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VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

Veterans For Peace News is published quarterly by Mpls./St. Paul Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27.

Veterans For Peace works to increase awareness of the costs of war, restrain our 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 non-violent 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 on her epic 6,000 mile sailing voyage around the "Great Loop" that was launched from a Twin Cities suburb late last summer. The crew's anti-nuke message is more important now than ever.



Prez Says . . .

By Dave Logsdon
dlvfp27@gmail.com

The Newsletter is back! A big shout out to our new layout artist Ginny Sutton and interim editor Craig Wood for pulling this

together. So much has transpired for our chapter since the last edition. Suffice it to say, it's a daunting task to even try to summarize.

With a large Veterans For Peace (VFP) chapter like ours, there are lots of moving

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Prez Says . . ., from page 1

parts. From Michael Orange's fine work with heading actions supporting an assault weapons ban to Arlys Herem and Jeff Roy's stellar job of keeping us informed about the Veterans Administration's (VA) push toward privatization. Individual organizing can be as exciting as it is important, such as Mike Madden's wonderful work on the "Free Julian Assange" campaign to Josh Farris' successful efforts to set up an information table at the Jimmy Dore concert. The job gets easier when you have fellow travelers like Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and Minnesota Peace Action Coalition (MNPAC) on board.

"The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we, thus, drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." — Albert Einstein

The huge box office hit "Oppenheimer" presented groups like VFP and WAMM with unique opportunities. While the movie was quite good, it was still a Hollywood production and not a detailed account of the history of the Atomic bomb. The devil is often in the details and the glaring omission of any mention of "Downwinders" — (those affected by nuclear fallout) is just one example of what the movie failed to include. Fortunately, the traveling little VFP sailboat *The Golden Rule* hasn't ignored this important detail during her epic journey.

The boat that's been "Sailing for a Nuclear Free World" for almost a year now is on its last leg of completing the "Great Loop" of circumnavigating the Mississippi River, the Caribbean, Atlantic Coast and Erie Canal before sailing back through the Great Lakes to Chicago. After that, she'll be broken down and shipped to the West Coast. This historic boat that began its voyage in a Twin Cities suburb has already brought a powerful anti-nuke message to numerous high profile ports including Cuba, Naval Base Norfolk, Washington, D.C. and New York City, garnering a huge amount of press all along the way.

A little background about the boat: way back in the 1950s the U.S. military was recklessly testing nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands. This prompted a small group of Quakers to try and sail the *Golden Rule* from Los Angeles into those testing areas and use their bodies as human shields. The crew were arrested near Hawaii before reaching their destination.

Another boat, *The Phoenix*, whose crew was inspired by the *Golden Rule*, did make it all the way, but that crew was also arrested. However, the incident created enough worldwide publicity to end the testing. While VFP has partly funded this project, the project has not been universally accepted within our organization. But through tireless fundraising by organizers Helen Jaccard and her husband Gerry Condon, the almost completed journey

has been a big success in my humble opinion. I'm so proud of our chapter's help with getting the boat launched from our area.

A lot of us rode the VFP peace bus down to Dubuque Iowa last summer where the *Golden Rule* was greeted by a large group of displaced Marshallese along with their children who were wearing traditional attire and singing Marshall Islands songs. It was a powerful and very emotional scene with lots of smiles and tears.

This brings us back to the movie and the impact of the atomic bomb's legacy on the the volatile situation in Ukraine which raises the very real possibility of a nuclear confrontation. Although the film is not a documentary, it does bring back the horror of nuclear bombs to people around the world. It's up to groups like WAMM and VFP to fill in the blanks, which we do in part by giving folks leaving theaters further information or copies of John LaForge's excellent Nukewatch newsletter. Big shout-out to dedicated VFP member Jim Brown in Mankato for being part of this group action.

"Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding." — Albert Einstein

At Veterans For Peace, we work a lot in the areas of arts, education, and direct actions. Oftentimes separately but, ideally in a combination of the three. As president I have been gifted with a cadre of dedicated and talented veterans and non-veteran fellow travelers. We work in solidarity with other groups to protest the ongoing military actions of our government and do not lose sight of the "FOR PEACE" part of our name.

We are using our networks and our imaginations to plant seeds of peace any place we can. Hiroshima survivor Kenji Kitagawa said it best, "World peace is kind of a dream away." It might be difficult, but we have to do something and the goal is the total banning of nuclear weapons. I feel what I'm doing is so small, but one seed will grow the crop in the future." In a nutshell, join us, plant those seeds for your children and your children's children.

"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile." — Albert Einstein

Since our last Newsletter, a lot has happened in our chapter. We've had a full plate of activities, not all big successes and not without controversy. Participation in peace and justice work is often problematic and not always rewarding, but is absolutely essential. Our veteran-led group is filled with good-hearted people who continually get out of their comfort zones to make the world a better place, and it is extremely humbling and gratifying for me to stand with them.

Peace,
Dave Logsdon

Why Did So Many Drink the Kool Aid on Ukraine?

by Barry Riesch

I am surprised and dismayed by the number of people in the U.S. (including all the members of Congress and Senate) who continue to drink the Kool Aid the U.S. government provides them on Ukraine. Particularly those who consider themselves part of the antiwar movement.

Shocked really, given an issue as important as war that more people aren't seeking information beyond what local and national media tells them. We at Veterans For Peace know first-hand about the lies we are fed and many of us are doing what we can to let others know things the mainstream corporate media (MSM) isn't telling us.

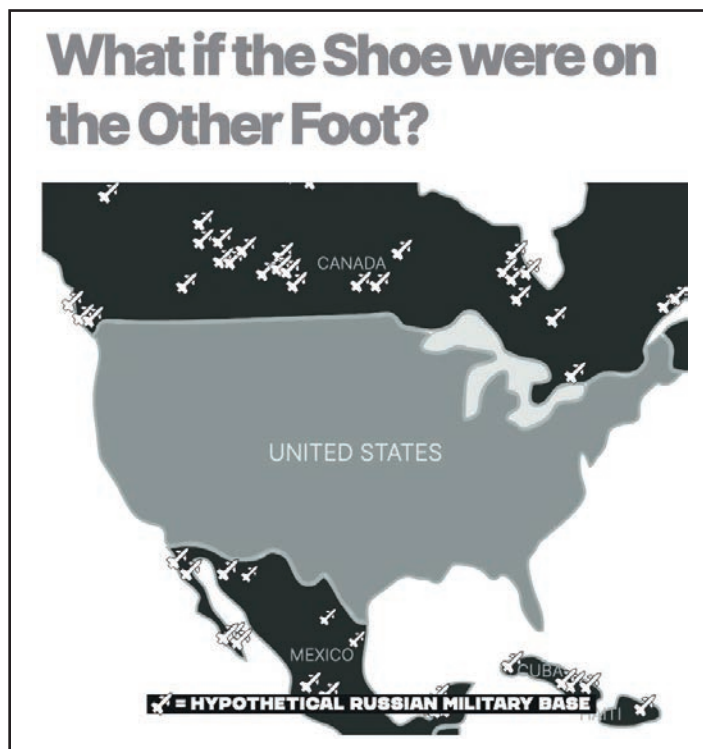
Don't folks remember that our government has consistently lied to us about recent wars and lured us into one military fiasco after another, such as Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria? How is Ukraine any different? Is the U.S. really the savior of the world? But the old clichés are repeated over and over, “freedom and democracy are threatened,” and “evil must be vanquished” or because the fate of Europe and NATO along with their “rules-based international order” is at stake.

Really, is the U.S. in any position to be enforcing or supporting any kind of democracy? Just look at the state of democracy in the U.S. and please tell me where is the Department of Peace in this whole matter.

Realizing of course that the MSM is very much part of the problem, especially in its collaborations with a conglomerate of institutions that's sometimes referred to as the Military-Industrial-Congressional-Intelligence-Media-Academia-Think-Tank Complex (MICIMATT.) Together, these organizations produce powerful and pervasive government propaganda.

Don't people realize that most of the information they receive comes from influential newspapers such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*? Outfits that typically print whatever our government feeds them — thereby making talking heads out of most of our national and local reporters. Leaving us with little in-depth, independent research, balanced reporting or any mention of high-ranking government officials complicit in weapons manufacturing.

In regards to the war in Ukraine, perhaps the most important consideration to be made for those in the U.S. is this — what if the shoe were on the other foot? Suppose that Russia decided to set up bases in Canada close to the border of the U.S. or Mexico for that matter. Or if Russia or China surrounded the U.S. with warships, all of course without our approval: just like what the U.S. is now doing with Russia and China. How would that fly with the U.S.? I would say it would not be a pretty picture.



We know how President Kennedy and former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev handled things during the 1963 Cuban Missile Crisis. Fortunately both had enough sense to realize how fast we were approaching nuclear disaster. But they realized their mistakes and began a process of nuclear disarmament, which the U.S. has paid no attention to after all these years. In fact we now spend 23 times more per year on nuclear weapons (\$857.9 billion

Drink the Kool Aid, cont'd on page 4

Drink the Kool Aid, from page 3

NDAA) than on the climate crisis. Listen to Kennedy's commencement speech at American University in 1963, just months before his assassination. Commencement Address at American University...JFK Library <https://www.jfklibrary.org › john-f-kennedy-speeches>.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine would not have happened if the Western alliances had honored their promises not to expand NATO beyond Germany's borders and Ukraine had remained neutral. The proponents of war knew the probable consequences of NATO's expansion. We were told that Europe was being threatened when, in reality, the U.S. and its allies were making Europe into a potential battlefield while damaging their economy and making Europeans more dependent on the United States.

The U.S. instigated the war in Ukraine not just by expanding NATO to Russia's doorstep, but by toppling Ukraine's democratically elected government in 2014. And let's not forget, Russia did not start the war in 2022. It was the coup government in Kiev launched the first military attack on its own people in April 2014. After eight years of warring, 14,000 Ukrainians had been killed and a million and a half more were displaced.

And what part of the Ukrainian democracy are we fighting to protect? Why did the Ukrainian parliament revoke the official use of minority languages, including Russian, three days after the 2014 coup? How do we rationalize supporting the eight years of warfare against ethnic Russians in the Donbass region before the 1922 Russian invasion?

It is right out of the play book of Hermann Wilhelm Göring — “tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger.” It works the same way in any country.

The U.S. government instigated this proxy war because they knew Ukraine was a red line for Putin. They knew he would see it as an existential threat. Then again, so did the MSM, but reporters continued to say it was an “unjustified” invasion like it was one word. It's almost ludicrous to hear them throw around the word democracy when talking about Ukraine as though the country didn't have a well-deserved reputation for being the most corrupt country in Europe for decades. But being tough is our modus operandi; maintaining geo-political dominance by wreaking havoc among our adversaries and making a tidy profit for the war industry at the same time.

Scroll forward to December 2021. The Kremlin presented treaty proposals that included implementation of the eight-year-old Minsk peace accords (which included a commitment that Ukraine not join NATO) and dissolving extreme-right Ukrainian militias along with a promise to engage in serious negotiations about a new security architecture for Europe.

But the U.S. and NATO consistently refused to negotiate. After that, the world was warned from December 2021 onward that Russia would invade Ukraine while Western powers were transferring huge quantities of weapons to Ukraine and NATO was training the Ukrainian military. Russia kept submitting negotiation proposals while sending more forces to the Ukrainian border to no avail. On February 24 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine.

This war will only be solved through negotiations that will allow ethnic Russians in Ukraine to have autonomy along with Moscow protection, as well as Ukrainian neutrality. This means Ukraine cannot join NATO. The longer these negotiations are delayed, the more Ukrainians and Russians will suffer and die. Until then, their cities and infrastructure will be pounded into rubble. The one thing that would have stopped the invasion is if Ukraine had said no to NATO. But this proxy war was designed to serve U.S. interests which include enriching weapons manufacturers, weakening the Russian military and further isolating Russia from Europe. What happens to Ukraine is basically irrelevant.

Much of the money that's been appropriated for Ukraine security assistance doesn't actually go to Ukraine. It gets invested in American defense manufacturing and fuels Ukrainian corruption. It also helps fund newer weapons and munitions for the U.S. armed forces to replace the older ones we provided Ukraine. It's unprecedented and deliberately planned that our “perpetual wars” are not accompanied by visible costs such as conscription, raising of taxes to pay for the war or American casualties.

The Russia-Ukraine War has been an unmitigated disaster. Hundreds of thousands have been killed or wounded. Millions have been displaced and the environmental and economic destruction have been incalculable. Future devastation could be exponentially greater as nuclear powers creep ever closer toward open war.

At VFP we deplore violence, war crimes, indiscriminate missile strikes, terrorism, and other atrocities that are part of war in general. The solution to this horrible situation is not more weapons or more war, this only guarantees further death and destruction. We reject the idea that diplomats seeking peace must choose sides — in this case, either Russia or Ukraine. In favoring diplomacy we choose the side of sanity to make the world a better place for all of us.

This is why we consider President Biden's promise to back Ukraine for “as long as it takes” to be a dangerous license to pursue ill-defined and ultimately unachievable goals. The idea of “fighting Russia to the last Ukrainian” runs contrary to our belief that deliberate provocations spawned the Russia-Ukraine War and deliberate diplomacy can end it.

Moral Injury May Follow You Home From War

by David Cooley

So you're feeling patriotic, or your job prospects look dim and a military recruiter just offered you the sky plus a bonus, but there's a lot missing in that pitch. Moral injury (MI) which is associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is something recruiters don't like to talk about.

So what pray tell is MI, don't we leave our morals at home when going off to war? W-E-L-L, if you had an upbringing that imparted a moral character it goes to war with you, even if you don't know it. The U.S. military is very good at teaching men and now women how to kill, but totally misses the boat when it comes to dealing with the effects of killing. If it did, there might be mass desertions at the end of bootcamp.

Here's a somewhat clinical definition of MI: The psychological, behavioral, social and spiritual aftermath of exposure to events where someone does or does not do something that goes against their beliefs of right and wrong (or both). This can also happen to people who simply witness events that go against their values, worldview or moral sensibilities — including those who feel betrayed by a person or persons (this could also be an institution) in positions of leadership in high stakes situations.

In short, MI is a combination of the very detrimental effects of war (or other traumatic situations) on one's moral character and integrity. The "UNMAKING" of this makes you who you are as a moral person, assuming you are one. Moreover, MI is common among civilian groups such as firefighters, police officers, EMT personnel and even vets who weren't deployed to war zones. MI can occur anywhere.

MI has much in common with PTSD. In fact, it often underlies or shares the symptoms of PTSD. Frequently PTSD symptoms have to be treated before going deeper to the core of MI. This condition mirrors PTSD in some respects leading untrained practitioners to not recognize there is something deeper at play. MI emotions that differ from PTSD are grief, shame, regret, alienation and anomie (a collapse of personal standards and values). Those emotions manifest in a failure to thrive in life or in a sense, not feeling like one deserves a good life.

Much of life is spent thinking in the past and future, which makes being in the present an ongoing challenge. This affects memory which makes dementia of some sort

more likely. Plus, decision-making can become more of an effort if one doesn't trust a process that led to the trauma in the first place. MI can also lead to a loss of faith in humanity or seeing the goodness in others as well as in oneself. Trust in a number of things can be shattered like one's belief in a higher power, institutions or traditions which may set the stage for a vicious cycle(s) of alienation.

This is a bleak picture of a human condition to dig out from, but it's worse to remain in those completely dark places than trying to find some shade. MI is best thought of in terms of repair rather than recovery. The reason for

this is that the serious event or events that brought MI to the doorstep of our soul or character can not be erased completely.

We thus have to learn how to accept responsibility for our part, which is where a lot of anger stems from, and learn new coping skills to work better with our emotional triggers. For military personnel and perhaps the police, healing will be enhanced by bringing together moral values, loosing warrior ethos and a deep dive into

the realities of war that have been going on since the time of Achilles when he studied the moral conflicts that invariably go along with battlefield survival. On a positive note, most of us figure out ways to be of service to others. Atonement is crucial.

None of this gets better with age without professional help because PTSD/MI gets worse with age if left untreated. For those struggling with MI, it takes real courage to wade into that MI cesspit. You may think you're alone, but you need to remember that there're a lot of other humans like you working to create a better life for themselves and loved ones.

Fortunately, there are great treatment options available for vets at the VA, Vet Centers or through VA community care. I can say on good authority to look into all the options because one size doesn't fit all. You may be surprised when you find out how much Vietnam and Iraq/Afghanistan MI groups have in common.

A short reading list: *Achilles in Vietnam*, Jonathan Shay M.D., Ph.D. // *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*, Rita Nakashima Brock & Gabriella Lettini // *Beyond PTSD: The Moral Casualties of War*, Camillo Mac Bica (A NY VFP member), Gnosis Press, P.O. Box 3, Commack, NY 11725 // *Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Veterans*, William P. Mahedy



A Surprising Visit

by Mike Madden

On November 29, 2022, the *New York Times* published an open letter calling on the U.S. government to end its prosecution of Julian Assange. VFP Chapter 27 and Twin Cities Assange Defense decided it was an opportune moment to speak with our federal elected officials.

Following procedures recommended on her website, we requested a meeting with Fourth District Representative Betty McCollum. We included a copy of the open letter, and informed her office that a four-person delegation from our group would be available to meet any day, Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

Ten days later, having received no response, a follow-up phone call was made. During the call, Representative McCollum's office agreed to a tentative meeting. They also agreed to accept as background a copy of Nils Melzer's book *The Trial of Julian Assange*. The book was promptly delivered, however, on December 14 we received an email telling us that Representative McCollum was now unable to meet, but we were assured that she "very clearly understands the position of your organization." We replied with a request to meet with a staff member in her stead. That request went unanswered into the new year.

After that we decided to pay a surprise visit to McCollum's St. Paul office and began collecting messages of support for Julian Assange via email and wrote them on post-it notes.

On the morning of January 12, 2023, eleven Assange supporters went to her office unannounced and began sticking approximately 200 post-it notes to the door, window, and adjacent walls. Through the glass, I could see a concerned look on the receptionist's face. A staffer then

appeared in the reception area. Together, they assessed the situation for a few moments and quickly disappeared. A second staffer promptly came by, took a look at us and left. After most of the notes had been placed around the entrance, all three came back to the reception area, opened the door and invited us in.

As we exchanged introductions and pleasantries, Mike McDonald, a past president of Veterans For Peace Chapter 27 continued applying post-it notes to an interior wall of the office. We took photographs with our Assange paraphernalia and prepared a nice stage to make our case about why the prosecution of Julian Assange must end.

We emphasized the free press issues at stake and that no journalist in American history has ever been charged under the Espionage Act for publishing true information. Behind us was a note that read — ***The Constitution protects publishers!***

We spoke of the Collateral Murder video and how it exposed the unlawful targeting of civilians, including the wounded and their rescuers. We asserted that the

crimes from the Iraq War, including torture of detainees, unreported civilian casualties and summary executions by U.S. soldiers, were far more serious than any crime Assange is alleged to have committed. In plain view was a note that read — ***Exposing crime is not a crime!***

And we brought up the recanted testimony of Siggie Thordarson, CIA sketches to kidnap or assassinate Assange and UC Global spying on Assange's doctors and lawyers. The prosecutorial misconduct in pursuit of Assange has been more egregious than that which resulted in the dismissal of the case against Daniel Ellsberg. Another note from a constituent read — ***Betty, speak up for justice!***



A Surprising Visit, cont'd on page 7

Speakers Available!

We have a stable of capable speakers on a variety of topics relating to a veteran's perspective.

Email dlvfp27@gmail.com



A Surprising Visit, from page 6

We also pointed out that the Obama administration declined to prosecute Assange because it would create “a *New York Times* problem.” One constituent provided a quote from Nadine Gordimer — ***The truth isn’t always beauty, but the hunger for it is.***

An activist from Vadnais Heights, MN, wrote a limerick for Assange:

***Collateral Murder is bad,
To ignore it is well beyond sad,
A pot and a kettle,
Should never meddle,
With a fine and diligent lad.***

We spent about half an hour presenting our case for Assange’s freedom. When we were done, we collected all the post-it notes and stuck them to hard copies of the open letter from the *New York Times*. Before leaving, we presented the neat pile to staff, thanked them for their hospitality and requested that Representative McCollum inform her constituents where she stands on this issue of constitutional and international importance.

Her response arrived January 20th, eight days after our visit. In it she writes:

“The detention of Julian Assange, and his potential extradition to the United States, are issues that fall outside the jurisdiction of the U.S. Congress. As he is being held

in the United Kingdom, the extradition request is an official matter between the U.S. Department of Justice and the government of the United Kingdom. Congress is not able to direct the Department of Justice in this matter or intervene in court proceedings before the Judicial Branch.”

Of course we didn’t ask Rep McCollum to “direct” the Justice Department, or “intervene” in court proceedings. We simply asked her where she stands.

Democrats, including Senators Bernie Sanders and Ron Wyden, were willing to criticize the prosecution of Assange when it was initiated by the Trump administration. Both of their 2019 statements were stuck to McCollum’s wall. Unfortunately, avoidance of the issue appears to be the order of the day now with a Democratic president pursuing precisely the same vendetta.

**"When we Glorify War,
we are not honoring the dead, we are
enticing the living to join them."**

**Smedley Butler
Four-Star USMC General**

Taking a Long Run at International Conscientious Objector's Day

by Larry Johnson

Few know that JFK said, "War will end when the conscientious objector (CO) has the same hero status as the warrior."

In 1982, Western European COs designated May 15 as Conscientious Objector Day, an idea that quickly spread to other countries. And it's in this tradition that I'm planning a collaborative CO event May 15, 2024 that will focus on the power of conscientious objecting.

I'm thinking of a program in Linden Hills in remembrance of Lew Ayers who grew up there. Ayers is probably Minnesota's most famous CO, but few today have ever heard of him. When you don't want people to know something, you bury the story. Ayers played the lead role in *All Quiet on the Western Front* and was famous as the first Dr. Kildare in the movies. When he declared conscientious objection during World War II, he shook Hollywood and the nation just as Muhammed Ali did later during the American War on Vietnam.

So far, the event will include at least two story circles, morning and afternoon, where any and all participants can tell their short stories about war and conscience. My story involves growing up seriously committed to the inerrancy of the Bible — loosely translated: "We're the only ones who really know the truth." Then I stumbled across a startling fact: Some churches like the Mennonites and Church of the Brethren shared the same evangelical theology, but refused to kill in warfare because early Christians believed that to be a teaching of Jesus.

Later, I was drafted as a medic who wouldn't carry a weapon. Those I had worked with in Christian evangelism (mostly those not serving in the military) trashed me as a coward for my unwillingness to kill "Godless Commies." It was a long time ago that I felt driven out of that kind of Christianity, but today I find some of the new Evangelical leaders speaking out in favor of the early Christians interpretation of nonviolence with a reference to Jesus.

If you want to be a part of this day, send me an email at larryjvfp@gmail.com. More than that, start sending in the stories and resources — all of them.

Amy Blumenshine and Al Bostelmann have worked to get the Lutheran Church to introduce young people to the option of conscientious objection. Support is meager, but the story is out there. Mel Gibson's film *Hacksaw Ridge* did much to dispel the myth that COs are cowards. Also, much has been written recently about how COs are improving mental health care by doing alternative service in psychiatric hospitals.

My original decision was naïve with no thought of

how to stop harm to people. Today I am conscientiously opposed to financial profit for killing people because this is a stimulus for mass shootings and unnecessary war. If you believe weapons are necessary, I say be patriotic and make them with no profit for shareholders or CEO types. Mel Duncan was a conscientious objector who started an international organization called Nonviolent Peaceforce that operates around the world to end conflicts without weapons. In my opinion, a large chunk of our alleged defense spending should be poured into more efforts like this one.

I'm also severely conscious now of being a "ONCE A MEDIC, ALWAYS A MEDIC" person. Simply put, if we are sending men and women to war there should be no hesitation about taking care of them when they come home. I am also conscientiously opposed to the way veterans have been treated after their exposures to toxins and trauma.

You're ALL invited to move your stories and resources toward May 15 — let's focus on them as POWER.

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Mayday Books has been a 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's also a great place to drop in, have a cup of coffee and talk with whomever happens to be there. Find that book you have been looking for.

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

War, a Circus of Cruelty

EMBRACING THE GHOSTS: PTSD and the Vietnam Quagmire by J. Michael Orange

— reviewed by Ron Staff

Veterans For Peace member Orange boldly reports in the spotlight of this derring-do entertainment. Days, weeks and months of no action are interspersed with moments of unforgettable terror and error.

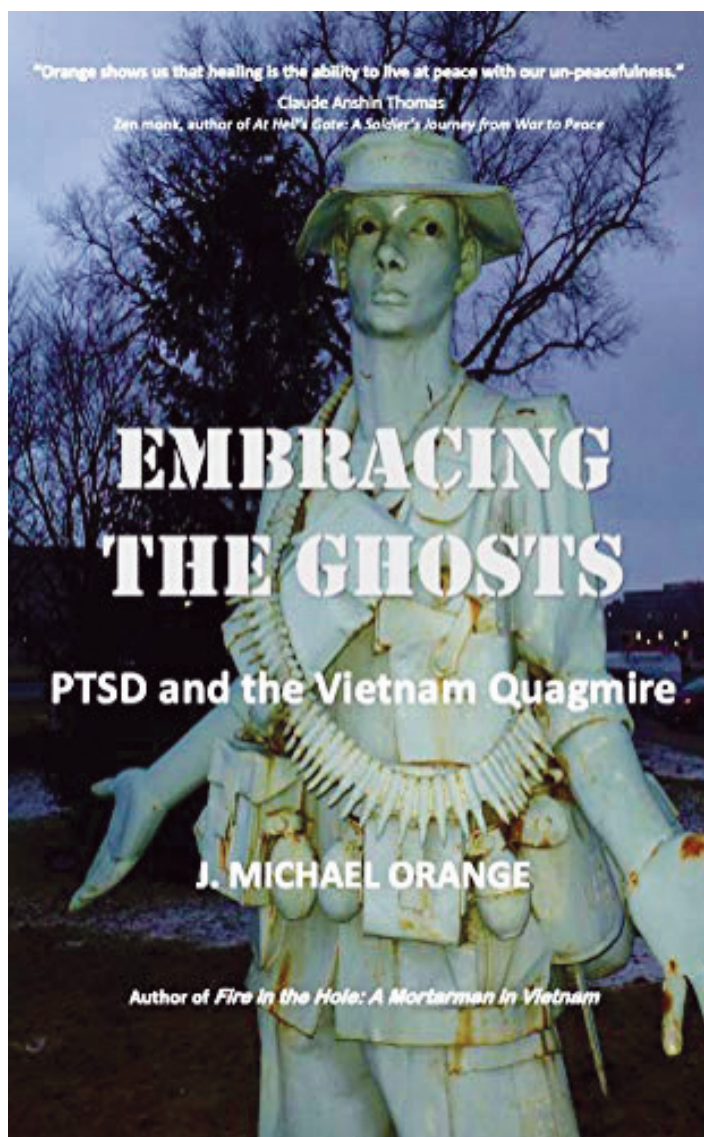
Not wanting to dwell on death, one blanks out one's own death, yet it greets those cleaning up battle sites before they can walk away. And while those experiences may seem like they're in the past or over with, they often cling to the psyches of military personnel traveling back to safe spots for indeterminate amounts of time. Attention loosens into a slightly wider scope with much abridged response time. Attention directed there does not attend to anything else. Feelings do not die — they are herded away.

When veterans with those experiences come “back-to-the-world” so to speak, the pressure to remove them may start slowly and can sneak up at night or in broad daylight. Noises which once threatened, now come casually and carry no danger. Assessing landscapes for possibilities which no longer exist may go unnoticed. But energy has gone there and those power drains can distract one from having a more enriched life.

In his book, Orange relates his life before his Vietnam training to his journey “back-in-the-world” where he began listening to others who cared enough about him to encourage him along with his search for a “post-performance recovery of balance.” He writes of a journey and people who showed him ways toward a more engaged and leveled life with those he loves.

Both his journeys roll and turn with the forward press of life that he connects to the life of clarity he is presently sculpting. His gift to readers is a report of healing along with the names of his helpers.

Ghosts such as his and others can be named, framed, hung on a wall and put in their places. *Embracing the Ghosts* does what the author wanted, which is to lay out path markers for the help he used. Thank you Michael.



A Call to Action for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

SANTA FE, New Mexico—Emerging from the sweltering heat, hundreds gathered under the roof of the Santa Maria de la Paz Community Hall on July 16, 2023, for “A World Without Nuclear Weapons: From Reflection to Action,” an interfaith remembrance of the Trinity nuclear test.

On the same day in 1945, the first atomic bomb was detonated in secret at the nearby Trinity test site in the Jornada del Muerto desert, ushering in the atomic age and the profound implications that came with it, including nuclear warfare and mutual assured destruction. To be sure, the test made possible the U.S. military operations carried out less than a month later, with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The remembrance event drew a large and varied crowd — activists, students, scholars and U.S. congressmen among them. The event was organized by a coalition of faith-based groups, leaders and institutions—the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Nuclear Watch New Mexico, Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, United Church of Santa Fe and Soka Gakkai International-USA.

The final notes of the SGI-USA song “A Revolution in You” still hung in the air as the Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe, took to the stage.

“This is an interfaith prayer service,” he began, “and our intention is world peace. We are committing ourselves to the very clear fact that the non-negotiable step to world peace is multilateral verifiable nuclear disarmament. So that is the focus of our prayer today.”

Indeed, prayer was offered throughout, in poetry, in recitation and in song. They tended to draw one’s attention to that which cannot be lived without—clean air and the richness of the land—as well as that without which life would be impoverished—the singing of birds, the carefree voices of playing children.

One prayer, offered by the Reverent Talitha Arnold, drew its strength from the breath.

“In Hebrew,” she explained, “‘breath’—*bruha*—‘spirit’ and ‘wind’—they all have the same meaning. . . . Let us breathe in deeply the spirit of peace, the spirit of hope and the spirit of deep abiding love.”

Dr. Mary Hasbah Roessel of the Navajo Nation followed with a prayer for the great mountains that surround her tribal land. “Dawn Boy’s and Dawn Girl’s voices echo clearly within my thoughts, and the bluebirds singing ahead of me tell me I am safe and protected.”

While the bombs’ devastating effects on the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are today widely known, less known are the effects suffered by the first people to experience nuclear radiation—the New Mexicans who lived near the testing site.

Tina Cordova, co-founder of the Tularosa

Downwinders Consortium, which advocates for medical care and compensation for people and their families affected by the nuclear bomb testing in New Mexico, is among five generations in her family to experience high rates of cancer due to radiation exposure.¹

“We will never fully know and understand the effect this has had on the people of New Mexico and our economy,” she said. “All of us have paid for this, because it’s had a huge economic impact on our state. . . . I’m asking all of you to join our fight for justice, the fight for the people of New Mexico who have been long ignored by our government.”

In keeping with the spirit of the event, the organizers initiated a call to action. Ms. Cordova joined SGI-USA Public Relations Director Danny Hall in outlining steps that those in attendance could take toward a nuclear-free future. These included asking U.S. Congressional representatives to co-sponsor House Resolution 77, “Embracing the Goals and Provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” as well as joining forces with the national grassroots coalition *Back from the Brink*.

Two SGI-USA youth read a message sent by Charles Oppenheimer, grandson of the late J. Robert Oppenheimer, the American theoretical physicist who, during World War II, directed the Manhattan Project, which created the first nuclear weapons.

Mr. Oppenheimer wrote that the story of nuclear weapons and our failure to contain them can seem scary — even depressing. “But I think there is reason for optimism,” he continued. “We can recognize our interdependence as a fact, as basic as nuclear fission. War is not practical anymore — we cannot have a total war without global annihilation. Robert Oppenheimer saw that in a bomb in the New Mexico desert in 1945.”²

Addressing his grandfather’s life and complicated legacy, he urged those gathered to hear the final message with which his grandfather had left the scientists at Los Alamos:

The peoples of this world must unite
or they will perish. This war, which has
ravaged so much of the earth, has written
these words. The atomic bomb has spelled
them out for all men to understand.³

—Prepared by the World Tribune staff

References

- 1 See an interview with Tina Cordova in the September 2023 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 24–25.
- 2 Read Charles Oppenheimer’s message in the September 2023 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 21–22.
- 3 Ibid.

This article originally appeared in the Aug. 4, 2023, issue of the World Tribune, a publication of the SGI-USA.

Open Streets

by Mike McDonald

Our chapter is participating again this year in the 12th annual Open Streets in Minneapolis. This community-focused event blocks off car traffic four times a year to give neighbors and the business community a chance to sell merchandise and stroll, skate or roll down streets on things that don't require gas. We've done this for nearly ten years.

Per usual, we'll drive the VFP peace bus down and set up tables next to sidewalks. There's always good food, music and connections to be made with individuals and groups. We hand out peace buttons and paste stickers on a lot of kids and adults we meet and this usually leads to conversations, which is our primary goal. We also have newsletters and brochures to share and copies of books such as "ADDICTED TO WAR" or "WAR IS A RACKET" to give away.

We now have a choice of four banners we can hang from the bus. My favorite is MILITARY SPENDING IS KILLING USA. A message that alludes to the fact that the U.S. spends more money on the military than the next ten countries combined. Approaching the trillion dollar mark each year, the empire's appetite for spending seems to be insatiable. John F Kennedy once said, "Weapons of War must be abolished before they abolish us."

We find that most people share our vision for peace, especially the vets who stop by — and this is encouraging.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

5-6 pm Mondays. Stop Line Three Vigil. In front of Governor's Mansion on Summit Ave., St. Paul.

5-6 pm Mondays. White Bear Lake Peace Vigil, Hwy. 61. and 4th Ave.

4-5 pm Wed. Lake Street/Marshall Ave. Peace Bridge Vigil.

4:45 pm Wed., 50th and Halifax, Mpls., Grandmothers for Peace Vigil. (FFI call 612-827-5364)

Monthly VFP chapter meeting, 2nd Sun., 6 pm. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. They are now hybrid meetings (subject to change because of future pandemic situations). Contact VFP at 612-821-9141 for information on how to connect.



Dave and Mike on the job on the West Bank.

DANIEL ELLSBERG (1931 — 2023) ~ a tribute and memoir

by Todd Pierce

Recently I was asked to help with the National Press Club's Tribute Honoring Daniel Ellsberg's Legacy on July 30, in Washington, DC this year — see link here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG_ZLcT6Ksg&t=310s

This I was eager to do not only because of Ellsberg's vital importance and courage as a whistle-blower with the *Pentagon Papers* and more recently his book *The Doomsday Machine*, but also because of my belief that Dan Ellsberg was far more important than just as a whistle-blower, although the importance of that is immeasurable.

For those who knew him and/or studied his work, he was also an invaluable "critical political theorist." That is, one who evaluates the underlying political theory and philosophy of "political acts" and "actors" regarding U.S. foreign policy and (in his case) its domestic consequences. Something Hannah Arendt, Sheldon Wolin, Chalmers Johnson, Noam Chomsky, Peter Dale Scott, among others, did. Through email introductions to Dan's personal friends Scott and Chomsky, I later managed to get an oral history interview seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1GMQ-EcCys&t=272s>

Dan's major writings — his books *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* and *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner* along with the *Pentagon Papers* — are essential reading if one is to understand their respective topics. Implicit and explicit in each is an evaluation of the underlying political theory of the U.S. Empire and the National Security State apparatus (Managers) who operate it. This was one of Dan's primary concerns in our email exchanges and in conversations we'd had on the subject of the U.S. Government's "Continuity of Operations" planning.

Dan and a few others including Noam Chomsky and Chris Hedges correctly saw the inherent repressiveness of a law passed under the 2012 NDAA which provided for military detention of U.S. citizens. And they challenged the law in a case, *Hedges v. Obama*. This resulted in an

assertion by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Attorney that the law permitted the President of the U.S. on his or her own "sole authority" to place a U.S. citizen into military detention simply for their "expressive activities." This confirmed what others feared.

Not surprisingly, the chief promoters of this Senate bill were Republican war-fanatics John McCain, Lindsey Graham and hyper-militarist Democrats who were later joined by Independent Joe Lieberman. "The Three Amigos," as General Petraeus called them, were not dissimilar to Goebbels, Göring, and Himmler in their ideological hyper-militarism.

Dan, though, evaluated the ideology of the U.S. National Security State and saw that its "Perpetual War Ideology" demanded opposition. Something he relentlessly did until his dying day.

I only knew Dan a little, having become acquainted with him through the group emails of a friend William R. Polk while I was on active-duty with the Army as a Guantanamo defense attorney. Also, by way of an organization Ray founded called "Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence." This group presented an annual Sam Adams Award to notable Whistleblowers like Julian Assange whom Dan particularly admired and worked to free until his dying day. This link below is from Dan's most recent Sam Adams Award ceremony: (<https://samadamsaward.ch>).

Through other email conversations along with a few extensive in-person conversations and of course through his books, I came to appreciate Dan as a Vietnam War whistleblower and nuclear weapons expert who revealed information about U.S. nuclear war planning. I also came to see him as one of only a few intellectual giants in history who understood the phenomenon of war in three unique ways: First-hand, theoretically and why it should be opposed.

Ray McGovern introduced me to Dan in person later

Daniel Ellsberg, cont'd on page 13

**U.S. MILITARISM
FUELS
CLIMATE CRISIS**

www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis





Raising awareness about imprisoned journalist Julian Assange on July 3 in St. Paul. The event was organized by VFP chapter 27 member Mike Madden.

Daniel Ellsberg, from page 12

at an American University event which was a response to the Pentagon's Vietnam War Commemoration that was essentially a "Psychological Warfare Operation" (Psyops) to spread lies and build support for war. And Dan knew those lies better than anyone, having been a target of them during the Nixon administration.

Dan always allied himself with those who resisted war propaganda and war itself — keeping his highest regard for whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning who used Nuremberg principles (like he did,) to justify speaking out against war. No surprise for his support for others such as Edward Snowden, CIA Officer John Kiriakou, NSA Officers Bill Binney, Tom Drake and his colleagues, and Daniel Hale who is currently unjustly locked in prison for revealing U.S. drone killings as war crimes.

I have wonderful memories of meeting Dan in person on two occasions when we had a chance speak at length. Once in Berkely ahead of the Vets For Peace annual convention in 2016 where we met at his favorite restaurant. It was a fascinating conversation with him doing most of the talking and me trying to keep my mouth shut so I could listen. And another time in 2018 when I was in

San Francisco after I called him out of the blue. As luck would have it, he invited me to his home to listen in on an interview he was giving along with an after-interview talk. Later we went out to dinner with his wife Patricia and continued our conversation. This was one of the most memorable and intellectually stimulating discussions of my life — with both of them!

What Dan stood for above all, I believe, is the necessity for Free Speech, Free Press and Freedom of Thought as guaranteed by the First Amendment — especially during wartime. With the only limitations being current operational plans and military details. But apart from that, the freedom to exchange ideas or opinions and to think freely are absolute necessities.

With those freedoms in mind, and using the Vietnam War as "Exhibit A" proof that "War is too important to be left to the generals," it remains up to the American people to keep challenging "National Security State Managers" because after all these years, they still have no intention of ending forever-wars.

For more information on Dan Ellsberg and to read more of his writings, go to: <https://www.ellsberg.net>. And go to the Ellsberg Archive Project of UMass Amherst at: <https://www.umass.edu/ellsberg/>.

WAR IS NOT OVER WHEN IT'S OVER: Women Speak Out From the Ruins of War

by Ann Jones reviewed by Paula Staff

Written in 2010, this book is a haunting and disturbing documentation of the consequences of war on infants, girls and women long after an armed conflict.

Jones's note in the first chapter — “Women need more than the world's sympathy. They need the world's ear.” Jones along with women from around the world collaborated to design a project called “A Global Crescendo: Women's Voices from Conflict Zones.”

The intent was to loan women in different post-conflict regions digital point-and-shoot cameras to document their lives. In addition, they were encouraged to take photos of whatever caught their attention including the blessings and problems in their lives. They worked in teams, shared cameras and after a period of time offered their photographs to community photography shows.

This project was “not in the end about photography but about developing the particular skills (observation, analysis, articulation) and confidence that people need to advocate for themselves.” The importance of the photographs was mentioned later, “A photo could pin down a fact so that people could see it. A photo could open your eyes.”

Jones traveled extensively to West Africa, Thailand and the Middle East, where she observed that “culture and traditions . . . in the best of times, were remarkably effective in keeping women in their subordinate place, but in wartime they become lethal, exposing those weak, second-rate, blame-worthy creatures a rush of violence so thrilling to the perpetrators that there seems to be no going back.” That's another reason why women were working so hard then, while war was in abeyance, to gain some education, some skills, some income, some respect and some standing as human beings before the soldiers come again.

In her book, Jones carefully wrote about the history of the place, people and conflicts that were ongoing or finished. Women and families “try to carry on, only to find when war ends, sexual violence against women and children continues. The habits of war carry over seamlessly into the peace.” She reported, “In 2009, the UN Security Council . . . passed Resolution 1888, asking the secretary-general to appoint a special representative to oversee a long list of UN mechanisms aimed at protecting women and children from sexual violence during armed conflict.” The Security Council noted that despite its repeated condemnation of such violence, these acts continue to occur and in some situations have become



systematic or widespread. Another resolution was passed a week later “urging all nations and international organizations” to “improve women's participation during all stages of the peace process . . .”

It's a challenging book to read even though many years have passed since its publication, but the message is not dated. Jones concludes “We carried out the photo project to see what ordinary women think about in the aftermath of war, and we found blueprints for peace.” Perhaps if you read this book, you will find your own blueprint for peace.

OPINION

Speechless in Minneapolis

by Craig Wood

Criticizing the ethnonationalist apartheid state of Israel comes with risks. For nearly a decade I've received hate mail after calling out Israeli political practices on social media and in newspapers. One retired police officer from the Bronx said he'd be happy to beat me up if I ever came to NYC and another smartass suggested that I have sex with a Palestinian goat.

More unsettling are the justifications for Israeli racism from those in power. Last month a House Resolution proclaiming that Israel isn't a 'racist or apartheid state' passed with a whopping 412-9-1 vote. Only nine Democrats dissented and Rep. Dean Phillips (D) of Minnesota's Third District weighed in with this: "To call an entire country racist is beyond the pale." Yet he mentioned nothing about the ongoing plight of Palestinians who are essentially marooned on segregated land and subjected to laws that favor Jews over non-Jews.

Then again, neither did a local Minneapolis rabbi a while back when I commented on his FB page while he was discussing the ongoing mistreatment of U.S migrants. It was a coincidence I was also looking for Jewish opinions on how Palestinians are mistreated and didn't see anything about this on his page, so I raised the question. His partial response from a long quote: "Mr. Wood, I don't believe we've met, but I am quite taken aback by your post. It is out of line, unfair, and wrong. This is precisely how 'casual' antisemitism works: An American Jew (me) posts about the US President's policies and inhumane treatment towards immigrants on our US border. Someone I don't believe I know interjects himself on my feed, attempts to detract from the conversation at hand, and turn it into one about Israeli politics and the American Jewish community."

Others I've been in contact have been open to an interchange of ideas. One was with Mordecai Spektor during a phone conversation just before Passover this year. The publisher and editor of *The American Jewish World* was not shy about expressing sympathy for Palestinians or his disappointment with Jewish political leaders in Minnesota he said were quick to side with Israelis during incursions. Although he didn't believe that sanctions on Israel would remedy the situation, he was aware of wretched conditions that Palestinians deal with on a regular basis.

By any measure, sanctions from outside of Israel are worth a try. Especially if one considers how long Palestinians have been discriminated against and the huge

fraction of Congress who still remain silent about Palestinian mistreatment along with pro-Israel Jews who make up about a third of President Biden's cabinet. Not one of those high-level leaders have suggested cutting off Israel's almost four-billion dollar annual allowance. Don't count on Biden — he's still a devout Zionist who once bragged to a Yeshiva Beth Yehuda dinner group in Detroit, "I've raised more money for AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) than some of you have."

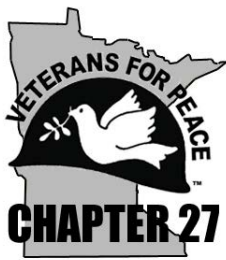
It's nothing short of hypocritical that the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has officially sanctioned twenty-five countries and Israel isn't on the list. Jewish exceptionalism (the unwritten rule of U.S. foreign policy) continues to exempt Israelis from war crimes, violations of international humanitarian laws and other atrocities that would put another country on notice. This of course, gives carte blanche to power splinter-groups like the Israeli settlers who train-wrecked the town of Huwara that one Israeli military commander called a pogrom.

No surprise to those who follow Israeli politics that the U.S. State Department and Israeli government made some noise about the incident but didn't do much. And while it's always open season on Christians who conflate patriotism with the teachings of Jesus or Muslims who treat women like second-class citizens, those who criticize Jews always run the risk of being called anti-Semitic.

Mention that Zionists have an enormous presence in media, be prepared to be smeared as an anti-Jew-hater for connecting Zionists with a power that can shape public opinion in Western countries. If you express disgust that U.S. taxpayers are still expected to give billions every year to a Jewish nation-state that has the second most billionaires per capita in the world, don't be surprised if someone calls you an anti-Semite for linking Jews and money.

And it doesn't matter if what you said is true. What matters, unfortunately, is that someone can retrofit your words into an old trope (which is essentially a figure of speech according to Merriam-Webster) and get away with calling you anti-Semitic.

So the question remains — do we confront this reality or avoid it?



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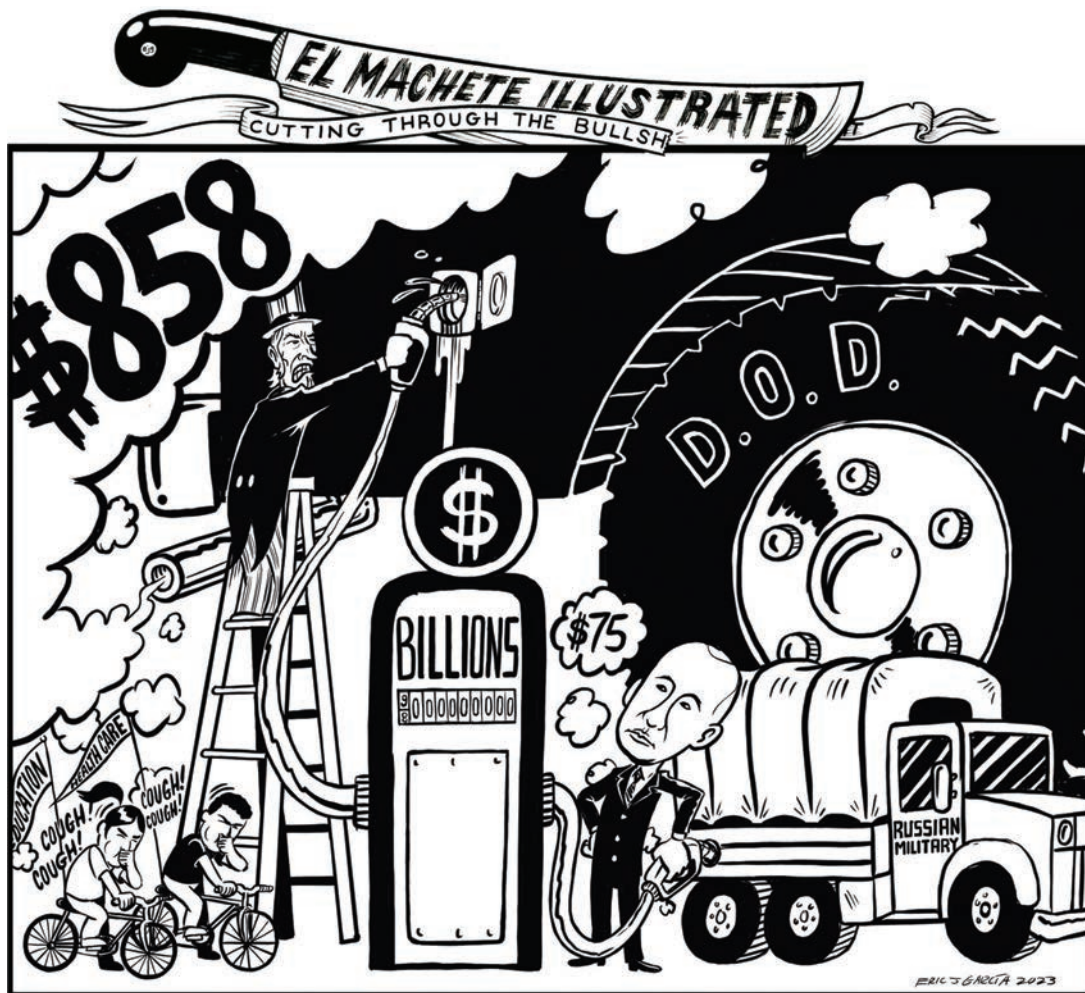
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Friend Eric J Garcia on facebook or follow at elmacheteillustrated @instagram.