

# Torture, Paramilitarism, Occupation and Genocide

## Torture as Policy under George Bush

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

On October 5, George Bush confronted a public uproar and defended his administration claiming "This government does not torture people." Again he lied. Once secret US Department of Justice (DOJ) legal opinions confirm the Bush administration condones torture by endorsing "the harshest interrogation techniques ever used by the Central Intelligence Agency." It also condones paramilitary thuggery, oppressive occupation, and genocide. This unholy combination is the ugly face of an imperial nation run by war criminals. That's the state of things today. First, the practice of torture.

### Torture as Policy under George Bush

In a hollow posturing gesture, DOJ publicly declared torture "abhorrent" in a December, 2004 legal opinion. That secretly changed after Alberto Gonzales became Attorney General in February, 2005 and authorized physical and psychological brutality as official administration policy. This continues unabated in violation of international and US laws that include fifth and eighth amendment prohibitions against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in all forms for any reason. These practices been long-standing US official policy, nonetheless, but the mask came off post-9/11 when former CIA Counterterrorism Center chief Cofer Black (now Blackwater USA's vice-chairman) told a joint House-Senate intelligence committee hearing September 26, 2002: "There was a before-9/11 and an after-9/11(on the use of torture). After 9/11, the gloves came off" and "old" standards no longer apply. They never did, and Congress knows and condones it.

Further, George Bush signed a secret September 17, 2001 "finding" authorizing CIA to kill, capture and detain "Al Qaeda" members anywhere in the world and rendition them to secret black site torture prisons for interrogation presumed to include torture.

As White House Counsel, Alberto Gonzales then wrote a sweeping memorandum to George Bush January 25, 2002 calling the Geneva Conventions "quaint" and "obsolete" and claimed the administration could ignore Geneva international law in interrogating prisoners henceforth. He also outlined plans to try prisoners in military "commissions" and deny them all protections under international law including due process and habeas rights. DOD Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was on board as well. In December, 2002, he approved a menu of banned interrogation practices that allowed most anything short of what would cause organ failure.

A new book called "Administration of Torture," by two ACLU attorneys, contains evidence (from FOIA requests) from over 100,000 newly released government documents. It reveals how US military interrogators carried out abuse and torture orders from their superiors on scores of prisoners. The book quotes Major General Michael Dunlavey who had DOD

responsibility for interrogations of “suspected terrorists.” He and Guantanamo commander General Geoffrey Miller both told the FBI they got their “marching orders” from Donald Rumsfeld to use harsh methods at Guantanamo that presumably were meant for all other US-run torture prisons as well. It was also revealed that Rumsfeld was “personally involved” in overseeing the torture-interrogation of Mohammed al Qahtani. He was falsely accused of being the 20th 9/11 hijacker, confessed under torture, and then retracted his testimony later as completely untrue.

Torture violates international law. The (non-binding) Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlawed it in 1948. The four 1949 Geneva Conventions then banned any form of “physical or mental coercion” and affirmed detainees must at all times be treated humanely. Its first two conventions protect sick and wounded forces in battle. The third one defines who is a prisoner of war and establishes “minimum standards” for POW treatment. The fourth convention applies to civilians and affords them protections during war that require they be treated humanely. All four conventions have a common thread called Common Article Three. It requires non-combatants be treated humanely at all times. There are no exceptions for any reasons and violations are grave breaches under Geneva and other international law that constitute crimes of war and against humanity.

The European Convention followed Geneva in 1950. Then in 1984, the UN Convention Against Torture became the first binding international instrument dealing exclusively with the issue of banning torture in any form for any reason. These are sacred international laws all signatories, that include the US, are bound by. No longer under George Bush’s unconstitutional “unitary executive” authority power grab Chalmers Johnson calls a “bald-faced assertion of presidential supremacy....dressed up in legalistic mumbo jumbo.” Condoning torture as official policy under it is Exhibit A.

In her important new book, “Cowboy Republic: Six Ways the Bush Gang Defied the law,” law professor and current National Lawyers Guild president Marjorie Cohn calls torture abhorrent and violates at least two US laws – the 1996 War Crimes Act and 1994 Torture Statute. The US is also party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that guarantees the right to life and prohibits cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

The 1996 War Crimes Act provides up to life imprisonment or the death penalty for persons convicted of committing war crimes within or outside the US. Administration memos from Gonzales, John Yoo, Jay Bybee, and David Addington supported dictatorial powers for the president and advised Al Qaeda and Taliban interrogators were exempt from torture laws under George Bush’s “commander-in-chief powers.” Cohn, in her book, explained “the Torture Convention permits no such exemption, even during wartime.”

Yoo and Bybee also distorted what constitutes torture by claiming psychological harm must last “months or even years.” Otherwise, it’s just harsh “enhanced interrogation” of the secret kinds George Bush authorized in a July, 2006 executive order. They reportedly include sleep deprivation, simulated drowning, stress positions, prolonged isolation, sensory deprivation and/or overload, beatings, induced hypothermia, and more that can cause irreversible physical and psychological harm including psychoses.

The October, 2006 Military Commissions Act followed, appropriately called the “torture authorization act.” It gives the administration extraordinary unconstitutional powers to detain, interrogate and prosecute alleged terror suspects and anyone thought to be their supporters. The law lets the president designate anyone in the world an “unlawful enemy

combatant,” without corroborating evidence, and order they be arrested and incarcerated indefinitely in military prisons outside the criminal justice system without habeas and due process rights. US citizens aren’t exempt. We’re all “enemy combatants” under this law. Anyone charged under it loses all constitutionally protected rights and can be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment including torture.

Ironically, on the one year anniversary of the Military Commissions Act enactment, Fr. Louie Vitale and Fr. Steve Kelly were both sentenced to five months in federal prison for opposing torture. They also oppose teaching it at Fort Huachuca, Arizona and tried to deliver a letter with their views to the base commander, Major General Barbara Fast, former head of military intelligence in Iraq. Both priests were arrested for trespassing while kneeling in prayer on the base driveway in November, 2006. In an appalling miscarriage of justice, the presiding judge refused to allow any evidence of torture to be introduced. He also ruled out discussion of the illegality of the Iraq war and all references to international law.

Relief from these type abuses are nowhere in sight as leading Democrats condone them and now assure extremist Attorney General nominee Michael Mukasey’s nomination won’t be challenged. He promises business as usual that’s bad news for supporters of the law. He earned his bona fides as a US District Court Southern District of New York judge by ruling Jose Padilla, a US citizen, could be imprisoned without trial and held indefinitely by the military.

Padilla spent three and a half years uncharged in a 9 by 7-foot isolated South Carolina Navy brig cell where he underwent alternating sensory deprivation and overload and was denied the right to counsel for two years. Months of beatings, mind-altering drugs, and denial of medical treatment destroyed his mind, turned him to mush, and him easy pickings to convict on all charges without evidence he broke any law. Under Bush administration justice, we’re all potential Jose Padillas in a nation where the rule of law affords no protection, and torture is the preferred means of social control.

#### Administration Outsourced Paramilitarism

The Bush administration believes anything government can do private business does better, so let it. And that applies to the military as well with Blackwater USA’s powerful emergence Exhibit A. Author Jeremy Scahill portrays the company as “the world’s most powerful mercenary army” in his frightening new book about it. It describes a “shadowy mercenary company (employing) some of the most feared professional killers in the world....accustomed to operating without worry of legal consequences....largely off the congressional radar.” It has “remarkable power and protection within the US war apparatus” with unaccountable license to practice street violence with impunity that includes cold-blooded murder.

A congressional report indicates Blackwater received more than \$1 billion in mostly State Department no-bid contracts since 2001. It’s to provide security services for US diplomats, officials and others once assigned to the military at around six times the cost and can be up to \$1200 per man-day. With Bush administration backing, it operates outside the law and Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and is immune from civil lawsuits like the military. Scahill calls the company the “Bush administration’s Praetorian Guard” with “immunity and impunity” to do as it pleases.

Today, around 200,000 private contractors operate in Iraq. Up to 100,000 of them are

paramilitary mercenaries from companies like Blackwater, DynCorp, ArmorGroup, Erinys, Triple Canopy and others like the Australian-owned Unity Resources that murdered two Iraqi women October 9. Blackwater is the largest, is close to the Bush administration, and is cashing in big as a war profiteer from huge continuing no-bid contracts.

The company was founded in 1996 by former Navy SEAL Eric Prince who's also closely allied to the extremist Christian Right. Blackwater came into its own post-9/11 and is now the world's best connected, largest paramilitary army. It employs 2300 personnel in nine countries with 20,000 or more others on call as needed. The company also has its own 20 aircraft fleet that includes helicopter gunships as well as a private intelligence division and a 7000 acre Moyock, North Carolina headquarters Scahill calls "the world's largest private military base."

Controversary surrounding Blackwater made headlines after its mercenaries killed as many as 28 Iraqis in al-Nisour September 16 by some accounts and wounded dozens more. It was only the latest incident involving the company that has a disturbing history of instigating unprovoked violence and then falsely claim it acted in self-defense as Eric Prince told Congress saying his men act "appropriately at all times."

A new congressional account from State Department and company documents reveals otherwise. It shows the company has been involved in at least 195 "escalation of force" incidents since early 2005 that include previously unreported Iraqi civilian killings. In at least one of them, evidence proved Blackwater personnel tried covering up what happened with a falsified report, and the State Department made no effort to hold them accountable or order the company to pay compensation to the families of the victims.

Agence France-Presse reported on September 16 Blackwater personnel shot recklessly "at everything that moved with a machine gun and even with a grenade launcher (as well as from two hovering helicopters). There was panic. Everyone tried to flee. Vehicles tried to make U-turns to escape. There were dead bodies and wounded people everywhere. The road was full of blood. A bus was also hit and several of its occupants were wounded." Among the dead were women and children. A daughter witnessing her mother shot in the head and killed said: "They are killers. I swear to God, not one bullet was shot at them. Why did they shoot us?"

Following the incident, investigations were launched that are little more than damage control cover-up. The FBI is involved as well as a joint American-Iraqi inquiry. Iraqi prime minister al-Maliki has gone back and forth on this one. At first, he demanded Blackwater personnel leave Iraq. He then backed down under pressure. He'll likely await the inquiry's findings that are out in part from Iraqi investigators, but again said he wants Washington to sever all Blackwater ties, remove the company from Iraq in six months, and have it pay each family \$8 million in compensation.

It won't ever happen, even though early findings conclude Blackwater's actions were unprovoked, the al-Nisour massacre was a deliberate crime, those involved in it should be charged, put on trial, and the families of victims fairly compensated. The findings are similar to an initial US military report that one Pentagon official confirmed saying Blackwater's actions were "obviously excessive, it was obviously wrong. The civilians....didn't have any weapons (and) none of the IP (Iraqi police) or any local security forces fired (on Blackwater)."

Investigations are still continuing, the State Department is in damage control mode, and an October 4 House-passed bill (not retroactive) just made US contractors accountable for felony crimes under the 2000 Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA). In addition, new operating procedures have been instituted to paper over the whole affair. Nothing, in fact, will change, however. Blackwater personnel will stay in place, none of them will face criminal charges, and things are again business as usual with the company's paramilitaries back on Iraqi streets after being banned from operating there by an impotent prime minister.

A sign of things to come came a day ahead of the October House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Blackwater hearing. It was revealed the company's Presidential Airways subsidiary got a new government contract to supply aircraft, crew and equipment for flight operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Blackwater personnel may likely show up anywhere and currently patrol New Orleans streets for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) post-hurricane Katrina. Their presence is menacing everywhere, and they may show up soon in a neighborhood near you as the "war on terrorism" touches down at home.

### Imperial Conquest and Occupation

Current rhetoric aside, even Alan Greenspan's new book admitted what's "politically inconvenient to acknowledge (but) everyone knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil" and it was "essential" Saddam be removed to control it. Unmentioned was Iraq's importance that explains why Washington plans permanent occupation of the country. The Middle East has two-thirds of the world's proved oil reserves; Iraq has the most untapped amounts of it; and it's the easiest gotten, cheap to refine light sweet kind Big Oil covets. The country is also strategically located between Saudi Arabia and Iran at the top of the Persian Gulf. That makes it a perfect site for military bases sitting atop an ocean of oil worth trillions of dollars and surrounded by lots more of it.

The strategy to seize it was simply conceived but hopelessly flawed – replace the "cradle of civilization" with a newly created free market paradise with all that oil as grand prize pickings. It's still up for grabs, but a huge supportive infrastructure is in place and still being built for permanent occupation.

By May, 2005, US forces were operating out of 106 bases around the country from an original 120 number of sites. They range in size from the huge Main Operating Base (MOB) Camp Victory complex near Baghdad airport with thousands of US troops to others for fewer numbers called Forward Operation Sites (FOS) that are still major installations. There are also many smaller Cooperative Security Locations (CSL) as well as prisons and detention facilities throughout the country plus others for Iraqi military and police units.

A sign of permanency are four to six or more super-bases built and planned, the largest of which is the huge Balad one. It's the major Air Force facility in the country with its state of the art "Kingpin" air traffic control center (called the Common Grid Reference System) that divides the country's airspace into "kill boxes." The Army's largest logistical support center and secret Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) are also there as well as well as thousands of civilian contractors in neighborhoods charmingly called "KBR-land."

Balad and other major bases are enormous in size and on the order of small towns. They encompass 15 – 20 square miles with double runways as long as 12,000 feet, and Balad's

air traffic operates round the clock and is comparable in number of takeoffs and landings to Chicago's O'Hare that along with Atlanta's Hartsfield are the world's two busiest airports.

In addition, they have their own neighborhoods and kinds of amenities found back home. They include department store-sized post exchanges, fast food outlets, movie theaters with the latest films, swimming pools, miniature golf courses, elaborate gymnasium and sports facilities, satellite internet access, cable TV, air-conditioning, international phone service and more. All the comforts of home including takeout pizza and Monday night football in the middle of a war zone.

Other major facilities are at al-Talil near Nasiriya in the South; the largest Marine base at al-Asad in Western Anbar province; al-Qayyara, 50 miles southeast of Mosul in the North; the US military command HQ at Camp Victory/Camp Liberty near Baghdad International Airport; Camp Marez near Mosul Airport; Camp Cook north of Baghdad; and a new base near Irbil in the North. In addition, another new Forward Operating base is being built near Zurbatiya near the Iranian border to be completed in November. It's location is provocative as the centerpiece of a new border control surveillance, monitoring and logistical support strategy called "Combat Outpost Shocker."

Then, there's what critics call "Fortress Baghdad" or the "ultimate gated community" inside the city's four square mile fortress-like Green Zone. It's surrounded by thick blast-proof concrete walls, and to enter visitors must pass through up to eight checkpoints. Inside, security is intense and includes full body searches, electronic scanners, explosive-sniffing dogs and every other human and high-tech measure imaginable for security.

The US embassy compound is there as well that when finished will be the largest in the world. It's Vatican-sized in dimensions and hugely fortified atop 104 acres, or six times larger than the UN complex in New York. Reports vary on whether 21 or 27 buildings are planned but their cost plus all facilities and perimeter security will top \$1 billion. Construction is continuing, far behind schedule, it's reported to be shoddy, and it's already way over budget as predicted so the final cost remains uncertain but will be plenty.

The compound has everything - its own water, electricity, sewers, apartment buildings, swimming pool, shops, Marine barracks and will house more than 1000 civilian staff plus a large private and military security contingent. For the Iraqi people, it's a hated symbol of imperial occupation Washington intends to be permanent, but it may in the end go the way of the Saigon embassy in 1975. That's where the last US Vietnam remnants were frenetically rooftop-helicoptered out of the country in humiliating drawdown defeat. It ended visions of permanence then the way history may one day repeat in Iraq.

### Imperial Genocide in Iraq

By any estimate, the human toll in Iraq is horrific from all that happened after Saddam's August 2, 1990 Kuwait invasion. Four days later, Operation Desert Shield was launched. It began with US-led UN-imposed economic sanctions, large US and other troop deployments to the region, and a sweeping Kuwait-funded PR campaign to win public support for Operation Desert Storm that began January 17, 1991.

Before it ended six weeks later on February 28, US forces committed grievous war crime violations of the Hague and Geneva Conventions and UN and Nuremberg Charters. They included gratuitous mass killings as well as bombing and destroying essential to life facilities

that included:

- power generating stations;
- dams;
- water purification capabilities;
- sewage treatment and disposal systems;
- telephone and other communications;
- hospitals;
- mosques;
- residential areas affecting 10-20,000 homes, apartments and other dwellings;
- irrigation sites;
- food processing, storage and distribution facilities;
- hotels and retail establishments;
- transportation infrastructure;
- oil wells, pipelines, refineries and storage tanks;
- chemical plants;
- civilian shelters like Al Ameriyya that was attacked February 13, 1991 by two laser-guided “smart bombs” killing around 400 civilians including 142 children;
- factories and other commercial operations;
- government offices;
- historical sites; and more in a willful malicious effort to return the country to a pre-industrial age and punish its people horrifically.

Lost was power, clean water, sanitation, fuel, transportation, medical facilities and medications, adequate food, schools, private dwellings and places of employment. Early post-war estimates placed the number of civilians killed at 113,000 (mostly children) according to the Red Crescent Society of Jordan. In addition, US CENTCOM commander, General Schwarzkopf and others, estimated 100,000 or more Iraqi military deaths plus thousands more killed gratuitously as they were retreating in disarray.

What then followed was 12 years of the most comprehensive genocidal sanctions ever imposed on a country as an act of vengeance and US-imposed imperial arrogance. They were first adopted in UN Resolution 661 four days after Iraq invaded Kuwait. They included a full trade embargo that crippled the country economically but initially allowed in food, medical and other essential humanitarian needs. UN Resolution 670 followed in September, 1990 that imposed an air blockade and measures to enforce it.

After the war in April, 1991, UN Resolution 687 was adopted. It required Saddam accept cease fire terms and comply with Geneva protocols banning biological and chemical weapons. It also affirmed Kuwait's sovereignty, but it wasn't good enough for US officials who wanted sanctions to remain in force until Saddam was removed.

Later on, the oil for food and medicine program was adopted under UN Resolution 986 in 1995 but was hopelessly inadequate by design. An internal UN report in 1999 revealed it delivered only \$74 of food per annum per person (about 21 cents a day) and \$15 worth of medicines (about 4 cents a day) with vitally needed items banned or in short supply like syringes, anesthetics, vaccines, antibiotics and other drugs. Everything with potential "dual use" was blocked – chlorine to purify water, vital medical equipment, chemotherapy and pain-killing drugs, ambulances, and anything Washington wished to deny the country punitively with horrific consequences.

Further complicating things, all Iraqi funds were frozen and administered through a US-controlled Development Fund for Iraq. In addition, UN Resolution 661 stipulated all goods entering the country had to be approved by a 15 member committee that included the five permanent Security Council members. Approval had to be unanimous with every member having veto power. The US representative abused his authority by blocking items or causing long delays in importing others. The practice became so extreme, on one occasion baby food was denied on the grounds adults might consume it. At other times, items on the World Health Organization (WHO) humanitarian priority list were blocked such as rice, school books, paper, agricultural pesticides, medical journals and catheters for babies.

The results were predictable and devastating. Normal life was impossible and became a daily struggle to survive. It became apparent by the mid-1990s many didn't or wouldn't:

- the UN World Food Program (WFP) reported 2.4 million Iraqi children were severely at nutritional risk in September, 1995;
- in December, 1995, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said 12% of Baghdad children were "wasted, 28% stunted and 29% under weight;"
- by year end 1995, FAO reported 567,000 Iraqi children sanction-related deaths;
- by March, 1996, WHO noted a six-fold mortality rate increase among children under five;
- in October, 1996 UNICEF reported 4500 monthly Iraqi children deaths from sanction-caused starvation and disease;
- by 1999, the under five child mortality rate rose three-fold from 1989, malnutrition doubled, and the entire young child population was affected;
- UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros-Ghali noted how health conditions deteriorated dramatically by the mid-1990s, and by 1997 the WHO Director General said Iraq's health care system was systemically broken; in addition, malaria, typhoid, cholera and other life-threatening and communicable diseases were rampant.

These actions were committed willfully and are war crimes under relevant Geneva Conventions and other international law. They also constitute genocide under provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide that "means any (acts like those listed above) committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the

national, ethnical, racial or religious group (by) killing (its) members; causing (them) serious bodily or mental harm; (or) deliberately inflicting (on them) conditions (that may destroy them in whole or in part).”

US administrations under GHW Bush, Bill Clinton and GW Bush are criminally liable under “the genocide convention” and other relevant international law. Up to the March, 2003 attack and invasion, more than 1.5 million Iraqis, including over one million children, likely died from the combination of war and economic sanctions. Two UN heads of Iraqi humanitarian relief resigned under them in anger and frustration with Dennis Halliday saying in 1998 he did so because he “had been instructed to implement a policy that satisfies the definition of genocide: a deliberate policy that has effectively killed well over one million individuals, children and adults” including 5000 Iraqi children monthly in his judgment.

To date, most members of Congress are mute on the Iraq genocide and continue funding it with hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars. Yet on October 10, the House Foreign Relations Committee hypocritically passed a non-binding resolution calling the 1915 – 1923 Armenian holocaust (taking 1.0 to 1.5 million lives) genocide with a full House vote on the measure still scheduled for November in spite of waning support for it and uncertainty where it will go in the Senate.

Speaker Pelosi still backs the measure and in 2006 as Minority Leader pledged to support legislation “that would properly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. It is imperative that the United States recognize this atrocity and move to renew our commitment to eliminate genocide whenever and wherever it exists.” Today, Speaker Pelosi is mute on Iraq, Afghanistan and fully supports AIPAC’s agenda and its top priority of war with Iran. She’s not bothered by her own government’s genocide that far exceeds the Ottoman and post-Ottoman Turkish Armenian slaughter during and after WW I. The data below estimates as many as four million Iraqis have perished from 1990 – 2007, but speaker Pelosi’s condemnation of it is nowhere in sight.

Dr. Gideon Polya is a well-published biological scientist who’s book, “Body Count: Global avoidable mortality since 1950,” came out this year. It “documents....non-reported (worldwide) avoidable death(s) of 1.3 billion people since 1950” including in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also published his data on millions of violent and non-violent deaths under the three most recent US administrations in articles like his October 7 one on Countercurrents.org. In it, he cites data on Iraq from the Lancet, UN and British polling firm ORB. His “Asian Wars” totals in Iraq, Afghanistan, Occupied Palestine and Lebanon are horrific, and, if correct, exceed any others published to date. A summary of his data follows.

— Eight million total violent and non-violent deaths in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Lebanon breaking down as follows:

— 70,000 “US-backed” Israeli-caused deaths in Lebanon from 1978 – 2006, 10,000 of which were violent killings “by Israelis” or their “surrogates;”

— 300,000 1967-2007 Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) deaths plus another 10,000 violent deaths;

— 200,000 violent 1990-91 Gulf war deaths;

- 1.7 million 1990-2003 Iraqi sanctions-caused deaths including 1.2 million children under age five;
- 3.2 million 2001-2007 US Afghanistan war deaths including UN Population Division data totaling 2.5 million plus 700,000 children under age five;
- 2.0 million 2003-07 US Iraq war deaths including 1.2 million UK polling firm ORB violence-related estimates plus 800,000 children under age five from UNICEF data; and
- 500,000 2001-07 opiate drug-related deaths resulting from the resurgent Afghan opium industry under US-UK occupation; the UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimates its output at 93% of world production.

Polya cites the failure of occupying powers to supply essential “life-sustaining requisites” as a major cause of preventable deaths. He also notes his eight million estimate exceeds the Nazi-inflicted Jewish holocaust total of about six million. And he rightly observes that major media misreporting, denying or “ignoring of this horrendous, ongoing mass” slaughter is the equivalent of Jewish holocaust denial and doing it endangers security for “both....victims and....perpetrators.”

There’s no denying the toll on victims, but consider the cost at home post-9/11:

- a nation with no outside enemies permanently at war and claims the right to wage preventive wars under the doctrine of “anticipatory self-defense” using first strike nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear states;
- world stability and peace further threatened by the administration’s abandoning NPT, ending Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty protection, rescinding and subverting the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention, deploying so-called “missile defense” for offense, and plans to weaponize space toward the goal of “full-spectrum (unchallengeable) dominance” of all land, surface and sub-surface sea, air, space, electromagnetic spectrum and information systems plus as much of the world’s energy resources as possible;
- a military budget hugely exceeding the rest of the world combined; The Independent Institute analyst Robert Higgs estimates the true FY 2007 budget exceeds \$1 trillion with all defense-related items included;
- a rogue government operating outside constitutional and international laws and norms with the Congress and courts criminally complicit;
- an unprecedented wealth disparity in an omnipotent corporatist state;
- growing social decay and poverty in the richest country in the world;
- a secretive, intrusive, repressive administration under a president who disdains the public interest and is a serial liar and war criminal;
- condoning and operating secret torture-prisons around the world as a weapon of cruelty, vengeance and social control; and
- a cesspool of corruption stemming from incestuous business-government ties that defile democracy and mock any notion of government of, for and by the people.

The toll in Israel is evident as well. Angela Godfrey-Goldstein is an Israeli Jew, based in Jerusalem, and the Action Advocacy Officer with the Israeli Committee Against (Palestinian) House Demolitions (ICAHD). On August 30, 2007, she delivered an address at the UN Conference at the EU Parliament in Brussels commemorating the fortieth anniversary of Occupied Palestine. In it, she noted part of the toll on Israeli society caused by 40 years of Palestinian repression:

- around one million Israeli Jews “voted with their feet and left the country;”
- an estimate by some that up to 50% of Israeli youths refuse mandatory Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) service plus a “grey” Air Force refusal rate of around 30%;
- a significant recent observation from John Pilger that “something (around the world) is changing. (There’s a) swell of a boycott....growing inexorably....an important marker (may have) been passed, reminiscent of the boycotts (preceding) sanctions against apartheid South Africa” that led to the fall of its white-supremacist government; and
- her experience working with “diplomats, politicians and aid workers in Israel and Palestine (shows) that, on an individual basis, there’s enormous personal support and empathy for the Palestinian cause” because decades of abuse against them are intolerable and must end.

Push eventually will come to shove. We better hope it arrives soon. The world can’t wait much longer.

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