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Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio? The Anti-Empire Report

by William Blum

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"France no longer recognizes its children," lamented Guillaume Roquette in an editorial in the *Figaro* weekly magazine in Paris. "How can the country of Victor Hugo, secularism and family reunions produce jihadists capable of attacking a kosher grocery store?" ¹

I ask: How can the country of Henry David Thoreau, separation of church and state, and family Thanksgiving dinners produce American super-nationalists capable of firing missiles into Muslim family reunions in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia?

Does America recognize its children? Indeed, it honors them. Constantly.

A French state prosecutor stated that "A network of French Islamists behind a grenade attack on a kosher market outside Paris last month also planned to join jihadists fighting in Syria." ²

We can add these worthies to the many other jihadists coming from all over to fight in Syria for regime change, waving al-Qaeda flags ("There is no god but God"), carrying out suicide attacks, exploding car bombs, and singling out Christians for extermination (for not supporting the overthrow of the secular Syrian government.) These folks are not the first ones you would think of as allies in a struggle for the proverbial freedom and democracy. Yet America's children are on the same side, with the same goal of overthrowing Syrian president Bashar Assad.

So how do America's leaders explain and justify this?

"Not everybody who's participating on the ground in fighting Assad are people who we are comfortable with," President Obama said in an interview in December. "There are some who, I think, have adopted an extremist agenda, an anti-U.S. agenda, and we are going to make clear to distinguish between those elements." ³

In an earlier speech, Secretary of State Clinton acknowledged the scope of the threat from such movements. "A year of democratic transition was never going to drain away reservoirs of radicalism built up through decades of dictatorship," she said. "As we've learned from the beginning, there are extremists who seek to exploit periods of instability and hijack these democratic transitions." ⁴

"Extremist" ... "radicalism" ... No mention of "terrorists" (which is what Assad calls them). No mention of "jihadists" or foreign mercenaries. Or that they were preparing their movement to overthrow the Syrian government well before any government suppression of peaceful protestors in March of 2011, which the Western media consistently cites as the cause of the civil war. As far back as 2007, Seymour Hersh was writing in *The New Yorker*:

The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.

Nor any explanation of what it says about the mission of the Holy Triumvirate (the United States, NATO and the European Union) that they have been supplying these jihadist rebels with funds, arms and training; with intelligence and communication equipment; with diplomatic recognition(!); later we'll probably find out about even more serious stuff. But President Obama is simply "uncomfortable" with them, because Assad, like Gaddafi of Libya, is a non-Triumvirate Believer, while the Jihadists are the proverbial "enemy of my enemy". How long before they turn their guns and explosives upon Americans, as they did in Libya?

Seeing is believing, and believing is seeing

Is it easier for a believer to deal with a tragedy like the one in Newtown, Connecticut than it is for an atheist? The human suffering surrounding the ending of life forever for 20 small children and six adults made me choke up again and again with each news report. I didn't have the comfort that some religious people might have had – that it was "God's will", that there must be a "reason" for such profound agony, a good reason, which you would understand if you could receive God's infinite wisdom, if you could be enlightened enough to see how it fit into God's Master Plan.

"How could God let this happen?", asked a Fox News reporter of former Republican governor of Arkansas and presidential candidate, Mike Huckabee. "Well," replied Huckabee, "you know, it's an interesting thing. We ask why there is violence in our schools, but we've systematically removed God from our schools. Should we be so surprised that schools would become a place of carnage because we've made it a place where we don't want to talk about eternity, life, what

responsibility means, accountability? That we're not just going to have to be accountable to the police, if they catch us. But one day, we will stand before a Holy God in judgment. If we don't believe that, then we don't fear that."

So the former governor is clearly implying that the tragedy was the lord's retribution for not believing in, or not fearing, or just ignoring His Master Plan. Believing this may well reduce the grief Huckabee feels about what happened; perhaps even provide him some satisfaction that those who were not "accountable" are being punished. Whether he includes the children in this group, or only their parents, teachers, school officials and Democrats I don't know.

Local pastor Jim Solomon recounted the story of a girl in the first grade who, by playing dead, was the only one in her room to survive: "She ran out of the school building covered from head to toe with blood and the first thing she said to her mom was, 'Mommy, I'm OK but all my friends are dead!'" This child was spared, said the pastor, "by God's grace".⁵

Ah yes, God's grace. Do I need to ask the obvious question?

It may be relevant to recall that the fellow who slaughtered 87 young people in Norway last year was a fundamentalist Christian.

"With or without religion, good people will do good things and bad people will do bad things. But for good people to do bad things — that takes religion." - Steven Weinberg, Nobel Prize-winning physicist

"Guns don't kill people. People kill people."

How true. And nuclear bombs don't kill people. Government leaders who decide to use nuclear bombs kill people. So why have any bans on nuclear bombs? Get one for each member of the family; well, for those over 16 at least.

The crazed and the disturbed will always walk amongst us. What we must do is strive to deny them the facile ability to engage in mass murder. Everything else being equal, if the Connecticut killer's mother didn't have an arsenal of guns at home, including an assault weapon, the story would probably have been a very different one. Ah, but I hear you asking – on the left and on the right – so you wanna let the government have all the guns and the people nothing to defend themselves with? To which I reply: Do you really think the people could hold their own in an armed battle with the police and the military? Mass suicide.

In the past decade various important rights and freedoms of Americans have been seriously curtailed by the Bush and Obama administrations. Did the 300 million guns in private hands prevent any of this from happening? No. And the rights and the freedoms were taken away much more by pieces of paper than guns.

I'd be in favor of eliminating all guns except for some law enforcement purposes. But if that is not feasible, the goal should be to have as few guns in circulation as possible. Or just ban

ammunition, which would be a lot easier and probably even more effective. It would be a good start toward our cherished national goal of becoming a civilized society.

The death of Osama bin Laden. What does it profit a country?

The books and the films are coming out. The subject is a sure winner. The American tracking down and execution of Osama bin Laden in May of 2011. Has there ever been a better example of Good triumphing over Evil? Of Yankee courage and cleverness? "The bin Laden operation was a landmark achievement by our country, by our military, by our Intelligence Community, and by our Agency," said the acting Director of the CIA, Michael Morell. ⁶

But even if everything the government has told us about the operation is true ... How important was it really? What did it change in Washington's glorious War on Terror? American taxpayers are not spending a penny less on the bloody spectacle. American soldiers still die in Afghanistan as before. American drones still bring extreme anxiety, death and destruction to children and parents in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Guantánamo still holds numerous damned souls who wonder why they are there as they bang their head against a brick wall.

Anti-American terrorists are still being regularly created as a result of US anti-terrorist operations. (Even the way bin Laden was "buried" increased the hatred.) It's a mass-production terrorist assembly line working three shifts even if the bin Laden model has been discontinued. If only one in 10,000 of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims is moved to want to attack the US because of Washington's repeated outrages against Muslims, the United States will have created a pool of 160,000 Muslims devoted to seeking revenge against Americans.

"Remember when the United States had a drug problem and then we declared a War on Drugs, and now you can't buy drugs anymore? The War on Terrorism will be just like that," declared author David Rees in 2008. ⁷

The fear mongering remains as is; airport security has not gotten any less stupid, embarrassing, or destructive of civil liberties than before, only worse. "Will that be frisked or naked pictures with your airline ticket, sir?" The No-Fly list grows bigger with each passing day, listing people who are too guilty to fly, but too innocent to charge with anything.

Wherever you go — "If you see something, say something!"

People are entrapped as much as ever, charged with some form of terrorism (or "terrorism"), staged and financed by government agents, put away for terribly long periods. The State Department puts a country on its terrorist list, then the FBI persecutes Americans for helping someone in that country, perhaps no more than medical aid.

And surveillance of Americans ... the science fiction methods are expanded without end ... no escape from Fortress America. Protestors in America are monitored and harassed and recorded as much as before; witness the recent revelations concerning the FBI/Homeland Security/et al and the Occupy Movement. The Patriot Act is still the law of the land, now joined by the National Defense Authorization Act which makes it easier than ever to hold people in indefinite detention,

for any reason, or no reason, including American citizens. And now we have the president's clandestine "kill list".⁸ Could it be any worse if bin Laden were still alive?

Just imagine

Imagine there's no countries

It isn't hard to do.

Nothing to kill or die for

And no religion too ...

John Lennon's "Imagine".

Sung New Years Eve by a performer at Times Square.

Such subversive talk.

And on worldwide television.

Followed *immediately* by NBC-TV commentator Carson Daly declaring that we have to honor our brave soldiers.

I'm surprised that he didn't also mention honoring God.

Toshiba sponsored the giant glass ball which rose up to the top at midnight.

Viewers had the name "Toshiba" flashed in their face a hundred times during the evening in all kinds of ways.

Imagine that John Lennon had called upon us to "Imagine there's no Toshiba".

Without Toshiba would there not have been a New Years Eve?

Stuck in 2012 forever?

Imagine.

"Summer, 1969: I sit next to Fidel Castro as he watches on the University of Havana's color TV the astronauts landing on the moon. At times he asks me to render certain idioms. He watches with fascination. The program had begun with 'TANG: THE BREAKFAST FOOD PRESENTS ... THE MOON LANDING.'

"And without Tang," Castro asks, "would there have been no moon landing?"

– Saul Landau, author of numerous books and films on Cuba

One way to look at it

Capitalism can be seen in historical evolutionary terms, independent of any moral point of view or judgement. Broadly speaking, the organization of mankind's societies has evolved from slavery to feudalism to capitalism. And it's now time for the next step: socialism.

Socialism or communism have always been given just one chance to work, if that much, while capitalism has been given numerous chances to do so following its perennial fiascos. Ralph Nader has observed: "Capitalism will never fail because socialism will always be there to bail it out."

Capitalism gave rise to some very important innovations, such as mass production and distribution, and many technological advances. But now, and for some time past, the system has caused much more harm than good. It's eating its young. And our environment. We can take the advances instituted by capitalism for the purpose of profit and use them to create a society based on putting people before profit. Just imagine.

Notes

1. *Washington Post*, October 21, 2012 ↩
2. *Associated Press*, October 11, 2012 ↩
3. *Washington Post*, December 11, 2012 ↩
4. *Washington Post*, October 15, 2012 ↩
5. *Huffington Post*, December 17, 2012 ↩
6. *Washington Post*, December 22, 2012 ↩
7. In his book *Get Your War On* ↩
8. *New York Times*, May 29, 2012 ↩