



VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNESOTA VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

Veterans For Peace News is published quarterly by Minnesota Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27.

Veterans For Peace works to increase awareness of the costs of war, restrain government from intervening in the internal affairs of other nations, end the arms race, reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons, seek justice for veterans and victims of war, and abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

We pledge to use democratic and nonviolent means to achieve our purpose.

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"There won't be any trumpets blowing come the Judgement Day — on the bloody morning after, one tin soldier rides away..."
(Potter & Lambert)



The Golden Rule, originally used to protest atmospheric nuclear bomb tests, sails in San Diego waters during the convention.

Peace, reconciliation in San Diego

by Mary McNellis

The theme of this year's VFP National Convention in San Diego was "Peace and Reconciliation in the Pacific." The convention was deliberately scheduled to coincide with the dropping of two atomic bombs in Japan 70 years ago: Aug. 6th in Hiroshima and Aug. 9th in Nagasaki. This helped contribute to my understanding of the total cost of war that I've previously not been exposed to and the healing that ensued from it.

Images have the ability to evoke emotions far more powerfully than can words. I still choke up when I remember the images and emotions portrayed in the beautiful film, *Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard*, the first event I attended on Wednesday evening. It portrays the story of 48 children who attend-

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The Golden Rule reborn

by Barry Riesch

One of the highlights of this year's VFP National convention and 30th anniversary, was to witness the resurrection of the small boat, the Golden Rule.

It launched in 1958 as a reaction to above-ground nuclear testing by the U.S. and USSR. Three men, Albert Bigelow, William Huntington and George Willoughby, set sail in the 30-foot ketch from San Pedro towards Enewetak Atol in the Marshall Islands, risking their lives to halt U.S. testing.

They never reached their destination. They were boarded twice by the Coast Guard and arrested, tried and jailed in Honolulu. However their actions inspired many more peacemakers. Said to be the very first of the environmental and peace vessels to set sail,

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This war business

Wars and billionaires

by Tom Dooley

"The greatest threat to world peace is the gap between the haves and the have-nots."

-Hubert Humphrey

There are 40 million immigrant/refugees fleeing war, poverty and the turmoil caused by the Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS, mostly in the Mideast and North Africa. They flee in unsafe, overcrowded boats and rubber rafts. Some drown, some suffocate in the holds of boats from fumes or lack of oxygen.

They pay about \$2,000 to be herded to Italy, Sicily, and Greece as the starting points to northern Europe and the UK. They get stuck in overcrowded camps in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon, short of food, water and medical care. The UN and some nations give help, but it's not enough.

There is a possible source of help: The billionaires of the world. LOL! Some nations have great wealth, some have a little; however, many have no wealth. Greece, for example. But ALL billionaires have great wealth. Here is a chance for them to atone for their misdeeds (as the French said, great fortunes are based on great theft).

If asked how many billionaires are in the world, I would answer 200 or 300, maybe 500. My friend Dick Taylor, retired Minneapolis high school teacher and conscientious objector of the American War against Vietnam searched the word "billionaires" and came up with stunning information!!!

There are 1,826 of them worth \$18.6 trillion!!! Twenty percent of this would pay for food, medical care, housing, and a few factories in their homeland. After the wars and turmoil have subsided, the refugees could return and rebuild homes and businesses after the decision-makers who cause these problems have been ousted.

For further startling information on billionaires, consult Forbes magazine.

Notes from the President

by Dave Logsdon

Wow, what a summer! Where do I start? Perhaps a good place is by acknowledging some of the folks showing up and some of the folks doing wonderful things behind the scenes. Last year I was "MIA" from most of the canoe raffle events. Boy, did I miss out! Being out there with our two raffle superstars, Vern Hall and Craig Wood, has been a rollicking good time. You couldn't ask for better goodwill ambassadors for our group than these two characters, and they sold a ton of tickets. This is, sadly, Bob Barron's last canoe that he will make for us. Most of us have never met the Korean War Veteran, but we owe such a debt of gratitude to him. Behind the scenes men and women such as Bob and Frank Fuller (this newsletter's editor) have been essential to the success of Chapter 27.

I could use up all my allotted space talking about Peacestock, the national convention, all the events around Hiroshima/Nagasaki remembrance, and the beautiful and talented people I met at our raffling events, but there are so many exciting things dead ahead that I need to talk about.

There is an ongoing photo exhibit at the Landmark Center (ends September 20th) called "Photos from a Hiroshima Schoolyard," a powerful display of some very tragic costs of war. Another powerful exhibit is Mara Pelecis "8030 Project," which shows photos of 22 objects sent to her that represent the 22 veteran suicides a day. Each photo is accompanied by a story about the significance of these objects. This exhibit runs until October 27th in the basement of the Government Center (in the tunnel that connects the two government buildings).

On Sep. 19th, we will draw the winner of our canoe raffle! We have a little party, catered food, and entertainment by musicians Chickpea and Garbanzo, and at 7 p.m., we draw the winner and call them on the spot! Join us at 6 p.m. at 4200 Cedar Ave, S. for a fun evening!

The busy weekend continues with a drone protest at Fort Ripley near Little Falls organized by the Brainerd Peace Coalition, held from noon to 5 p.m.

If you get back in time please join us at a benefit concert Sun., Sep. 20, for the Deported Veterans Support House in Tijuana. The concert won't be in Tijuana, but at the Eagles Club at 2507 25th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Headlining an evening of spoken word and storytelling will be the outrageous folk stylings of Emily Yates. Emily is an Iraq War veteran who sings a lot of truth in an often humorous manner. This concert gets underway at 7 p.m.

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ed a bombed-out shell of a school building less than a mile from Ground Zero. The children, who in spite of living in the horror that was Hiroshima in 1947, drew brightly-colored pictures of their lives, scenes of surprising beauty and joy, pictures drawn amid the horror they witnessed only two years earlier that destroyed their families, homes and schools, leaving them with nothing. Yet none of the 48 pictures reflected sadness, anger or fear. They drew self-portraits, flags and kites flying in bright blue skies, cherry blossoms, children playing. The film juxtaposed these with the photos of absolute horror at Ground Zero, the charred remains of human bodies, carnage, death, destruction and rubble everywhere. The film is a wonderful example of the healing power of art; for the children it created space for hope, allowing them respite from the ruins they lived in.

These pictures were given to All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., to thank the church members who sent desperately needed supplies, including art materials. After being forgotten and buried in the church for 63 years, the cache of pictures were miraculously uncovered, restored, and eventually returned to Hiroshima where they were reunited with the now-elderly artists who drew them, and exhibited in the very school in which they were created.

The film includes interviews with these artists who reflect on growing up in the rubble of their destroyed city. What impressed me most was the absence of rancor among these innocent victims; the bright colors, the hope, gratitude



Dave Logsdon led a workshop on Recruiting Experiences and Sustainable Chapter Building.

and joy portrayed in their artwork. The word forgiveness is never mentioned; amazingly, anger was never expressed. Where did they find this courage, this nobility?

Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard exemplifies the healing power of reconciliation, a theme that came up time and again during the conference. *Naneek*, a documentary screened Thursday night, is about Tim 'Naneek' Keenan, who served as an infantryman in Vietnam, surviving five months of heavy battle where his platoon took over Hill 1338. His resulting PTSD was a crucifix he couldn't shed. Determined to overcome his demons, he decided to revisit Vietnam and climb that hill again. As he spoke with his former Vietnamese "enemies" and reconnected with the Vietnamese culture, he was gradually able to come to

terms with his role in the conflict, lifting the weight of Vietnam's long struggle off his shoulders. It was another story of Phoenix rising from the ashes, another tear-jerker film for me.



Kevin Augustine, sad clown, whose father was a Marine who committed suicide in 1981.

Friday morning I attended a mini-ple-nary entitled "Healing and Reconciliation," given by Ben Griffin (VFP UK) and Claude Anshin Thomas. Griffin relayed his story of returning to Northern Ireland where he had been a British soldier, introducing himself as such to Catholic residents, subjecting himself to their

loathing and distrust. Instead of being defensive, he just listened to them. And listened. Eventually he was able to turn their hatred of him into understanding. This reminded me

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of the power of the Truth and Reconciliation healing process in South Africa.

Claude Thomas Anshin was a Marine door-gunner in Vietnam, who was one of those that “shot anything that moved.” He returned from service a truly broken individual. Eventually, working with a good therapist, he found his way to the Omega Institute in where he worked with Thich Nhat Hahn and eventually became a Buddhist monk himself. He doesn’t believe forgiveness is essential for healing, but believes a person needs to acknowledge their wrongdoing and vow to not repeat it. Anshin now works extensively with veterans suffering PTSD, offering five-day retreats in Mindfulness at the Omega Institute himself. When my husband Steve and I attended his retreat there in 2012, Steve was introduced to the concept of “telling your story,” describing personal military trauma. This practice assists in healing “moral injury,” unburdening the soul and also educates civilians about the horrors of war. This was a large impetus leading the two of us to join VFP. The work Steve did leading up to his story-telling was the basis for the Full Disclosure letter he submitted last November to the

Vietnam Memorial.

By Friday night I’d already shed many tears when those of us aboard The Hornblower dinner cruise were awed by the appearance of The Golden Rule, sails billowing, bouncing through the waves, resurrected for another chance to be a presence for peace and humanity in the Pacific. (See accompanying article.)

This is the third conference I’ve attended; the previous two were wonderful, educational, uplifting and motivational. This conference, however, was most powerful in terms of personal healing. I’m sorry all of our chapter and national members weren’t able to attend. I regret that we live in a world where we need to spend so much time and energy trying to convince our government and neighbors that war is a racket. But I have renewed hope that peace will prevail if enough of us speak our truth, lead by example and continue to believe that peace is possible. NOW.

For an opportunity to see Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard and an exhibit of these pictures locally see <http://www.stpaulpeace.org/>. Also: <http://firstuniversal-istchurch.org/event/pictures-from-a-hiroshima-schoolyard-film-screening-2/>.

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Suggested donation is \$10. This is a can’t-miss show!

Also please remember the bus we send to the School of the Americas protest at the gates of Ft. Benning in Georgia. The event happens the weekend before Thanksgiving, and the seats will fill up fast!

Before I wrap up this little piece, I should tell you an interesting story about a letter Steve McKeown with a helping hand by Mary McNellis, crafted to be sent to the Pope through an interesting envoy: Mayor Betsy Hodges of Minneapolis! We got wind of her getting an audience with the Pope and put together the letter quickly. I went to Councilperson Cam Gordon’s office to have him act as go-between. Robin from Cam’s office took the letter and a Kellogg-Briand banner to the Mayor’s Office, and much to our shock they took them to Rome! They didn’t get the opportunity to present the items, but they still have communications with the Vatican so we shall see!

If it seems like we’re doing a lot, it’s because WE ARE! Thanks for all the support you’ve given us. Let’s keep on keeping on!

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their actions helped ignite world wide outrage against nuclear weapons that resulted in the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

Abandoned and destined to be burned, it was discovered on a beach in California. Its history spoke to Freddy and Sherry Champagne and others who felt it must sail again. Now, five years later, through the dedication of many volunteers (one every day) and \$200,000, the Golden Rule sails again, and it was viewed in action in San Diego at the VFP convention.

It is now a project of the VFP to help “advance our opposition to nuclear weapons and war and to do so in a dramatic fashion.”

For more information about joining the crew, destinations, donations or in some way helping out, visit the website vfpgoldenruleproject.org.

Free the 17

by Joan Johnson

Father Roy Bourgeois recently spoke to a group gathered at the home of VFP members Pat and Jennie Downey. After giving an SOA Watch update, which included talking about the terrible situation with immigrants trying to cross the Mexican/U.S. border, he talked about 17 women, referred to as *Las 17* languishing in prison in El Salvador, after being accused of having abortions. Many are mothers of young children, have already served a decade or more of time, and are facing 30- to 40-year sentences. To add insult to injury, many of the women accused of having abortions had been rape victims and had miscarriages.

The prison is overcrowded, with sometimes 40 women to a cell. To date, one woman has been released, Carmen Guadalupe Vasquez Aldana, who was 18 years old when she was arrested for having a miscarriage. She spent seven years behind bars.

Dennis Munoz, her attorney, calls this policy a “witch hunt against poor women.” He added: “The prosecution of these women is based on prejudice, not proof, and starts from a presumption of guilt; a presumption that because they are poor and uneducated, they killed their babies because they didn’t want them and couldn’t care for them. The evidence is that there is a dead baby, a woman and the forensic evidence establishes they are mother and child. That’s it.”

Earlier this year, Bourgeois visited with five of the women at the prison and found that they are having to endure horrific living conditions and are forced to eat unpalatable food. Most feel hopeless that they will ever be freed. He said that earlier this year, Amnesty International delivered a petition to the government calling for the women’s release. So far, only Ms. Vasquez has been released. This is a great victory, but unfortunately, there is talk of a backlash because of her release. The other 16 women who remain incarcerated are: Mirian, Martiza, Marina, Salvadora, Ena, Teodora, Guadalupe, Mariana, Mirna, Cinthia, Verónica, Alba, Johana, Evelyn, Teresa, and

María.

Last April, Bourgeois and three other activists were arrested for staging a sit-in at the Embassy of El Salvador in Washington, D.C., calling for officials to push for the release of the 16 remaining women. Bourgeois has called these imprisonments “a grave injustice,” and says, “where there is injustice, silence is complicity.”

In July, the four were tried and could have faced up to six months in prison for unlawful entry and trespassing. Instead, they were fined \$50 each and given credit for time already served. At that time, they had planned to turn over the \$200 to help the women with legal expenses, who Father Roy visited again Aug. 19. As I write this, he is also meeting with leaders in El Salvador to try and persuade them to release *Las 17* (now 16).

Father Roy is asking us to write, call or send a website-based comment to the El Salvador Embassy in Washington and contact our own representatives about the plight of these women, in hopes that our collective voices will bring about their freedom. “Spread the word!” he emphasized at the conclusion of our meeting with him.

Salvadoran Embassy information: PHONE - 202-595-7500; LETTER - 1400 16th St. NW #100, Washington, DC 20036; or POST A COMMENT on their web page at https://embassy-finder.com/el-salvador_in_washington_usa.

Four other resources to peruse: “Columbus Ledger Enquirer” by Ben Wright, April 24, 2015 (arrest article) and July 7, 2015 (trial article); and “SOA Watch” newsletter, April 24, 2015 issue; and New York Times op-ed “El Salvador and ‘Las 17’” by Erika Guevara-Rosas, March, 2015 (background information).

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Mayday Books has been a consistent and significant supporter of Chapter 27 for many years. The volunteer staff has provided help with mailings and has donated books for the use of our group. It is also a great place to drop in and have a cup of coffee and talk with whomever happens to be there and find that book you have been looking for.

Hours: M-F noon to 7 p.m, Sat. noon to 6 p.m.

WORLD BEYOND WAR

VFP members Leah Bolger, Bruce Gagnon, and Paul Chappell are among the impressive International Speakers Bureau headed up by David Swanson. Very worthy of CHECKING out and SUPPORTING.

www.worldbeyondwar.org/speakers/

Thank you for fighting for the truth that will set us free

by Larry Johnson

When 11 of us made our own Armistice Bells on a State Arts Board grant a couple years ago, mine ended up with the inscription RING OUT LIGHT. I set out to build an alternative to the refrain, “Thank you for fighting for our freedom.” Since we know the first casualty of war is truth, I was going to use Jesus’ statement, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” and turn it in to “Thank you for fighting for the truth that shall set us free.” I found it too laborious to set that long a statement, letter by letter, in the wax mold, so I mixed it with Leonard Cohen’s poem, “Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” That got me to “Ring Out Light” and the opportunity to engage in educational, peaceful dialogue when people see it and ask, “What does that mean?” Here are some “in the moment” ways to fight for the truth.

First Annual Leslie Reindl Peace Essay Contest, sponsored by Mn Alliance of Peacemakers (MAP)

Encourage young people to research, think, and write about non-violent resolution to conflict. If you have high school juniors and seniors in your life, order the full topics, guidelines, and submission sheet for the essays from me at larryjvfp@gmail.com. Deadline is October 15, and the winners of three scholarships (\$1000, \$750, and \$500) will be announced at the MAP annual celebration at the Arts High School in Golden Valley (www.mapm.org).

Winners will read their essays, and the main speaker will be Rose McGee, African-American storyteller, musician, and activist for peace and racial justice. Rose was central in the fight against illegal, unjust foreclosures, is author of *Story Circle Stories*, and is currently best known for organizing communities to bring Sweet Potato Pies for Peace and Racial Justice to places like Ferguson MO and Charleston WV. Order the guidelines, but here are the topics to start writing now:

What does Peace and Justice mean to you? Use your definition to implement peace and justice locally, in your school or community.

Describe a compassionate plan for social change. How can compassion improve your community or make for a better world?

Identify one or more root causes of conflict. Describe ways to resolve, locally or internationally.

Hiroshima Nagasaki Exhibitions at Landmark Center in St. Paul

Veterans For Peace is one of 72 organizations belonging to MAP, dedicated to helping the larger peace and justice community work in coalition. Last year’s MAP celebration was the Paul Chappell (Art of Waging Peace) event at the Landmark Center. This year Landmark is hosting two exhibits marking the truth about the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 70 years ago. Exhibits opened August 22 and go to November 28. Landmark is at 75 West 5th Street in St. Paul, right by the Ordway and Rice Park. Bring people to the exhibits, or contact Caren Stelson at carenstelson@gmail.com to volunteer as guide.

Talking in churches and spiritual communities.

Proverbs 15:1 in the Old Testament says something like, “A soft answer turns away wrath; harsh words stir up anger.” Later, in the 16th chapter it says the person who controls his temper is mightier than a general who takes a city. Fighting for truth means listening to someone tell their accepted party line story, like, “We’ve got to have more bombs than they do to keep the peace,” then quietly saying, “Well, then, don’t you think we should stop them from selling to the other side, like Allied companies selling weapons to Germany in the 30s, or Halliburton and others selling to Iran in the past 10 years? Most people don’t know those truths, because they’re conveniently left out of most history or news. Quiet dialogue usually has potential for at least making them think, and consider a more accurate “truth”.

I’m glad whenever we get to speak in churches, because the faith community, most notably FOR and the Friends, so strongly supported the massive mobilization for peace after World War I, and could be again. Steve McKeown just spoke to Every Church a Peace Church, and I spoke with the People of Faith Peacemakers. I’ve been asked to speak at First Unitarian Society, by the Walker, October 11, and I’m thankful for these spiritual communities who wish to learn and partner with us. I also wish, for us, the opportunity to speak in more churches that think they believe differently.

There are still many churches pounding the Bible and calling for bigger bombs to protect our “God-given freedoms,” but I believe they’re ignoring just about everything God is about. I believe they ignore the common Old Testament lament, “Why do the wicked prosper?” when they advocate for more weapons of death. They ignore the

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The Peace Index

Cost of nuclear weapons in human terms

compiled by Frank Fuller

President Obama has proposed spending up to \$348 billion to rebuild and upgrade the U.S. nuclear arsenal over the next ten years. It's a guess what the actual cost is, because these things are kept secret and costs are spread out over several different departments.

But included in the budget is a 15 percent increase. Part of that is for building new warheads and delivery systems, not just upgrading old ones. The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that the U.S. now has 7,300 nuclear weapons, with an average annual maintenance cost of \$1.8 million each. Plans call for 3,000 new warheads that will cost at least \$60 billion.

It's an ambitious program that costs more every year and quite possibly provides less security each year. So it's fair to ask: what would you want to do with just that 15% increase in spending that Obama wants, which amounts to about \$51 billion over the next ten years? Here are a few suggestions:

145,000 recent college graduates could have their student loans completely paid off. This year, about 70 percent of college graduates borrowed for their education, and the average amount was \$35,051. With interest over the life of the loans, they would have to pay off over \$50,000.

Amtrak could be funded for about three and a half years. It is requesting \$1.62 billion this year in federal capital and operating support. Its president and CEO Joe Boardman said: "If Amtrak could obtain access to a multi-

year federal funding commitment, it could build and follow through on a capital program that would address our fleet and infrastructure needs. Amtrak has never had a true capital commitment, one that allowed us to sign multiyear contracts."

It could provide **SNAP benefits for 1.2 million working mothers** with two children earning \$14,000 a year. In Minnesota the average food stamp benefit per person is \$116.25 per month.

91,000 teachers could be hired at the average Minnesota teacher's salary of \$56,268.

Head Start could be funded for nearly six months.

Four months of the **federal school lunch program** would be paid for.

It could build **1,700 miles of off-street biking and hiking trails**, which cost \$3 million per mile. Minneapolis now has 84 miles of bike paths and St. Paul has 73 miles.

It could provide **102,000 miles of bike lanes** on city streets, which cost up to \$50,000 per mile to create. Minneapolis has 46 miles of on-street dedicated bike lanes and St. Paul 32 miles.

Readers are invited to imagine what could be done with the remaining \$297 billion budgeted for these weapons.

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core, "Love God, and your neighbor as yourself." In the modern warfare context, would you want guys with guns breaking down your door and killing your family? At one time the truth of the early Christians refusing to kill in warfare was important to me, but these days I'd be satisfied if all churches could see to truthfully back the Just War theory. Too often we're at war, and church leaders say, "It's a just war," ignoring, or not knowing that A MAIN TENET OF BEING A JUST WAR IS THAT NO CIVILIANS ARE

KILLED. Given that 90 percent of casualties in modern warfare are civilians, I'd argue for all churches, conservative and liberal, to forcefully back the truth of the Just War concept. Maybe, just maybe, that could slow it all down enough so we could stop the rest of it, and get enterprising, honest business people on the task of making a profit, beating nuclear and bomber "swords" into modern "ploughshares" that could feed hungry people in the U.S. and around the world.

Another successful Peacestock

by Joan Johnson

Peacestock is a VFP-sponsored event which takes place in a rural setting each July. The past two years it has been held at "Hobgoblin Barn" near Red Wing. Sponsored by Red Wing and Twin Cities VFP chapters, this year's lineup of speakers addressed subjects related to the theme of "The War on Our Climate." Once again, Bill Habedink did a fantastic job of doing most of the organizing, and there were close to 200 people. Bells were rung 11 times by Chapter 27 members at the start of the day-long event, in remembrance of the Armistice of Nov. 11, 1918. The following are some of my own highlights from the day.

Our first speaker, Father David Smith, Catholic priest and retired professor of theology, is the founding director of the Justice and Peace Studies program at the University of St. Thomas. He led us on a very detailed walk through history in light of the abuses by Christian hierarchy and government leaders. He talked about how 15th century Vatican leaders basically gave Christian explorers the right to claim lands and people for their Christian kings and queens. The Doctrine of Discovery, promoted through the centuries by colonizing nations and religions, invalidates and ignores indigenous peoples' rights to their lands. Our government's removal of Native Americans from their lands and sustainable ways of life has not only destroyed their way of life, but has ushered in unsustainable uses of precious natural resources. Sadly, the legacy of the destruction of land, air and water by colonial conquerors continues. Recently, our Minneapolis paper ran a story about the contested harvest of wild rice on Hole-In-The-Day Lake near Nisswa, Minnesota. Arthur LaRose expressed his

Lake Ojibwe band's concerns to Gov. Dayton in an August 7th letter, saying, "From pipelines, to wild rice and walleye, the State of Minnesota does not appear to be protectively regulating the natural resources (and is) defining acceptable levels of degradation in the land of sky blue waters for the profits of foreign corporations."

Larry Johnson, our next speaker, walked 25 miles to Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant, which sits on Native American land. He carried his property insurance policy and a copy of the End Polluter Welfare Act. "I found out none of us are covered by property insurance in the event of a disaster at a nuclear power plant," he explained. "Private insurers consider it too risky to cover, so the government insures it, thus amounting to a secret and extremely large ongoing subsidy for nuclear power from the start. Because all these disease-causing



Peter Eaves, Kathy Kelly and Jennie Downey at Peacestock. Both Pete and Kathy were in the original SOA fasters.

radiation pollutants and war profiteering are caused by gigantic corporations who think they are persons, I carried my copy of *Horton Hears a Who* (by Dr. Seuss), because Horton said, "A person's a person, no matter how small." He said nothing of no matter how big.

Kathy Kelly also spoke. She is co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence and had recently been awarded the 2015 Peace Prize by The U.S. Peace Memorial Foundation. She also had been recently released from prison for civil disobedience at Whiteman Airforce Base in Missouri, home base for drones flown over Afghanistan. She lamented the unhealthy conditions for the 300 women housed at FMC Lexington in Kentucky, and the desperate need for prison reform. Kathy later reflected on the organizing, actions, events and programs that members of Veterans For Peace have done over the years, saying, "I



Bill Habedank and essay contest winner Marcus Warrington. See his article on page 11.

wonder if we aren't in some ways part of something much bigger that we can't even understand ourselves which does prevent the even greater destructions that might be possible." She believes that when we unbind ourselves from the forces of war, we will "liberate our abilities (and) our talents in order to solve the very, very grave problems we do face." Kathy is a living testament to the power of creative nonviolent actions in solidarity with victims of war and other disenfranchised, marginalized people.

Nate Hagens was the last speaker of the day. In recent years, he has been lead editor of *The Oil Drum*, a website for the analysis and discussion of global energy supplies and the future implications of energy decline. For years, he worked on Wall Street, courting millionaires and billionaires for accounts at his brokerage firm. After making incredible amounts of money and living the "high life," he began to question the assumptions that drive our economy and saw what the real costs were: to the environment, other human beings, and other species. With each passing decade, the extraction and production of energy requires more and more energy to produce. We need to dig deeper for the oil; travel farther to find fossil fuels; exploit more sensitive regions; and in the process, are lopping off more mountain tops, polluting more wetlands, rivers, drinking water, and air, and destroying lives and livelihoods, and annihilating other species. Sadly, these kinds of costs are just not figured into the economist's plans and projections.

Nate no longer works on Wall Street and has undergone

a major lifestyle change. He offered very concrete suggestions on how individuals and society might better adapt to what's ahead, many ideas coming from his own personal experience. For starters, he promotes localization and sustainable living: for example, living off-grid, using solar energy, doing organic gardening, and driving less. He strongly emphasized the need for regional blocks of supplies for basic goods and services, like medical care, food, water, and sanitation. This is similar to what Kathy Kelly was saying about freeing ourselves from militarism and materialism in order to solve the major problems of the day. It's obvious to me that all of the enlightened, creative thinkers who attend Peacestock should put their minds together and come up with concrete ideas and solutions for these very real energy-use problems.

During lunch, many good connections were made, and we celebrated Don Irish's 90th birthday with a big cake, song and well-wishes for another wise and dedicated peacemaker. Kellogg-Briand Pact replicas were given to our generous Peacestock hosts. The owner of Hobgoblin Music Store promptly displayed it there for all to see. In between speakers, we rocked out to lively Celtic music, played by the very entertaining local duo Wild Colonial Bhoys. At the conclusion of the formal program, several attendees pulled out their instruments for some spontaneous music-making, including some sing-alongs, on the outdoor stage. From my perspective, Peacestock was a huge success, and I look forward to attending many more!!!

The Making of a Peace Activist

by Chante Wolf

On a bright Sunday afternoon in 1998, I attended a talk at the St. Petersburg FL Quaker Meeting House. The woman speaking had flown to Iraq to protest Desert Storm back in 1991. Her talk was about depleted uranium (DU) and its long-term effects on the Iraqi people, especially its children. As I sat in the back of the room I was in awe of this tiny woman who showed such courage in a way I had never seen, and without a gun. It was one thing in my experience to go to war with enough weaponry to start WWII and feel terror to the depths of your soul, but it was another to see an American woman not just taking to the streets in protest, but to go to the heart of an incredible bombing campaign and place her life on the line. Now that took ovaries!

I was so moved and impressed that I stood for the first time in a public setting and began to share my own Desert Storm information and story. Afterwards, I walked through that door on a path that brings me to the present. It was because I had met Kathy Kelly that I became an advocate for peace, though not in the same capacity or gentle, loving, nonviolent power that she holds in her heart, but I have managed to stumble along as best I can.

Another woman, Julia Butterfly Hill, was instrumental

in motivating me to take peace work into the public and to get more involved with VFP Chapter 27. I had just finished reading her book, *The Legacy of Luna*, and I was embarrassed that she had done more than I had in her life. If a woman with no prior intention would be so moved to climb 180 feet up into a Redwood tree and sit there for two years to keep it from being cut down, then I could begin to do the work with the male veterans, whose Statement of Purpose I so believed in. I met her a few years later in Minneapolis when she was promoting her second book, *One Makes a Difference*, and told her that story, then thanked her for her service.

So, fast forward to present day Peacestock. The main guest Kathy Kelly spoke eloquently, followed by a recent Red Wing high school graduate, Marcus Warrington, who read his winning Peace Essay. I was suddenly so inspired by the combination that I asked to say something. I acknowledged the change one person can make in the world, thanking Kathy Kelly and encouraged Marcus to do the same, by paying for his membership with Veterans For Peace. I believed that for young people to speak in such a way from their hearts they needed to be included and 'thanked for their service' in a much better way than I ever felt I did in the military. His winning essay is on the next page.

VFP bus trip to Fort Benning Nov. 20-22

by Mary McNellis

For much of the world, the School of the Americas is synonymous with torture and impunity. SOA graduates were responsible for the Uraba massacre in Colombia, the El Mozote massacre of 900 civilians in El Salvador, the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the massacre of 14-year-old Celina Ramos, her mother Elba Ramos and six Jesuit priests in El Salvador and hundreds of other human rights abuses. Since its inception in 1946 more than 60,000 members of Latin American militaries have trained at the SOA.

(To learn more about the SOA see: <http://www.soaw.org/about-the-soawhinsec/what-is-the-soawhinsec>. See also: <http://soaw.org/november/week-end-schedule-of-events/shut-down-stewart/>.)

Closing the school would send a strong human rights message to Latin America and the world! We must come together to reaffirm our belief in justice and peace, and our

commitment to ending militarization and injustice. As we struggle, we see hope as movements throughout the hemisphere are standing up for dignity and self-determination. The November Vigil is about resisting militarization and affirming life, dignity, justice, and peace in our interconnected world. (See <http://www.soaw.org/>.)

Veterans For Peace Chapter 27 is once again chartering a bus from Minneapolis to the gates of Fort Benning for participation in Saturday's protest of the Stewart Detention Facility and the celebratory rally (music, puppets, speakers and more). After the rally the bus will drop the group off at the downtown Columbus Marriot hotel for a comfortable night's stay and the opportunity to attend activities across the street at the convention center: workshops, caucuses, cultural and musical events. Sunday morning the group returns to the gates for the solemn vigil, when the names of the many victims of SOA gradu-

Continued on next page

Winning essay from peace essay contest

by Marcus Warrington

It may be hidden, but the potential for peace in our world is, and always has been, present and ready to be applied. There are several things that can be done to achieve this largely untapped peace. First off and most importantly, we as people must let go of our egos. We need to back off and think more about everyone then we do about ourselves. We tend to worry about small issues in our lives, and lose sight about the big picture. In this media-driven age, it is easy to get caught up in distractions and get lost in the pitfalls the Internet provides in the hunt for peace. There's a core group of things we can all really focus on to become more peaceful as people.

We can put down the phones. We can log off the computer. And we can shut off the TV. Instead, we can pick up a book, let our mind paint a picture and take off into its own world. We can put on our shoes, explore the world and see the beauty of nature and the world around us, an experience too many people fail to live. And finally, we can knock on our neighbor's door, fire up the grill, and enjoy human to human interaction. We can talk, discuss, laugh, and share.

There are other ways to become more peaceful that don't include limiting our media-centric lives. Random acts

of kindness are perhaps unbeatable when it comes to bringing peace and gratitude among people. Random acts of kindness don't only create peace for the people receiving the random act – but for the person that is giving out the act as well. Personally, I have been at the receiving end of a Random Act of Kindness, and it really does create a feeling that is irreplaceable, and an overwhelming sense of peace was with me for quite some time after the act. It also is contagious. You realize how much you love the feeling of peace and the act of kindness itself.

Lots of people don't think they have the money to deliver random acts of kindness. They can hardly afford to feed themselves, much less the car behind them in the drive-thru. But the truth is, while these kind of acts are still fantastic, there are so many other and more personal ways to give acts of kindness. There is no limit, really. And every single one of them will lead to more peace. A simple smile, visiting the elderly, or helping somebody with carrying groceries all go a long way. While it is nearly effortless to smile or wave at somebody, it might go a long way for the person you are smiling at. You never know. There is potential for peace everywhere you look, and I am optimistic that people will begin to really pick up the afore mentioned tactics and there will be much more peace in this world.

From previous page

ates are read, each name followed by “*PRESENTE!*”

The bus departs Minneapolis at 7:30 a.m., Friday Nov. 20, arriving in Columbus Saturday morning in time for breakfast. The bus begins its return on Sunday after the vigil ends, arriving back in Minneapolis Monday afternoon, Nov. 23. The bus ride itself is part of the experience; VFP members aboard will be screening DVDs, sharing their thoughts and experiences relating to the SOA/other peace efforts and encouraging passengers to do the same.

If payment is received by Oct. 20, the price per person (including bus and shared double room) is \$285. If you are unable to pay full amount, please send a \$25 per person non-refundable deposit by Oct. 20, balance due Nov. 1st. After Oct. 20, the rate will be \$310 per person, shared double room. No spaces on the bus will be reserved without payment or deposit. Registration will close when the 48 passenger limit is reached. Each room has two double (not queen) beds. If you wish to share the room with more than two people, please make a note on your registration,

giving the names all people sharing a room. Cost for bus is \$205, cost per hotel room is \$160. If you want a private room the cost will be \$365. Cost for bus and sharing four to a room is \$245 each. Three people is \$260 each.

To register send check payable to: Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27. Along with check please include: your name, email and snail mail address, cell phone number, and school or organization affiliation, if any, and name of roommate. (If none is given you will be assigned a roommate of the same gender.)

Mail to: Mary McNellis, PO Box 126, Stillwater MN 55082.

If you have questions or if you haven't received an email confirmation within seven days of mailing check, please email vfpsow@yahoo.com. Specific bus trip details will be emailed on 10/20/15.

Let's fill the bus and shut down the SOA and Stewart Detention Center!!

Kellogg Briand update

by Steve McKeown

If someone was asked to speculate what was going on in the back room of an elegant Italian restaurant in a busy suburban mall just west of Chicago, they probably never would have guessed. The West Suburban Coalition of Faith was giving out awards for an international essay contest called "How can the U.S. obey the Law against War?" VFP Chapter 27 President Dave Logsdon and I had reservations in that room, and for a half an hour earlier had been two blocks away on a median on a freeway exit ramp holding signs supporting the Kellogg Briand Pact. Several hours later when leaving that room, I told a Catholic priest how much I liked his songs of prayer. He told me that he saw the signs Dave and I had outside, and his driver was wondering why we were protesting against Kellogg cereal. The priest told him that this was a welcome to where they were going.

It was fitting that it was taking place in the Chicago area near where Salmon Levinson lived and worked. He was the creator of what was called the Outlawery Movement after WWI, which eventually led to this law against war called the Kellogg Briand Pact. It was also ably fostered and grown by another Chicago resident, Jane Addams.

The keynote speaker was David Swanson the author of *When the World Outlawed War* and *War is a Lie*. David started his talk by saying that when this law was passed on Aug., 27, 1928, it was the biggest news story of the year, even bigger than Charles Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic. It was the Outlawery movement that brought it about so much so that politicians had no choice but to join in. Now there are few people who know of the existence of this law, a law that for the first time ever made war illegal.

Swanson also said that when most people are told about this law, they dismiss it quickly for a variety of reasons, which you can read on his blog in an Aug. 27 post called "Let's Try Democracy." In fact, I encourage it along with any support you may want to give to him and/or the organization World Without War.

In the Q&A period a young person asked Swanson how people her age could better make connections between what he was saying and climate change. His answer was that the Pentagon is one of the biggest polluters and users of natural resources, something we cannot ignore if we hope to survive climate change. The problem is that the environmental groups largely do not address war as a major contributor to the problem, usually because of fear of offending major donors.

When the first place winner gave her acceptance talk, she said that what has to be added to the conversation was

that our culture largely considers war as holy, when in fact it should be considered a sacrilege. Another winner from Toledo said we need to use our imagination as well as the movement in the 1920s did. And another winner said she was teaching her class about the Pact.

Dave Logsdon, a veteran from Chicago and I engaged Swanson briefly prior to his talk about ways to make the Pact better known, especially the fact it is still law. He was thinking about something at the National Cathedral in D.C. where the only Nobel Peace Prize winner from Minnesota's remains are placed. I told Swanson that perhaps he should tell this faith-based coalition that we were going to spread word of the Resurrection, and in hindsight there is an element of truth to that, and that the movement to remove the scourge of war from the face of the earth has shown the way, and in the closing sentence of Swanson's talk. We need to complete it.

On the next page is a letter that Dave Logsdon, Mary McNellis, Joan Johnson, and I composed to the Minneapolis Mayor and Pope Francis. The Mayor and her Chief of Staff John Stiles brought it with them to the Vatican with the intention of delivering it, but the event organizer said that everyone wants to give the Pope a gift. John told me that he going to contact the organizer again and see if they will accept it in the mail.

Additionally, at the VFP National Convention the National President told Logsdon that he wants to make better use of our status as non-government observers at the U.N. We suggested making copies of the Kellogg Briand Pact available to all members, and to notify them that they can sign up just by contacting the State Department.

Finally we are being mailed microfilm documents of correspondence between the largest Peace organization ever, The National Council for the Prevention of War, which was asked by the Postmaster General in the 1930s to provide copies of the Pact, which were then posted in over 50,000 Post offices at the time. We want to see if that authorization is still valid. While researching this, I have also been unable to find any authorization for placing the red, white, and blue draft registration forms that have been in post offices for some time.

Changing Address?

If you are moving please let us know, so you can receive your newsletter. Even if you leave a forwarding address with the post office, it still may cost us an additional \$ 1.10 each time Thank you

Our letter to Pope Francis



V.F.P. Chapter 27

612-821-9141

1806 Riverside Ave. #3A - Email, vfpchapter27@gmail.org
Minneapolis, MN 55454 - Website, vfpchapter27.org

July 14, 2015

Dear Mayor Hodges:

We, as members of the Twin Cities chapter of Veterans for Peace, write to ask you to bring the enclosed "Kellogg-Briand Pact" banner to Pope Francis when you meet with him at the Vatican, along with the following request.

To His Holiness Pope Francis:

Our local chapter of the National and International Veterans for Peace is asking you to accept this banner, a copy of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Following the horrors of The Great War (the so-called "War to End All Wars") this pact was engineered by U.S. Secretary of State, Frank Kellogg, and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand on August 27, 1928. It has been signed by 85 nations and is still law today. We are proud to note that Frank Kellogg is the only person from Minnesota to have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Our distinguished Mayor is coming to meet you because you have correctly made the connection between poverty and sex trafficking. This tragedy only stands to get worse with climate change which will result in even more poverty.

We, as military veterans, have seen this connection first hand. War not only fuels poverty, but also contributes to climate deterioration by wasting precious resources and creating toxic waste.

We are inspired by your leadership towards the abolition of war and nuclear weapons!

We believe that revisiting the Kellogg-Briand Pact will encourage all nations to become signatories and will motivate current signatories to honor the pact, bestowing upon our youth a brighter future than they might otherwise inherit. We further humbly beseech you to emphasize this to the world of nations at large.

Sincerely, with gratitude,

Dave Logsdon,
President, Twin Cities chapter of Veterans for Peace

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

Second Sunday each month, 5:30--7:30 pm:
VFP Chapter 27 general meeting,
1806 Riverside Ave., #3A.
Executive meeting at 5 p.m.
FFI: Dave Logsdon at 612-203-9768.

5-6 pm Weds. Lake Street/Marshal Ave. Bridge vigil.

OTHER EVENTS

Sep. 20, 11 am-2 pm. Drone Protest at Camp Ripley.
Potluck at Morrison Cty Park after Protest.
www.brainerdpeace.org or call 218 839 2985

Sep 20, 7 pm. Benefit for Deported Veterans Support House. Eagles Club, 2507 25th St. S., Mpls. Featuring Emily Yates, Andrew Lee-Mangan, Bad Ted and the Rocketman (Jazz Poetry) and spoken word. Suggested donation: \$10. Spaghetti Dinner at 6 pm: \$5.

Sep. 24-30, "The Truth Shall Make you Free" Veterans For Peace in Iowa Announce RAYMcGOVERN and COLEEN ROWLEY barnstorming Tour of Iowa. Between them, Coleen and Ray have 51 years of service in the highest levels of the CIA and FBI. They since have worked relentlessly for peace and justice. FFI contact Ed Flaherty at flahertyem@aol.com or John Jadryev at jdryv@yahoo.com.

Sep. 27, 2 pm. March and Rally starting at the Duluth Rose Garden for longtime-VFP Duluth Chapter 80 member Andy Anderson who died Aug. 28. Bring signs and banners that reflect all the many causes that Kathy and Andy worked on. There is a remembrance gathering at 3 pm at the Friends Meeting House. Donations are accepted to fund the Kathy and Andy Anderson Memorial Lectures.

Sep. 27, 5-8 pm. WAMM Silent Auction, St. Joan of Arc 4537 3rd Av. S., Mpls. 612 869 6547

Oct. 18, 4 pm. "50 years of Peace Music" Bryn Mawr Presbyterian, 420 Cedar Lake Rd., Mpls. Suggested donation \$10, children \$5. Proceeds to WAMM and VFP.

Nov. 11, 10:30 am. Gathering for bell ringing, place to be announced.

Nov. 11, 6 pm, Britts Pub event. TBA

For information on vigils, go to the VFP website at vfpchapter27.org or call 612-827-5364 or visit www.worldwidewamm.org

An antidote to impunity

by Steve McKeown

Recently I attended an excellent film shown by WAMM, *How to Nail a Dictator*, which was a documentary about the more than 200,000 murders in Guatemala in the 1980s. A filmmaker and an archeologist and some extraordinary brave people were able to gather evidence that led many years later to the prosecution of the dictator Efraim Ros Month. A word that was used again and again was how those in high power acted with impunity. We have seen that time after time regarding the involvement by the graduates of the School of the Americas, not to mention much of our foreign policy for years on end. But I think nowhere is this more pronounced than in our using the Atomic Bomb and rationalizing its use and existence today.

Fifteen minutes before the Armistice took place in 1918 then Army Captain Harry Truman wrote to his future wife Bess Wallace, "It is a shame we can't go in and detonate Germany and cut off a few of the Dutch kids' hands and feet and scalp a few of their old men but I guess it will be better to make them work for France and Belgium for fifty years."

It is no wonder then that after only a few months in office as President that "give them hell Harry" gave the orders to have atomic bombs dropped on the civilian cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Right after the Hiroshima bombing, Truman went on the air claiming it was a military target, and he went to his deathbed unapologetic for his decisions. Over the years the evidence has clearly shown that even militarily, these bombings were unnecessary, that Japan was going to surrender anyway, and that General Eisenhower opposed their use prior to the decision. Yet, many of the so-called greatest generation, their families and our institutions have perpetuated this alleged necessity which makes them complicit in the impunity of each and every nuclear weapon that exists today.

A number of us from VFP have volunteered for assisting at the exhibits From War to Reconciliation at the Landmark Center in St. Paul. This includes the Hiroshima Nagasaki Peace Exhibition Aug. 22-Nov. 28, as well as *Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard* that is both an art exhibit and film Sep. 19-Oct. 25. St. Paul and Nagasaki became sister cities in 1955, something that wasn't popular at that time. Both cities and the driving forces that brought this about are to be commended and supported. This is very much along the lines of using Soul Force, which Gandhi spoke of, as a needed antidote to the hatred that led to the use of atomic bombs and the impunity that allows them to exist.

Marching in River Falls Days parade

by Mary McNellis

VFP Chapter 27 marched in this year's River Falls Days parade on Friday, July 10th, in an effort to whip up support for Peacestock, held the following day in Redwing.

Our efforts were greatly assisted by the support of Duluth's VFP Chapter 80, which graciously lent us their float. We owe big thanks specifically to Chapter 80 member Bob Tammen and his wife, who drove the float down from Duluth behind their camper. Bob declined our offer of gas money, saying it was his pleasure, the least he could do. Thanks, Bob! We were sorry they had to leave right after the parade, unable to attend Peacestock on Saturday.

This activity was a bit of a stretch for us. The only parade our chapter normally attends is MayDay, which is strictly non-motorized, very leisurely, sometimes downright pokey. The River Falls parade started right on time and kept a VERY brisk pace throughout. We handed out as many Peacestock/VFP mission statements flyers as possible, but



The float from the Duluth Chapter 80 VFP that appeared in the River Falls Days parade.

ended up with quite a few leftover due to having to run to keep up with the parade. Joan Johnson, seated on the float playing fiddle, was the only one fiddling around! Nonetheless we make an impressive showing, our members waving VFP flags in front of the float which displayed our

usual placards plus a couple new ones in keeping with the theme of Viva La Kinni. There was a judging booth where we were able to explain our *raison d'être*, "Viva EVERY river, Viva Life, war is the enemy of all rivers and life in general." Although we didn't win an award, our reception overall was quite positive. We got many cheers and thumbs up. When we

marched by the local VFW we got a number of curious stares, but no boos or hostility. Frankly most of the crowd had never heard of VFP, so in that sense our mission was a great success. Hundreds of people in western Wisconsin are now aware of Veterans For Peace.

Hats off to Chapter 27 members who traveled the distance, braved the heat, sacrificed time and put forth effort during an already busy July weekend: Dave Logsdon, Craig Wood, Vern Hall, Ron Staff, Joan Johnson, Steve McKeown, James Brawn, Steve Gates and yours truly, Mary McNellis.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Please let us know if you want to receive our newsletter by email.
Contact: chantewolf7@gmail.com

Movie night

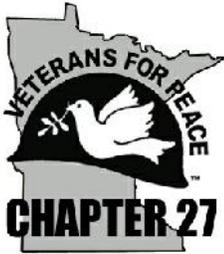
Chapter 27 began showing documentary features last March on a large flat screen in the common space of our office at 1806 Riverside Ave., # 3A, in Minneapolis.

These movies are scheduled every Wednesday following Chapter 27's general meeting on the second Sunday of each month.

Soldiers: Know Your Rights

To Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan: You took an oath to uphold the Constitution, not to support policies that are illegal. The GI Hotline phone number is:

1-800-394-9544



Veterans For Peace, Inc., Chapter 27
1806 Riverside Ave., #3A.
Minneapolis, MN 55454

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Fall 2015 Newsletter

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SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!

As of Sep. 11, 2015:

At least 6,849 dead in Iraq and Afghanistan;
over one million injured veterans (see below).

An estimated 22 veterans commit suicide each day,
amounting to over 24,090 over the past three years.

Iran

**Has never had nuclear
weapons**

**Is not violating the
nonproliferation treaty**

**Spends \$24b total,
\$303/capita on military**

**Has 0 foreign bases and has
started 0 wars in centuries**

**Has never overthrown U.S.
government**

USA

Has 7,200 nukes

**Violates the NPT by not
disarming, by building more,
and by sharing with other
nations**

**Spends \$648b total,
\$2,057/capita on military**

**Has >800 foreign bases in >70
countries and has invaded >70
countries in past 70 years**

**Overthrew Iranian democracy
in 1953 to install dictator**