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The Anti-Empire Report

by William Blum

1/4/2011

"Most people don't understand what they have been part of here," said Command Sgt. Major Ron Kelley as he and other American troops prepared to leave Iraq in mid-December. "We have done a great thing as a nation. We freed a people and gave their country back to them."

"It is pretty exciting," said another young American soldier in Iraq. "We are going down in the history books, you might say." (Washington Post, December 18, 2011)

Ah yes, the history books, the multi-volume leather-bound set of "The Greatest Destructions of One Country by Another." The newest volume can relate, with numerous graphic photos, how the modern, educated, advanced nation of Iraq was reduced to a quasi failed state; how the Americans, beginning in 1991, bombed for 12 years, with one dubious excuse or another; then invaded, then occupied, overthrew the government, tortured without inhibition, killed wantonly, ... how the people of that unhappy land lost everything — their homes, their schools, their electricity, their clean water, their environment, their neighborhoods, their mosques, their archaeology, their jobs, their careers, their professionals, their state-run enterprises, their physical health, their mental health, their health care, their welfare state, their women's rights, their religious tolerance, their safety, their security, their children, their parents, their past, their present, their future, their lives ... More than half the population either dead, wounded, traumatized, in prison, internally displaced, or in foreign exile ... The air, soil, water, blood, and genes drenched with depleted uranium ... the most awful birth defects ... unexploded cluster bombs lying anywhere in wait for children to pick them up ... a river of blood running alongside the Euphrates and Tigris ... through a country that may never be put back together again.

"It is a common refrain among war-weary Iraqis that things were better before the U.S.-led invasion in 2003," reported the Washington Post on May 5, 2007.

No matter ... drum roll, please ... Stand tall American GI hero! And don't even think of ever apologizing or paying any reparations. Iraq is forced by Washington to continue paying reparations to Kuwait for Iraq's invasion in 1990 (an invasion instigated in no small measure by the United States). And — deep breath here! — Vietnam has been compensating the United States. Since 1997 Hanoi has been paying off about \$145 million in debts left by the defeated South Vietnamese government for American food and infrastructure aid. Thus, Hanoi is reimbursing the United States for part of the cost of the war waged against it. (William Blum, *Rogue State*, p.304) How much will the United States pay the people of Iraq?

On December 14, at the Fort Bragg, North Carolina military base, Barack Obama stood before an audience of soldiers to speak about the Iraq war. It was a moment in which the president of the United States found it within his heart and soul — as well as within his oft-praised (supposed) intellect — to proclaim:

This is an extraordinary achievement, nearly nine years in the making. And today, we remember everything that you did to make it possible. ... Years from now, your legacy will endure. In the names of your fallen comrades etched on headstones at Arlington, and the quiet memorials across our country. In the whispered words of admiration as you march in parades, and in the freedom of our children and grandchildren. ... So God bless you all, God bless your families, and God bless the United States of America. ... You have earned your place in history because you sacrificed so much for people you have never met.

Does Mr. Obama, the Peace Laureate, believe the words that come out of his mouth?

Barack H. Obama believes only in being the President of the United States. It is the only strong belief the man holds.

Items of interest from a journal I've kept for 40 years, part VI

If the US really believed in 2002-3 that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction why did they send in more than 100,000 troops, who were certain to be annihilated?

In a letter released August 17, 2006, 21 former generals and high ranking national security officials called on President George W. Bush to reverse course and embrace a new area of negotiation with Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. The group told reporters Bush's "hard line" policies had undermined national security and made America less safe.

Throughout most of the 20th century, the Catholic Church in Latin America taught its flocks of the poor that there was no need to do battle with the ruling elite because the poor would get their just rewards in the afterlife.

The US overthrew the Sandinistas in Nicaragua because the Sandinistas "intended to create a country where there was only a colony before." — Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer

"[George W.] Bush said last week that part of the purpose of the Indonesia trip 'is to make sure that the people who are suspicious of our country understand our motives are pure'." (Washington Post, October 22, 2003)

"Wars may be aberrant experiences in the lives of most human individuals, but some nations are serial aggressors. American society is unique in having been formed almost wholly by processes of aggression against external and internal Others." — The Black Commentator, June 8, 2006

President Obama should accompany the military people when they inform parents that their child has died in the latest of America's never-ending wars. And maybe ask George W. to come along as well.

During the Vietnam War some University of Michigan students created a brouhaha when they threatened to napalm a puppy dog on the steps of a campus building. The uproar of indignation at their cruelty was heard nationwide. Of course, when the time came they didn't do it, having successfully made the point that people cared more about napalming a dog than they did about napalming people.

"It's a lie and an illusion that we have an inefficient government. This government is only inefficient if you think its job is, as stated in the Constitution, 'to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.' These objectives are beyond our government's talents only because they are beyond its intentions." — Michael Ventura

"Get some new lawyers" - US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook when he told her he was informed that the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 (which Albright championed) was illegal under international law.

The two countries of the world, along with the United States, which have the greatest national obsession with baseball are two of the main targets of US foreign policy: Venezuela and Cuba.

The Cuban Five case: This is the first case in American history of alleged spying and espionage without a single page from a secret document. The government never presented any evidence of a stolen official document or any attempt to steal an official document. This is the first spy case without secrets from the government. (Read more)

"If a bomb is deliberately dropped on a house or a vehicle on the grounds that a 'suspected terrorist' is inside, the resulting deaths of women and children may not be intentional. But neither are they accidental. The proper description is 'inevitable'. So if an action will inevitably kill innocent people, it is as immoral as a deliberate attack on civilians." — Howard Zinn

"The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously Saturday to impose limited sanctions on North Korea for its recent missile tests, and demanded that the reclusive communist nation suspend its ballistic missile program." (Associated Press, July 15, 2006) ... Internet commentator: "Test some missiles that land harmlessly in the ocean? Unanimous condemnation. Fire some missiles at targets on land, kill hundreds of people, and destroy hundreds of civilian targets including power plants, airports, roads, bridges, TV stations, etc., all in violation of the Geneva Convention? Hey, no problem."

For some nine years, American B-52 bombers relentlessly dropped tons of ordnance on a southeast Asian country (Vietnam) that still cultivated rice fields using draft animals.

"The messianism of American foreign policy is a remarkable thing. When Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice speaks it seems like Khrushchev reporting to the party congress: 'The whole world is marching triumphantly toward democracy but some rogue states prefer to stay aside from that road, etc. etc'." — Natalia Narochnitskaya, vice chairman of the international affairs committee in the State Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament. (Washington Post, April 3, 2006)

Washington ... Propagandistan

The bulldozer, driven by an Israeli army soldier on assignment to demolish a home, rolled over Rachel Corrie, who was 23 years old. She had taken a nonviolent position for human rights; she lost her life as a result. But she was rarely praised in the same US media outlets that had gone into raptures over the image of a solitary unarmed man standing in front of Chinese tanks at the time of the Tiananmen Square massacre. — Norman Solomon

American sovereignty hasn't faced a legitimate foreign threat to its existence since the British in 1812.

There are two major patterns in foreign policy: the rule of force or the rule of law. On February 8, 1819 the US decided, after a very long debate in the House, to reject the rule of law in foreign policy. The vote was 100 to 70 against requiring the Congress to approve illegal invasions of other countries or peoples. This pertained to the "Seminole War", actually the invasion of Florida. Since then every president has had the right to "defend America", code words for the use of force against whomever he chooses. — Kelly Gelgering

Happy New Year. Here's what to look forward to.

JANUARY 22: Congress passes a law requiring that all persons arrested in anti-war demonstrations be sterilized. House Speaker John Boehner declares it is "God's will". House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi says she supports the law but that she has some reservation because there's no provision for a right of appeal.

FEBRUARY 15: Ron Paul assassinated by man named Oswald Harvey.

FEBRUARY 18: Oswald Harvey, while in solitary confinement and guarded round the clock by 1200 policemen and the entire 3rd Army Brigade, is killed by man named Ruby Jackson.

FEBRUARY 26: Ruby Jackson suddenly dies in prison of a rare Asian disease heretofore unknown in the Western Hemisphere.

MARCH 6: US President Hopey Changey announces new draconian sanctions against Iran, Syria, North Korea, Pakistan, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba, declaring that they all possess weapons of mass destruction, are an imminent threat to the United States, have close ties to al Qaeda and the Taliban, are aiding Islamic terrorists in Somalia, were involved in 9-11, played a role in the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the attack on Pearl Harbor, do not believe in God or American Exceptionalism, and are all "really bad guys".

APRIL 1: Military forces overthrow Evo Morales in Bolivia. US State Department decries the loss of democracy.

APRIL 2: US recognizes the new Bolivian military junta, sells it 100 jet fighters and 200 tanks.

APRIL 3: Revolution breaks out in Bolivia endangering the military junta; 40,000 American marines are sent to La Paz to quell the uprising.

APRIL 8: Dick Cheney announces from his hospital bed that the United States has finally discovered caches of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq — "So all those doubters can now just go 'F' themselves." The former vice-president, however, refuses to provide any details of the find because, he says, to do so might reveal intelligence sources or methods.

APRIL 10: ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco, General Electric, General Motors, AT&T, Ford, and IBM merge to form "Free Enterprise, Inc."

APRIL 16: Free Enterprise, Inc. seeks to purchase Guatemala and Haiti. Citigroup refuses to sell.

APRIL 18: Free Enterprise, Inc. purchases Citigroup.

MAY 5: The Democratic Party changes its name to the Republican Lite Party, and announces the opening of a joint bank account with the Republicans so that corporate lobbyists need make out only one check. In celebration of the change the new party calls for eliminating the sales tax on yachts.

MAY 11: China claims to have shot down an American spy plane over the center of China. State Department categorically denies the story.

MAY 12: State Department admits that an American plane may have "inadvertently" strayed 2,000 miles into China, but denies that it was a spy plane.

MAY 13: State Department admits that the plane may have been a spy plane but denies that it was piloted by a US government employee.

MAY 14: State Department admits that the pilot was a civilian employee of a Defense Department contractor but denies that China exists.

JUNE 11: Homeland Security announces plan to collect the DNA at birth of every child born in the United States.

JULY 1: The air in Los Angeles reaches so bad a pollution level that the rich begin to hire undocumented workers to breathe for them.

AUGUST 6: The Justice Department announces that six people have been arrested in New York in connection with a plan to bomb the United Nations, the Empire State Building, the Times Square subway station, Madison Square Garden, and Lincoln Center.

AUGUST 7: Charges are dropped against four of "The New York Six" when it is determined that they are FBI agents.

AUGUST 16: At a major demonstration in Washington, the Tea Party demands an end to all government expenditures. They also warn Congress not to touch Social Security or Medicare.

AUGUST 26: Texas executes a 16-year-old girl for having an abortion and a 12-year-old boy for possession of marijuana.

SEPTEMBER 3: The Labor Department announces that Labor Day will become a celebration of America's gratitude to its corporations, a day dedicated to the memory of J.P. Morgan and Pinkerton strike breakers killed in the line of duty.

SEPTEMBER 12: The draft is reinstated for males and females, ages 16 to 45. Those who are missing a limb or are blind can apply for non-combat roles.

SEPTEMBER 14: Riots breaks out in 24 American cities in protest of the new draft. 200,000 American troops are brought home from Afghanistan, Iraq, and 25 other countries to put down the riots.

SEPTEMBER 28: The Tea Party calls for giving embryos the vote.

OCTOBER 19: Cops the world over form a new association, Policemen's International Governing Society. PIGS announces that its first goal will be to mount a campaign against the notion that a person is innocent until proven guilty, in those countries where the quaint notion still dwells.

NOVEMBER 8: The turnout for the US presidential election is 9.6%. The voting ballots are all imprinted: "From one person, one vote, to one dollar, one vote." The winner is "None of the above".

NOVEMBER 11: US prison population reaches 2.5 million. It is determined that at least 70 percent of the prisoners would not have been incarcerated a century ago, for the acts they committed were then not criminal violations.

DECEMBER 3: Supreme Court rules that police may search anyone if they have reasonable grounds for believing that the person has pockets.

DECEMBER 16: The Occupy Movement sets up a tent on the White House lawn. An hour later a missile fired from a drone leaves but a thin wisp of smoke.