest of previous issues. The result was that by 1933, the total debt was \$22 billion and the amount of gold needed to pay even the interest on it was soon going to be insufficient.

In this exigency, President Roosevelt decided to default on the whole of the domestically held debt by refusing to redeem in gold to Americans and devaluing the dollar by 40 percent against foreign exchange. By taking these steps the Treasury was able to make a partial payment and maintain foreign exchange with the critical trade partners of the United States.

If we price gold at the present-day value of \$1,550 per troy ounce, the total loss to investors by the devaluation was approximately \$640 billion in 2011 dollars. The overall result of the default was to intensify the depression and trade reductions of the 1930s and to contribute in a major way to fomenting World War II.

The Momentary Default of 1979

The Treasury of the United States accidentally defaulted on a small number of bills during the 1979 debt-limit crisis. Due to administrative confusion, \$120 million in bills coming due on April 26, May 3, and May 10 were not paid according to the stated terms. The Treasury eventually paid the face value of the bills, but nevertheless a class-action lawsuit, *Claire G. Barton v. United States*, was filed in the Federal court of the Central District of California over whether the treasury should pay additional interest for the delay.

The government decided to avoid any further publicity by giving the jilted investors what they wanted rather than ride the high horse of sovereign immunity. An economic study of the affair concluded that the net result was a tiny permanent increase in the interest rates of T-bills.

What Will Happen in August of 2011?

Many people are wondering about the possibility of a default by the Treasury on August 3, 2011, when, according to the Treasury's projections, it will no longer be able to meet all expenses without additional borrowing.

In this event, it is unlikely a default will occur. Historically, governments prioritize debt service above all other expenses. If the expansion of funds via debt becomes impossible, the Treasury will cease paying other expenses first, starting with "nonessential" discretionary expenditures, and then it will move on to mandatory expenditures and entitlements as a last resort.

In extremis, what will happen is that all the losses will be foisted onto the Federal Reserve. The Fed holds something on the order of \$1.6 trillion in debt issued by the Treasury of the United States. By having the Federal Reserve purchase blocks of Treasury debt and defaulting on these non-investor-held securities, the United States can postpone a default against real investors essentially forever.

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Webster Tarpley: Ground Truth in Libya

an interview from Press TV

TARPLEY from p. 1

fashion that might be expected of them.

Tarpley: I would have to take issue, first of all, with your terminology. You called the Benghazi Rebel Council 'the revolutionaries.'

There are a lot of people in the Tripoli area of Libya who would say that the current Gaddafi regime is the revolution and that these rebels that are attempting to overthrow him are actually the counterrevolution.

If you look at their support for monarchies and if you look at the support from imperialism and colonialism, I think there is a strong case but obviously the events of today above all, a very severe military defeat for those rebels in their attack on Brega, where their assault has been thrown back with heavy losses comes in the wake of this meeting of the contact group in Istanbul, Turkey yesterday which was the scene of, really an astounding action, a real act of folly, I think, where the United States and thirty other countries have decided now that this Benghazi Rebel Council is the legitimate government of Libya.

They are going to try to loot the frozen Libyan assets for the purpose of conveying that money into the pockets of people like [President of the rebel council, Mustafa Abdul] Jalil, [the rebel's military Chief of Staff Abd Al Fattah] Yunis, and [Head of the Council's Executive Bureau, Mahmoud] Jibril, and [Senior Rebel Commander Khalifa] Haftar and the rest of the visible leadership of that group.

The problem that it raises is, of course, that it is very well known that in the military arm of the rebellion we have a very strong representation of al Qaeda terrorists.

People who, according to the US official definition of the US government are, terrorists. That would include somebody like [Abdel-Hakim] Hasadi of [the city of] Darnah, somebody like ... also of Darnah and Borhani of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group [LIFG] and the United States has actually facilitated the arrival of lots of foreign fighters, be they from Afghanistan or Pakistan, really the entire greater Middle East.

People have been streaming in there to join the rebel side and, of course, this has not escaped the attention of the opposition forces. Here, in the United States, especially in the House of Representatives, you have a significant Republican majority who are extremely distrustful. In particular Congressman Michael Turner, Republican of Ohio, has taken the lead in denouncing the US government decision to recognize these rebels yesterday, saying it is totally premature because you still do not know who they are, and, of course, you do not.

Of the members of the Libyan Rebel Council, the Benghazi Rebel Council, only about one third of them are known, the rest of them are secret and the story is that they are threatened by Gaddafi, but others would also argue [that] they are being kept secret because they are from al Qaeda, they are people who have been to Guantanamo Bay or prisoners of war.

Press TV: Dr. Tarpley, these are definitely perplexing details that you just mentioned. I want to talk to you about the issue of arms. Who is providing the opposition forces with arms, and is the issue of providing arms something that contradicts resolution 1973, or has that resolution just turned into a document that exudes various subjective interpretations as time goes by?

Tarpley: Well, the resolution itself of course violates the UN charter but that does not stop the French in particular but also the British and the US and other NATO countries from violating this resolution.

In particular, we know that the French have set up kind of an airlift into these south western mountains, southwest of the capital Tripoli. They have been flying in and plane loads of weapons. That is a blatant violation of the UN Security Council resolution which provides for an arms embargo on everybody.

We also know that the US and the British have been shipping in weapons across the Egyptian border into that stronghold of Cyrenaica [an ancient region of northeast Libya bordering on the Mediterranean Sea] or the Benghazi, Darnah and Tobuk area.

So they are violating the US resolution. It is going to be interesting to see. The recognition of the rebels is designed to open the door to give them money, but that will also violate the UN Security Council resolution.

So we are at a point now where the international anarchy could hardly be greater and I would just recall to [US Secretary of State] Mrs. Clinton [that] she may be in the position now of giving material support to Al-Qaeda and people have been impeached in the United States for less.

So, Secretary of State can be impeached just like any other officer of the executive branch and there may be some Republicans in the House who are thinking in those terms right now.

MSK/HGH



Neo-cons Fume Over US Boat to Gaza

GAZA from p. 1

be a "self-hating Irishman."

But the bottom line is this: Dershowitz's Likud friends and their neocon chums in the Obama administration realize they have suffered a stinging — and unnecessary — PR defeat. They could easily have let our peaceful boat carrying passengers, media and letters of goodwill reach the isolated people of Gaza.

What we boaters appear to have accomplished is to provoke the mighty diplomats of Israel and the United States into a full-court press that brought renewed attention to the plight of the Gazans.

Greek authorities, already tied up in knots over their national financial crisis, had their arms twisted to thwart a group of humanitarians and peace activists — including poet Alice Walker, retired Army Col. Ann Wright and Code Pink's Medea Benjamin — from sailing a boat to Gaza.

By putting the issue of Israel's blockade front and center, we also managed to force discomfited US State Department spokespersons to dissemble about the legality of Israel's illegal blockade. They ducked declaring something so clearly illegal legal, knowing that otherwise they would have invited international ridicule.

But caution. The injured-animal syndrome among the Likudniks poses distinct dangers for the people of the Middle East — the more so, as we watch President Barack Obama continue to let Netanyahu walk all over him.

US Appeasement

Official Washington's appeasement of the Likud Lobby seems to encourage Israeli leaders to believe that not only the US Congress but also America's lusting-for-a-second-term President will condone just about any action Tel Aviv might undertake. That makes the situation very volatile.

In my view, there is more danger, in present circumstances, that the extreme right in Israel will flail out in a very misguided way than there has been in several years. The Netanyahu regime is in a very defensive, reactive posture.

It certainly appears that the Likudniks, the US neocons and some of the "Harvards" are running scared as Israel's growing extremism and anti-Muslim bigotry becomes harder to perfume over with every passing day.

Beyond expanding settlements on Palestinian lands and resisting serious peace talks, Netanyahu's government has taken to segregating not only Arabs from Jews but secular Jews from ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Plus, over the past two years, Netanyahu's right-wing coalition has lost its co-opted ally Hosni Mubarak in Egypt as well as the once-friendly Turks and, bit-by-bit, its legitimacy. This reality is finally sinking in. Tel Aviv, Washington and Cambridge see a significant weakening of Israel's worldwide standing.

And, as for "delegitimizing" Israel, no one could do that job better than the Likudniks themselves — the more so, given their penchant for knee-jerk overreactions and risible rhetoric.

The likely "legitimization" of a Palestinian state by the UN in September is being seen in some Israeli right-wing quarters as the last straw.

But Netanyahu's thuggish regime still can count on influential apologists like Dershowitz to excuse whatever it does. Dershowitz and other neocon voices pipe up whenever Israel's drift toward an unconscionable apartheid system is noted.

As part of that propaganda, we are now hearing, again and again, bizarre accounts about how wonderful life is for the Gazans. In his pro-blockade diatribe, Dershowitz depicted a fun-in-the-sun existence for these Palestinians, who are, in reality, trapped in what amounts to a squalid open-air prison.

Besides cutting the Gazans off from the world, Israel has strangled their economy by tightly restricting construction material needed to rebuild homes, businesses and schools damaged in Israel's 2008-09 invasion, which killed an estimated 1,400 Palestinians, compared to 13 Israeli deaths.

However, to gloss over the ugly reality, Dershowitz selectively cites a recent *New York Times* article, which noted that construction material smuggled in from Egypt in the aftermath of Mubarak's ouster is fueling a mini-boom in construction in Hamas-ruled Gaza and slightly lessening the jobless crisis.

Here's Dershowitz's slanted version: "According to reporting by *The New York Times*, Gaza has been thriving recently. Luxury

hotels are being built; stores are stocked with food; beaches are filled with children; and life is far better than in neighboring Al Arish, which is across the border in Egypt."

Yet, the few positives were only part of what the *Times'* Jerusalem bureau chief Ethan Bronner reported. In the same article, he wrote, "So is that the news from Gaza in mid-2011? Yes, but so is this: Thousands of homes that were destroyed in the Israeli anti-rocket invasion two and a half years ago have not been rebuilt.

"Hospitals have canceled elective surgery for lack of supplies. Electricity remains maddeningly irregular. The much-publicized opening of the Egyptian border has fizzled, so people remain trapped here. The number of residents living on less than \$1.60 a day has tripled in four years. Three-quarters of the population rely on food aid."

Strangled Economy

The Israeli human rights group Gisha, which has campaigned against the closure of Gaza, notes that while Gaza now has adequate food supplies, "economic recovery is blocked by sweeping restrictions."

Gisha noted that "The continued ban on export, construction materials, and travel between Gaza and the West Bank contradicts the 2010 Israeli government decision to facilitate economic recovery in Gaza.

"At least 83% of Gaza's factories are either closed or working at a capacity of 50% or less, according to the Palestinian Federation of Industries. The manufacturing sector cannot recover under the present Israeli ban on export.

"Even during the winter agricultural season, when Israel allowed the export of agricultural produce, the quantities were economically negligible: an average of two trucks per day, compared to the 400 trucks a day agreed upon in the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.

"Israel has banned, completely, goods destined for Israel and the West Bank, even though prior to 2007, 85% of the goods leaving Gaza were sold to Israel and the West Bank."

In other words, the situation for Gazans remains horribly bleak, although perhaps slightly less bleak now that Egypt is looking the other way on the smuggling of concrete, steel beams and other construction material.

Under international pressure — brought about partly by earlier challenges to the four-year-old sea blockade — Israel also has lightened up somewhat on the land transport of some goods.

But Dershowitz's slanted argument is offensive for other reasons. Arguing that some people in the Middle East might be worse off than the Gazans is reminiscent of the claims by white South Africans that "their" blacks were better off than some blacks living in poorer parts of Africa, thus justifying apartheid.

Or the neocon musings in the United States some years back that slavery wasn't so bad because Africans who were captured by European slavers and forcibly shipped to the New World had a chance for a better life — more so than Africans who weren't lucky enough to be put in chains, crowded into foul slave ships (where many died), sold to plantation owners in a strange land, and then be subjected to whippings, rapes, endless humiliations and lynching. Yes, the "upside" of slavery.

To tout a couple of "luxury hotels" being built in Gaza, some children at the beach and the possibility that some other Arabs might be more miserable than the Gazans — as an excuse for the entrapment and collective punishment of 1.6 million people — is the same kind of rationalizing on behalf of injustice.

As for Dershowitz's insults toward me and the other passengers on our Boat to Gaza, the old saying surely applies: "Names can never harm you." But we would all be well advised to keep a keen eye peeled for future sticks and stones.

We US boaters have just begun; we will get to Gaza. But watch out for Israeli-sponsored provocations, which could become the prelude to even more violence in the months ahead.

Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, the publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in Washington, DC. During his career as a CIA analyst, he prepared and briefed the President's Daily Brief and chaired National Intelligence Estimates. He is a member of the Steering Group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS).

Iran Opens Oil Bourse

Harbinger of Trouble for New York and London?

BOURSE from p. 1

Not surprisingly, many of these concepts originate in countries not enamored with Washington's influence, perhaps none so more than "Axis of Evil" charter member Iran, which has seen its economy hammered by more than three decades of US-led sanctions. Now Iran is working on a program that, if it succeeds, could help undermine the dollar's preeminence as the world's reserve currency more effectively than a Republican filibuster.

Iran's sly weapon against the Great Satan's currency? An oil bourse on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf, which has now begun selling high-grade Iranian crude oil.

Mohsen Qamsari, deputy director for international affairs of the Iranian National Oil Company was modest about the exchange's initial capabilities, saying, "The commodity stock exchange has been pursuing a mechanism for offering crude oil on the stock exchange for a long time, and it has taken the preliminary steps, to the extent possible. Considering the existing banking problems, foreign customers are not expected to be taking part in the first phase of offering crude oil on the stock exchange, and this will be done on a trial basis. Today Bahregan heavy, high quality, low sulfur crude oil with less sourness will be offered on the stock exchange for the first time. In the first phase, a 600,000 barrel shipment will be offered."

Given that the world currently consumes roughly 83 million barrels of crude oil each day, the initial oil offerings at the Iranian stock exchange are hardly going to make or break

in the value of the dollar is one of the biggest problems facing the world today. The damage caused by this has already affected the global economy, particularly those of the energy-exporting countries. ... Therefore, I repeat my earlier suggestion, that a combination of the world's valid currencies should become a basis for oil transactions, or (OPEC) member countries should determine a new currency for oil transactions."

What it would take for Iran's new exchange to survive and flourish are some heavy-duty customers that Washington would be wary of picking a fight with, and Tehran already has one — China.

China, the world's largest buyer of Iranian crude oil, has renewed its annual import pacts for 2011. In 2010 Iran supplied about 12 percent of China's total crude imports. According to the latest report of the China Customs Organization, Iran's total oil exports to China stood at 8.549 million tons between January and April 2011, up 32 percent compared with the same period last year. Iran is currently China's third largest supplier of crude oil, providing China with nearly one million barrels per day.

China simply ignores Washington's squeals about sanctions, but it is concerned about the bottom line, and unless Iran makes its oil prices more attractive versus competing supplies from the rest of the Middle East or South American exporters, it may be hard for the OPEC member to boost its share in the rapidly expanding Chinese market.



the market, but they do represent an attempt by a significant oil producer to divert revenue streams from New York Mercantile Exchange, the world's largest physical commodity futures exchange, which handles West Texas Intermediate benchmark futures, and London's Intercontinental Exchange, which deals in North Sea Brent. All trades are in dollars, effectively giving the US currency a monopoly.

The Kish Exchange dates back to February 2008, when instead of Tehran, Kish was chosen because it had designated as a free trade zone. The Exchange was set up to trade contracts in euros, Iranian rials and a basket of other currencies other than dollars. The previous year, Iran had requested that its petroleum customers pay in non-dollar currencies. But the Exchange initially traded contracts only for oil-derived products, such as those used as feedstocks for plastics and pharmaceuticals. Now the institution has taken the next step.

Even as Congress remains tone-deaf to the recession's effect on American jobs and the economy, others have taken careful note. On 17 June 2008, addressing the 29th meeting of the Council of Ministers of the OPEC Fund for International Development in the Iranian city of Isfahan, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told those in attendance, "The fall

Enter the Kish Exchange.

China's Ambassador to Tehran Yu Hung Yang, addressing the Iran-China trade conference in Tehran on Monday, said that the value of the two countries' trade exchanges surged 55 percent during the first four months of 2011 over the same period a year ago to \$13.28 billion and further predicted that the figure would surpass \$40 billion by the end of the year.

So much for sanctions, eh?

So, while Washington prepares to commit political hara-kiri, Iran is preparing to take away a little of the capitalist glow from New York and London. If the Chinese decide to start paying for their Iranian purchases strictly in yuan, expect the trickle away from the dollar in energy pricing to become a stampede. That ought to give Washington politicians an issue to think about besides gay marriage.

Dr. John C.K. Daly is one of the leading specialists on the post-Soviet space, particularly the Caucasus and Central Asia energy issues, having provided professional audiences with indepth analysis of energy issues there for more than a decade.

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One Million Dead in Iraq?

Six Reasons the Media Hide the True Human Toll of War — and Why We Let Them

MILLION DEAD from p. 1

likely death toll, which is well into the hundreds of thousands, possibly more than one million. It's a textbook case of how opinion gatekeepers reinforce each other's caution. Because the number of civilians killed in a US war is so morally fraught, the news media, academics and political leaders tend to gravitate toward the figure (if mentioned at all) that is least disturbing.

The "tens of thousands" mantra is peculiar because even the most conservative calculation — that provided by Iraq Body Count, a British NGO — is now more than 100,000, and IBC acknowledges that their number is probably about half correct. They count only civilians killed by violence who are named in English-language news and some morgue counts. Their method is incomplete for a number of reasons — news media coverage is far from comprehensive, most obviously — and many Iraqis who are killed are not labeled by authorities as civilians. The death toll from nonviolent deaths (women dying in childbirth, for example, because the health care system has been devastated by the war) is also very high and is not included in IBC's tally.

The more accurate figures come from household surveys and other methods, and these have much higher figures. I commissioned one conducted by Johns Hopkins scientists in 2006 (*The Human Cost of the War in Iraq: A Mortality Study, 2002-2006*) that yielded a figure of 650,000, which was hotly disputed, but another around the same time yielded a total of more than 400,000 dead, including all Iraqis from all causes. Both surveys followed state-of-the-art epidemiological practice. And a lot of killing was still to come after those surveys were done.

There is a lively debate among specialists about these figures, but the bottom line is that "hundreds of thousands" rather than "tens of thousands" is the incontrovertible mortality statistic.

So why the devotion to the lower number? And why does it matter?

The latter question is the easier one to answer. Make the rounds of right-wing blogs and think tanks and you'll find a constant refrain: the war, despite its many difficulties, was worth it to get rid of Saddam Hussein. As Richard Miniter of the Hudson Institute put it last September, "The death tolls in the Saddam years were far higher than in the years following liberation; hundreds of thousands disappeared into mass graves."

Such a comparison is only possible if mere "tens of thousands" perished in the war. If the human costs are calculated to be relatively low, then the next war is all the easier to start.

But what the right-wing triumphalists assert does not explain why the elite media bury the mortality issue. A half-dozen reasons explain their indifference to accurate reporting.

First, many of these news outlets had endorsed the war and never quite recanted. Even if a newspaper did admit to a mistake in judgment about the war, acknowledging that you've been hoodwinked by the Bush administration and then seeing that error magnified by 5 million refugees and perhaps a million dead is a hard pill to swallow.

Second, the Bush White House worked overtime to decry any of the high estimates, and the Murdoch media machine did its part in attempting to discredit the household surveys in

particular. The reaction to the Johns Hopkins estimate of 650,000 "excess deaths" came in for savage treatment, trashed as a "political hit" in Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal*. This campaign against the scientists had a chilling effect.

Third, journalists have rarely, if ever, engaged the technical debate about estimating casualties, preferring to report mortality — if at all — as a political story. The science is complicated, to be sure, but accessible. The epidemiologists who are thoroughly conversant with the most advanced techniques of estimating fatalities come down squarely on the side of the household surveys and the higher numbers.

Journalism in the Iraq war tended to focus on the Bush administration's foibles and the chaotic political wrangling in Baghdad. The attention to civilians and the violence of the war quickly fell into a few reliable tropes: the Shia-Sunni fratricide, spectacular car bombs rather than the quotidian reality of violence, Baghdad-centric reporting (because it was too dangerous to travel), and any glimpse of progress on the ground. While Iraqis were reporting (through blogs and polling) that 80 percent of the violence was due to the US military and the conditions of life were intolerable, this perspective rarely found its way into major news media in the United States.

Fourth, the political establishment, including the Democratic leadership, would not touch this issue, and the news media was left without an opposition voice. The implication of so many deaths, a large fraction by the hands of US soldiers, was politically a third rail. For many reasons — not least the hunger for heroes in the aftermath of 9/11 — the troops have been accorded nearly unprecedented adulation, and such heroes cannot be accused of excessive use of force. So politicians have steered clear, and the rare one who did raise a question, such as the late, pro-military congressman John Murtha, were mercilessly attacked.

Fifth is the troubling matter of racism. The major US wars since 1945 have been waged in Asia, and a certain "orientalism" — not unique to Americans, of course — has framed our perceptions of the local populations. How much a factor this is in ignoring the suffering of these populations is very difficult to gauge (about 1.5 million Korean civilians were killed in the Korean War, and between one and two million Vietnamese, and hundreds of thousands of Cambodians and Lao in America's Indochina War, all largely disregarded). But racism surely accounts for some of the cavalier disrespect the public and press show toward the civilian suffering in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The sixth and last explanation for indifference — and perhaps the most powerful — is a psychological one. We tend to avert our eyes from gruesome spectacle; it disrupts our sense of an orderly, just world. We want to believe that the mayhem is not happening, that in the end, everything will be all right, or that the victims are to blame. These kinds of reactions — demonstrated time and again in clinical experiments by social psychologists — are reflected in society and also in the news media.

The Korean War is often called the "forgotten war"; it is not literally forgotten, but avoided. The enormous destruction without a clear and satisfying result for America, led rapidly to public indifference. That,

I think, is what's occurred in Iraq—a falsely premised war with enormous devastation leads to a vast carelessness. And the civilians, the real victims, are the most disregarded of all.

Contrast the news coverage of Iraq with the summer 2006 war in Lebanon, when Israel bombed neighborhoods in Beirut that resulted in more than 1,000 Lebanese deaths in the 34-day conflict. However laudable the extensive news interest in that toll, such attention was significantly greater than the coverage of civilian killings in Iraq, which approached that figure in any single day that bloody summer. Why attention to one and not the other? A plausible explanation is that the Lebanon war was not a US operation. We were not responsible (directly), and hence discussing the human toll was not out-of-bounds.

"When the *New Republic* ran a column by a private that recounted several instances of bad behavior by US soldiers," media critic Michael Massing recalled, writing about Iraq, "he and the magazine were viciously attacked by conservative bloggers. Most Americans simply do not want to know too much about the acts being carried out in their name, and this serves as

a powerful deterrent to editors and producers."

And there's the rub. We simply don't want to know: it's too upsetting, too much to absorb. This is not behavior limited to journalists; many academics and NGOs who should know better do the same thing. Because they generally sympathize with the downtrodden of the Third World, their indifference is all the more disquieting.

But the major news media enjoy influence that few institutions possess, and with that have a responsibility to be more comprehensive, more energetic, in getting and presenting the full scope of war. Missing the WMD story before the war has been the focus of press criticism. But the bigger failure — the more consequential failure — is neglecting the fate of the people subjected to the US occupation.

And once all the American troops are withdrawn, the season of forgetting will be in full flower.

John Tirman is executive director of MIT's Center for International Studies. His new book, The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars, was released July 7, 2011 by Oxford Press.

Legalize It

LEGALIZE from p. 3

When we look at the State, naked, as it were, we see that it is universally allowed, and even encouraged, to commit all the acts that even non-libertarians concede are reprehensible crimes.... Regardless of popular sanction, War is Mass Murder, Conscriptio is Slavery, and Taxation is Robbery.

My purpose for writing is not to discuss, at any length, the differences between these approaches nor to argue for the superiority of one over another. Rather, consider the main thing these approaches have in common: the notion that individual, natural rights are of supreme importance. The goal of agorists and proponents of republican, constitutionally limited government have in common, at least, is a nominal acceptance of the protection of liberty and property. Hopefully, they also share a recognition of the truth of that famous statement on the danger of government attributed to George Washington: "it is not reason ... it is force."

In light of this, what contribution does the war on drugs make to the perpetuation of liberty and the protection of property? And at what cost?

The White House's drug-policy website reports a requested budget of \$15.5 billion for 2011. For our trouble, we have seen drug-usage rates rise, even while prisons are filled with nonviolent offenders. In 2008, four of five arrests were for possession, not distribution. Two of five are for marijuana. Americans pay to support one-fourth of the world's prison population, largely because of the "drug war". And yet violence flourishes, in part because the "war on drugs" causes drug prices to skyrocket. That the drug war is a colossal failure is scarcely debatable, especially in light of the UN's recent pronouncement to that effect. If the United Nations is calling a multiple-government power grab a disaster, then it is probably a train wreck of unprecedented proportions.

More significant, however, is the damage that this farcical war does to

our life, liberty, and property.

The "war on drugs", like any war, serves to expand the power of the state continually. Recently, we have seen virtually limitless expansions of the power of police. They are granted the authority to violate the Fourth Amendment blatantly whenever "the exigencies of the situation" make the needs of law enforcement so compelling that [a] warrantless search is objectively reasonable under the Fourth Amendment."

In *Kentucky vs. King*, the exigencies involved were the smell of marijuana and the sound of a flushing toilet. Woe to the man who has a stomach virus on a day when he burns yard trash!

Recent news reports about the abuse of civil-forfeiture laws have further diminished the credibility of the notion that the drug war is about the public good; it seems to be more about lining the public coffers.

Above all of this, hovers the tragic story of Jose Guerena, murdered in May 2011 by police in a fruitless drug raid on his Arizona home and allowed to bleed to death, unaided. The police did find guns and body armor; probably rather common for a Marine who served two tours of duty in Iraq. His murderers were recently cleared of any wrongdoing. Guerena is just another casualty in another senseless, immoral war; not on drugs, nor on some foreign enemy, but on liberty itself.

The war on drugs consistently leads to the violation of rights. It feeds the growth of government power, at a tremendous cost to the public, based on the spurious notion that government has the right or responsibility to dictate to private citizens their choice of recreational activities. It's time to legalize freedom.

Stefano R. Mugnaini is the minister of the Essex Village Church of Christ in Charleston, South Carolina, and a graduate student working toward a master of divinity, expecting to graduate this year.

News Bites

AntiTorture Strike in California Prisons

ConsortiumNews.com - Inmates at California's Pelican Bay State Prison have been on a hunger strike for a month or more to protest torturous conditions in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) there.

Prisoners in the SHU have been held for years in solitary confinement, which can amount to torture. Thousands of inmates throughout California's prison system have refused food in solidarity with the Pelican Bay prisoners, bringing the total of hunger strikers to more than 1,700.

Inmates in the SHU are confined to their cells for 22 ½ hours a day, mostly for administrative convenience. They are released for only one hour to walk in a small area with high walls. The cells in the SHU are eight feet by 10 feet with no windows.

In May, the US Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that incarceration in California prisons constitutes unconstitutional cruel and unusual punishment.

Arkansas Town Council Forbids Citizens From Freely Meeting, Forming Groups Without Formal Approval

NaturalNews.com - Members of the Gould, Arkansas, city council, a town of roughly 1,100, recently passed a new ordinance that prohibits all Gould residents from forming any kind of group or organization without first getting formal approval from the council.

The passage of the ordinance apparently stems from a dispute the city council had with a local political group called the Gould Citizens Advisory Council (GCAC) that has continually tried to influence the way the town is governed.

"I couldn't believe that it was real when I first read it," said University of Arkansas, Little Rock (UALR) School of Law Dean John DiPippa, concerning the language of the ordinance. "The truth is the city of Gould doesn't have the authority to tell anyone that they have no right to petition them, no right to speak, and no right to exist in their city."

But that is precisely what council members have attempted to do, as the ordinance's provisions not only outlaw citizens from freely congregating and discussing various issues with one another, but they also prohibit the town's Mayor Earnest Nash from meeting with and talking to local residents.

California Prison Doctor Has Prescription for High Pay

AllGov.com - Other than a few state university officials, no California government employee made more money last year than Dr. Jeffrey Rohlfling, a prison physician who's done very little doctoring in recent years.

According to a *Los Angeles Times* investigation, Rohlfling made \$777,423 in 2010. Not bad for someone with "a history of mental illness, was fired once for alleged incompetence and has not been allowed to treat an inmate for six years because medical supervisors don't trust his clinical skills."

To be fair, Rohlfling's base salary was only \$235,740, typical for California's corrections system. But he also collected back pay for two years he didn't work for the state while appealing his termination.

Rohlfling's troubles began in 1996, when he suffered a breakdown while working at a hospital in Fresno. Twice, he was committed to psychiatric wards for 72 hours, leading to the California Medical Board putting him on probation for five years.

Being on probation didn't stop state prison officials in Susanville from giving Rohlfling a part-time job in August 2000. Three years later he was elevated to full-time work caring for prisoners. One died under his care in 2005, and two others having heart problems failed to get proper medical care under Rohlfling's authority.

His supervisors then fired him. But Rohlfling appealed the decision and was reinstated in 2009.

Years Later: Human Rights Watch Announces That Bush and Cheney Tortured — What Gives?

WarIsACrime.org - Statutes of limitations for torture not resulting in death have passed. The DOJ has refused to prosecute 99 of 101 cases of torture-to-death that it looked at. Obama has long since publicly told the DOJ not to prosecute the CIA for torture. Obama's torture of Bradley Manning has been widely ignored. Rendition has been established as normal. Torturers have published professional/praising memoirs. Habeas corpus has been formally ended. The Bagram-Gitmo archipelago is here to stay. Torture continues in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Assassinations have been established as the truly big new fashion. Harold Koh has replaced John Yoo as the Guy Who Will "Legalize" Anything. We've got more illegal wars going at once than ever before. Congress has practically dropped the pretense of a rule of law. The President can't clear his throat without opposing "re-litigating the past," as if on the planet he comes from it is common to litigate the future. And Human Rights Watch has chosen this moment to announce that Bush and Cheney might just have been responsible for torture?

(Washington, DC) - Overwhelming evidence of torture by the Bush administration obliges President Barack Obama to order a criminal investigation into allegations of detainee abuse authorized by former President George W. Bush and other senior officials, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. The Obama administration has failed to meet US obligations under the Convention against Torture to investigate acts of torture and other ill-treatment of detainees, Human Rights Watch said.

Hey, thanks, Sherlock. What was your first clue?

I'm glad someone still cares. But why not care a little faster?

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