



# 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)

## Bill Hatton's Last Protest

By Amy Bluemenshine

After hearing that Veterans for Peace (VFP) Chapter 27 was participating in a 40-Day Fast for Gaza last summer, Vietnam combat veteran William "Bill" Hatton wanted to join them. In hospice care, he had two final wishes: to stand with his comrades in one last antiwar action and to feel grass beneath his bare feet again.

But the former Marine's pain and paralysis raised fears that a trip to downtown Minneapolis might further compromise his health — or even kill him. Learning of his dilemma, VFP Chapter 27 decided to bring their vigil to him, gathering on public land across from the Minnesota Veterans Home where Hatton resides.

Bill's disabilities are likely the result of his exposure to Agent Orange, the toxic defoliant widely sprayed during the Vietnam War. According to a CBS report earlier this year, more than 300,000 American veterans have already died from illnesses linked to the chemical. Bill had lived with pain and increasing paralysis for decades and has been confined to a wheelchair for more than twenty years. Now his mobility is reduced to his voice, mouth, and a few fingers on one hand.

Still, on the day of the vigil, Hatton gamely crossed the parking lot in his motorized wheelchair to greet more than 30 activists holding banners. Despite his frailty, he addressed them with the help of a megaphone, thanking the group for their vigils and for accommodating him. He spoke of his activism after Vietnam — joining protests against the war and later working to combat poverty in South Minneapolis. Later, he used his skills to help Indigenous communities build enterprises of their own in northern Canada.

A VFP member then read the group's statement of purpose and the fasters' demands: first, a resumption of humanitarian aid to Gaza under UN authority; second, an



*Bill Hatton addresses a crowd near the Minneapolis VA. Photo by Craig Wood*

immediate halt to U.S. weapons shipments to Israel. Others spoke passionately about the devastation in Gaza. A prayer was said. As if on cue, an eagle soared overhead — an unmistakable symbol of affirmation.

Bill drew strength from the moment. He gave an interview to a local television station, and, with the help of his comrades, fulfilled his second wish: feeling the cool blades of grass beneath his bare feet.

As he returned to hospice care, an Iraq War veteran approached him to say, "Thank you for speaking. My father, a Vietnam vet, died from Agent Orange. I was told never to have children" — a reminder of the chemical's intergenerational impact.

Hatton's story is at once heartbreaking and inspiring. His lifelong suffering mirrors the hidden costs of war — multiplied across millions of lives yet rarely acknowledged by the military. These costs ripple outward for decades, often invisible to the public that pays for America's ill-conceived wars.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military sprayed dioxin-laced defoliants such as Agent Orange profusely, leaving a legacy of

*Bill Hatton, cont'd on page 3*



# Prez Says . . .

by Dave Logsdon

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“Down through the centuries this trick has been tried by various establishments throughout the world. They force people to get involved in the kind of examination that has one aim and that is to stamp out dissent.”

—Pete Seeger

These are tough times for optimists like myself. We try to maintain our sanity in a climate of sorrow and chaos. Genocide is happening right before our eyes and we continue to allow apologists and tricksters tell us what we see is not what we see. Veterans For Peace and our comrades in the peace and justice communities are doing a lot and yet it can be a struggle when our mostly volunteer people are up against highly financed spin doctors in the media. For many of us who need to ferret out the truth, who need to sound a clarion call for action, it can be a disheartening process. Yet, we must continue to fight, continue to use our imaginations to inspire and nurture a dream of peace. Why you ask? We have no choice.

“The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves from its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.”

—Helen Keller

Arlys Herem is one of those honest workers who have accumulated thousands of tiny pushes in her life. Even though she has spent her whole life in nursing in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indigenous reservations, she never sought the spotlight, but the spotlight shone on her at the Veterans For Peace National Convention in Las Vegas. She was honored with a stewardship award and received a standing ovation. This is one thing that happened in Vegas that is not staying in Vegas. Folks like Penny Gardner and Arlys spend a lifetime in service as nurses and even in retirement just keep on serving. How often as veterans we get thanked for our service; thank the nurses who give a lifetime of service!

“Last night I had the strangest dream, I ever dreamed before, I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war.”

—Ed McCurdy

It has been a tough summer for our chapter. We lost three longtime members. Doug Drews, ex-president of the chapter and mentor of mine. Doug, Vern Hall and I had



VFP Chapter 27 President Dave Logsdon  
Photo by Craig Wood

some memorable trips to the School of the Americas demonstration at the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia. Doug died peacefully after years of suffering from the affects of Agent Orange.

Gerald Gannon was a musician (He loved John Prine songs) and showed up for actions here and in D.C. and Columbus, Georgia. I did not know Ward Brennan as well, but he also road the bus to Georgia and participated in many local actions. Presente my brothers, we will carry on in your spirit.

“Non-violence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and enables the person wielding it. It is the sword that heals.”

—Martin Luther King

We finish the year with a flurry of events. On Indigenous People's Day we do our annual visit to Mankato where we do a remembrance of the mass hanging of 38 Dakota men. We ring our bell every minute for 38 minutes as we do a silent walk around the White Buffalo and the giant scroll with the names of the warriors. Dakota Elder Dr. Chris Mato Nunpa (Two Bear) reads the names as we pause during the procession.

On Armistice Day (November 11th), we march down Victory Memorial drive to the monument for the fallen from World War I. There, we ring our bells of peace in solemn remembrance of all wars and their victims.

Of course, through ongoing vigils protesting our countries unending support for war, we will continue to raise our voices and do our best to promote peace wherever we can. What choice do we have?

Fight the power, see you in the streets!



# Trump Is Playing Headline Games with VA Health Care

By Arlys Herem

If you only read the headlines, it sounds like the Trump administration is backing away from staffing cuts and boosting funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). But a closer look shows that neither canceling the proposed 80,000 staff cuts nor adding \$83 billion to the overall VA budget actually benefits VA health care.

The original plan to cut 80,000 positions has been dropped, but 30,000 jobs will still be eliminated. According to the VA's workforce dashboards, since January the agency has lost over 750 doctors and 2,100 nurses – the only net loss in the past five years. Remaining staff are demoralized, and applications to work at the VA have plummeted. Chronic understaffing has plagued the VA for years. Recently, the Office of the Inspector General reported a 50% increase in the number of VA medical centers experiencing severe staff shortages. A proposal to return to 2019 staffing levels ignored this chronic understaffing as well as the 500,000 new patients added after passage of the 2022 PACT Act.

To make recruitment and retention even harder, the VA terminated all union contracts with employees except for VA police officers and firefighters. Bargaining rights, on-site offices, and equipment are gone. Union leaders argue this is retaliation for resisting staff and funding cuts and opposing efforts to weaken and privatize the VA. Secretary Collins, however, claims unions "... represent VA employees fighting against the best interests of veterans while protecting and rewarding bad workers."

The VA's total budget – including the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefit Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration – did increase by \$83 billion in the 2026 budget. But the details tell a different story. Private-sector health spending rose from \$22 billion to \$35 billion (a 50 percent increase), while VA clinical services funding fell from \$69 billion to \$57 billion (a 17 percent decrease).

These cuts are part of a broader effort to privatize veterans' health care. Current bills before Congress would further shift veterans from the VA to private providers – despite evidence that VA care is equal to or better than private-sector care and costs less. The VA is also unique in the United States as a holistic system, offering integrated medical, social, and psychological care under one roof for veterans nationwide. These bills also ignore the VA's other critical missions: conducting research that benefits all Americans, training health professionals across the country, and providing backup during national and state emergencies.

Now is the time to truly "thank veterans for their service" by resisting these harmful changes. Stay informed

and lobby your Members of Congress by visiting SOVA Veterans for Peace and signing up for updates. Join rallies in support of the VA and its staff. Over 92 percent of veterans who use VA health care want the system preserved and improved – not dismantled. Stand with them in defending their right to high-quality VA care.

*Arlys Herem was in the Army Nurse Corps 1970-75, including a tour of Vietnam. She founded a local NGO in Cambodia doing home health care in villages for 20 years before returning to Minneapolis in 2018. She is a VFP chapter 27 member and has been a SOVA steering committee member.*

**"When we Glorify War,  
we are not honoring the dead, we are  
enticing the living to join them."  
Smedley Butler  
Four-Star USMC Major General**

## Bill Hatton, from page 1

death and disease. Government officials colluded for years to obscure its toxicity, even though by 1965 Dow Chemical's own toxicologist had warned that TCDD, the dioxin component, was exceptionally hazardous to humans. Only decades of relentless advocacy by veterans and humanitarian groups forced the VA to begin acknowledging illnesses linked to Agent Orange. Some conditions were only added to the list of recognized diseases in 2025 (VA source).

Many veterans died without benefits. The worst effects remain in Vietnam, where rural poverty compounds the suffering. High rates of illness are also found in Cambodia and Laos – countries where the U.S. denied waging war. The full scope of intergenerational harm remains uncertain, though limited benefits exist for some veterans' children (VA source). Advocates argue that government reluctance to expand coverage is driven by the staggering potential cost of compensating all affected families.

The lesson Bill Hatton's story makes plain is that the aftermath of war lingers far beyond the battlefield – etched into human bodies, passed down through generations, and embedded in poisoned landscapes. Preventing war itself is the only true way to prevent such prolonged suffering.

Even in his final days, Bill Hatton wanted to remind us of that truth.



# What is Israel *Really* up to in Gaza – Land, Gas and Oil Grabs?

By Ken Shain

Gaza can be hard to figure – especially during this stage of history where conspiracy theories are rampant. From left to right, pundits speculate about the hidden forces behind assassinations, wars, and terrorist attacks. Think back to JFK: his assassination has been blamed on



*Map of the Gaza coastline showing the Gaza Marine and adjacent offshore fields, some of the most valuable natural gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean.*

pro-Castro Cubans, anti-Castro Cubans, Russians, the Mafia, Israelis – almost everyone before suspicion turned to our own intelligence agencies.

That these theories are deliberately created and promoted shouldn't surprise anyone who looks past headlines and does some research. So when we try to understand what's going on in Gaza we have to ask – are we seeing events as they are, or are we being told a carefully constructed version of reality? MSM still remains horribly biased with news reports that focus on the violence in Gaza and the occupied enclaves but rarely on the underlying motives behind it. Those who bring up the decades of abuse suffered by Palestinians are largely ignored or risk being labeled pro-Hamas or an antisemite.

For those who have done some homework, the ongoing ethnic cleaning in Gaza has much more to do with making lots of money than securing the release of a small group of hostages.

Consider President Biden's announcement of U.S.-built docks on Gaza's coast. We were told they were for humanitarian aid, but does anyone still believe that? To get an idea of what appears to be happening, we must look at four economic and geopolitical motives that go a long way to explain why Gaza is so controversial.

## Exploiting Palestinian Offshore Oil and Gas

Under the Oslo Accords, Palestinians were granted rights to lucrative offshore reserves – the Gaza Marine, Med Yavne, and Or oil and gas fields. These are among the Mediterranean's most prized deposits. Following the October invasion, Israel quickly seized them.

On October 29, just 22 days after the Hamas attack, licenses to drill were issued to six firms, including Italy's Eni SpA, Britain's Dana Petroleum (a South Korean subsidiary), and Israel's Ratio Petroleum. Although the tender had been announced in December 2022, Israel acted with striking speed after the invasion, ensuring international buy-in from oil oligarchs.

Such projects require infrastructure: housing for platform workers, docks for shipping, onshore processing facilities – and a strong military presence to secure it all. Not long after, Biden's docks appeared.

## Building the EastMed Pipeline

For decades, Israel and its partners have advanced the EastMed Pipeline, designed to make Israel a primary supplier of natural gas to Europe via Greece and Italy. This would transform Israel into an energy superpower.

But the project also requires Gaza's coast for industrial development, as well as a fortified military presence to patrol both land and sea. For Israel's plan to succeed, competing supply routes – including Nord Stream and

*Land, Gas and Oil Grabs, cont'd on page 5*



*Planned route of the EastMed Pipeline, linking Israel's gas fields to Cyprus, Greece, and Italy, positioning Israel as a key supplier to Europe.*



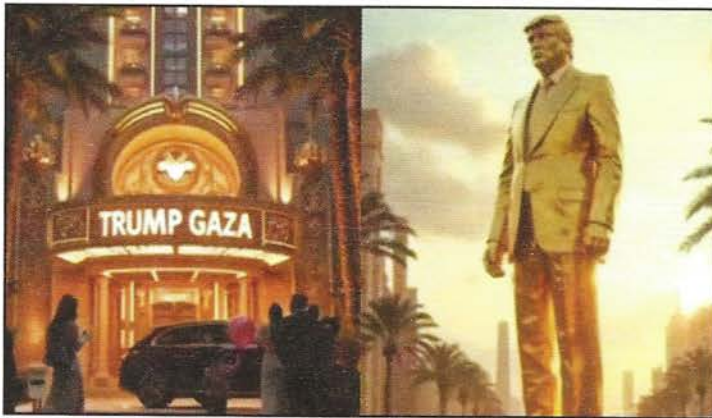
## Land, Gas and Oil Grabs, from page 4

Ukraine's Burisma connections – had to be sidelined. Eliminating Palestinian control over the Gaza coastline was also essential.

### Trump's Eastern Mediterranean Riviera

When Donald Trump unveiled his proposal to redevelop Gaza as a luxury Riviera, critics dismissed it as vulgar and absurd. Golf courses, casinos, hotels, and gated resorts replacing Palestinian homes seemed almost like satire. Democrats denounced it as a cruel joke.

But was it simply a cover story? Some analysts argue Trump's plan masked the militarization of Gaza's coast, offering a glossy development narrative to distract from more strategic goals. Others believe he genuinely saw Gaza as real estate ripe for profit. Either way, the announcement highlighted how Gaza's land is being treated not as home to its people, but as property for outside interests.



*Illustration of proposed "Riviera-style" redevelopment of Gaza's coast, replacing Palestinian neighborhoods with luxury resorts and gated communities.*

### The Vision of Greater Israel

Finally, there is the oldest and most ambitious project: the Zionist dream of a Greater Israel. Rooted in scripture and nationalist ideology, this vision extends Israel's territory from the Nile River to the Tigris-Euphrates delta—absorbing Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and parts of Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

Maps of "Eretz Yisrael" have circulated since Israel's founding, updated over time to match shifting political realities. Under this logic, eliminating Palestine is not just tactical—it is the necessary first step in a long-term expansion. Gaza's erasure, then, fits squarely into this vision.

### Which Story Is True?

So which of these scenarios explains what is happening today? Are Israel's actions about seizing offshore gas? Securing pipeline routes? Redeveloping Gaza's coast into resorts? Or pursuing the centuries-old dream of Greater Israel?



*Historical maps of "Eretz Yisrael" envision borders extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, placing Gaza's elimination within a larger territorial project.*

Perhaps elements of all four are at play. What is certain is that the official narrative that Israel is acting solely in self-defense leaves out too much. To understand Gaza's tragedy, we must look beyond the headlines and ask the harder questions about power and money.

*Ken Shain is an associate member of VFP Chapter 27 and a former educator. He came up through the ranks first as a machinist, then as an engineer, and started a few businesses along the way. He started a union at his first job and launched a new software product at his first company.*

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### ONGOING EVENTS

**4-5 pm Mondays.** Stop Line Three Vigil. In front of Governor's Mansion on Summit Ave., St. Paul.

**3-4 pm Mondays.** White Bear Lake Peace Vigil, Hwy. 61. and 4th Ave.

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

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

**Monthly VFP chapter meeting,** 2nd Sunday., 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.



# A Hundred-Years War on Russia

By Dave Gutknecht

Wars are usually about resources, which create wealth for the victors and their industries. However, mobilizing for war requires a propagandistic cover story.

Russophobia – hatred and fear of Russia – is so pervasive it is unrecognized by many. In a media-saturated world, the dominant narratives are the waters surrounding us, and powerful institutions work to shape these narratives.

Russophobia has deep roots. Its religious history dates to the Eastern Orthodox split with the Roman Catholics in 1054. Slavs were demonized, and Russians were later conflated with Mongols. To religious division, add ethnic prejudice – all in service to power. Modern Russophobia was sharpened during European imperial wars, including the 1850s Crimean War led by the British – an attempt, now being repeated, to restrict Russia's access to the Black Sea.

The U.S. itself has been at war with Russia for over a century. We inherited from the British a deep antagonism to Russia as well as sophisticated propaganda tradecraft. Modern police and spy agencies targeted working-class movements that threatened financiers and owners, and in an international manifestation of this class war the U.S. joined the failed Allied invasion of Russia and attempted overthrow of the Bolshevik government in 1919. In 1945 and even before the end of WWII, the U.S. recruited top Nazi spies and scientists to its hegemonic strategy. Soon the U.S. began threatening nuclear attacks on “communist” countries.

After 1991, the ideological justification for the Cold War was seemingly lost. But there was no peace dividend. The U.S. rulers' drive for dominance and its attempts to weaken a nuclear-armed Russia supported the enormous power of the military-industrial.

Neutrality in Europe – vividly demonstrated until recent years by Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Austria – was required in the Ukraine constitution prior to the 2014 coup. And neutrality remains the only hope for a future Ukraine without constant war.

Russophobia prepared us for Russiagate, and Russiagate reinforced Russophobia. Russiagate was an elaborate, unproven fraud alleging Trump “collusion” and Russian election “interference.” The Russiagate campaign against Trump was prompted by the presidential candidate's advocacy of diplomacy and improved relations with Russia – a huge red flag for the Washington war planners and the uniparty.

A continuing sea of falsehoods surrounds the war on Russia, aimed at generating public consent: That the Ukraine war was “unprovoked.” That Russia is weak and can be defeated by Western sanctions and weapons. That more arms for Ukraine will reverse its defeat. To these,

add demonization of Russia, essential to war propaganda.

Economic sanctions, illegal by UN standards, are a crashing failure, resulting in a stronger Russia and a weaker Europe. To this geopolitical shift, add tariff chaos and the threat of debt defaults. The U.S. is damaging the international financial system and is revealing inescapable limits – financial, military, diplomatic – to U.S. power.

Want more? Look outside mainstream media to find informed skeptics such as Aaron Mate, Jeffrey Sachs, Larry Johnson, Glenn Diesen, Brian Berletic – and Tulsie Gabbard.



Mike McDonald, Roger Cuthbertson and Mike Madden protesting Senator Klobuchar's lack of concern for the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Photo by Mike McDonald

About 60 activists rallied outside Senator Amy Klobuchar's office in Minneapolis earlier this fall to protest the ongoing genocide of Palestinians.

The action included a number of speakers including Nadiyah Salawdeh of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network who said “Like all liberal Zionists, Amy Klobuchar is doing all that she can to extend the life of the collapsing U.S. empire and its proxy in Israel. She wants to redeem thie irredeemable. The world sees the fascist entities for what they are, and they see you as a foot soldier for genocide. You can no longer hide. It is our job to make sure that people like Amy Klobuchar are always held accountable for their role in genocide.” The Minnesota Peace Action Coalition organized this event.

— Mike McDonald



# Peddling Peace, a Jewish Writer Visits Our Town

By Bill McGrath

The pen may or may not be mightier than the sword. But Bob Sanders is hoping his bicycle can help carry a pro-peace message to counteract the massive weapons which the U.S. is supplying to Israel for use against Palestinians.

Sanders, a 70-year-old former journalist who is Jewish, is riding the bike from the west coast to his home state of New Hampshire. Along the way, he explains his motivations to a growing number of peace activists.

Speaking to a picnic audience of 30 people on July 20 in Northfield, Sanders said he doesn't support Hamas – OR Israel.

"I do not defend Hamas or anyone killing civilians," he said. But Hamas does not have anywhere near the power that Israel has, he added.

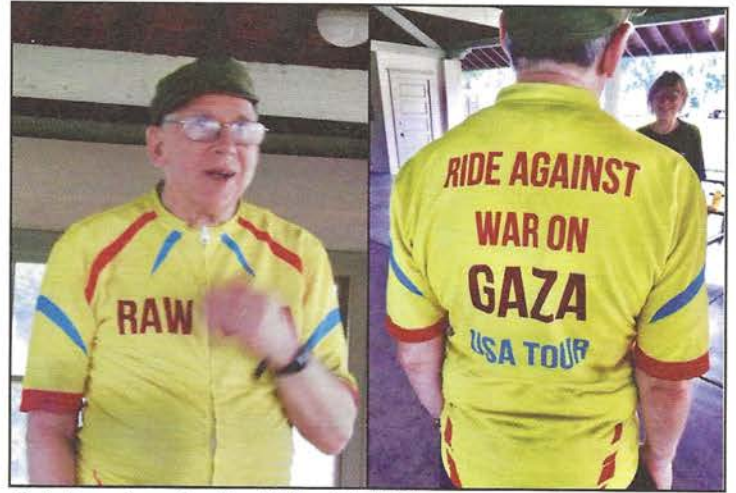
"We don't want the U.S. to be involved in killing Palestinians," he said.

In addition to raising consciousness, Sanders' bicycle ride is intended to raise one dollar for each citizen killed during the Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. The health ministry in Gaza says more than 57,000 people have died in Gaza since then, due to the Israeli military campaign.

"For years, I knew that what Israel was doing was wrong," Sanders said. But he was reluctant to engage in anti-Israel activity that might hurt his family. During his recent efforts, he has not received threats, although he has had some arguments with other Jews.

One success Sanders has accomplished, working with the New Hampshire chapter of "Not In Our Name," involved contacting all rabbis in New Hampshire. This effort resulted in five rabbis writing letters to their own congregations in which they condemned the ethnic cleansing happening in Gaza. Sanders was a founder of his state's chapter of "Not In Our Name," comprised primarily of Jews in New Hampshire.

He sees a shift in the narrative in America that for years has favored Israel.



Bob Sanders in Northfield, MN.  
Photos by Bill McGrath

"It's no longer working to be calling Jews anti-semitic," he said. Hopefully, initiatives such as his bike-ride will encourage more Jews to speak up, he said.

Sanders' appearance in Northfield was endorsed and organized by Northfielders for Justice in Palestine/Israel, a citizens group established in 2008. Nationally, his ride is backed by American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Doctors Without Borders, Peace Action and Veterans for Peace, plus many other groups and individuals including a co-founder of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream.

Sanders can be followed on Facebook and Instagram under the name RAW GAZA. After Northfield, the bicyclist heads to Minneapolis, Red Wing, Winona, La Crosse and points east.

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

[www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis](http://www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis)



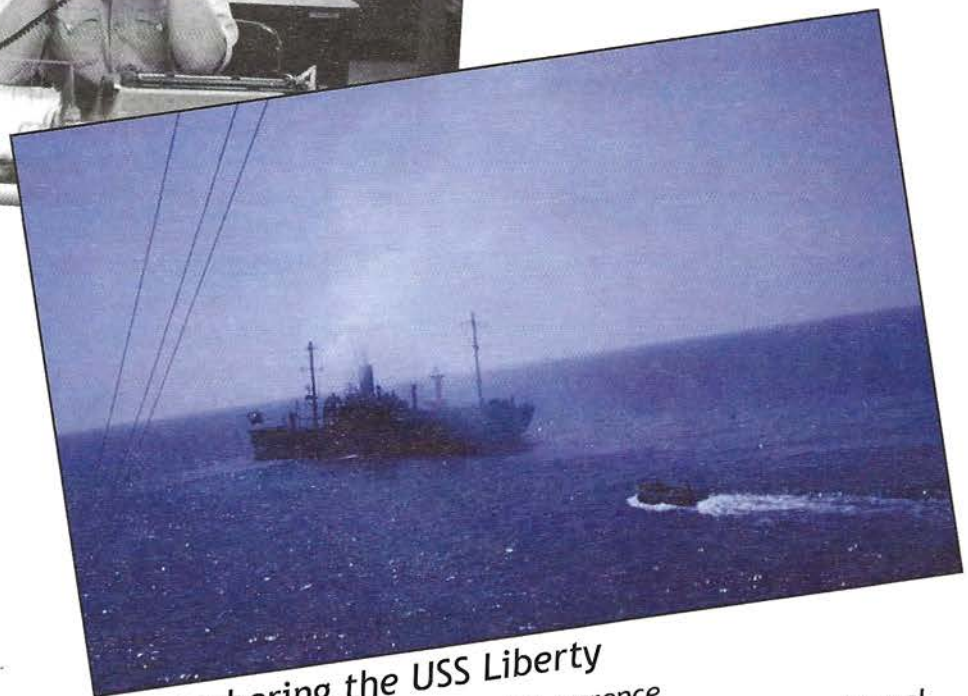


# BULLETIN BOARD

"I prefer someone who burns the flag and then wraps themselves up in the Constitution over someone who burns the Constitution and then wraps themselves up in the flag."  
- Molly Ivins



Molly Ivins at The New York Times in 1978.



## Remembering the USS Liberty

Military.com | Photo by Drew F. Lawrence

On June 8, 1967, during the Six-Day War, Israeli air and naval forces attacked the U.S. Navy intelligence ship USS Liberty, killing 34 American crewmen and wounding more than 170. Israel later apologized and claimed the incident was a case of mistaken identity. Nonetheless, virtually all surviving crew members along with prominent officials, continue to believe the ship was deliberately and intentionally attacked.

"Life after  
woke isn't  
funny"



speaks out about the climate crisis



Member Barry Riesch addresses a crowd of about 2,000 in St. Paul. Photo by Mike McDonald

Riesch recently spoke in front of Minnesota's capitol in St. Paul to show how the U.S. military contributes to climate change at a "Fight for People's Earth Day" rally.

Things I emphasized:

Prevent nuclear war. We have been playing a stupid game of nuclear chicken with Russia (and now Iran) since 1962. This should be a no-brainer because nobody wins a nuclear war.

War is an abomination. It is the most brutal, inhumane, destructive and wasteful act we perform as humans. I participated in the Vietnam War and now am a witness to the genocide of Palestinian people. War will eventually get us all if we don't put an end to it. The most eco-friendly thing we can do is be anti-war.

The climate crisis is the most important issue of our time. Other issues will not matter if we can't save the life of our planet. Believe Mother Nature is angry with us and will eventually have her way — she is in charge.

Are we in the final century of human civilization? According to our religious family, we are the 'seventh generation' and the ones who decide whether humankind continues. It's imperative we take responsibility off and face this crisis openly and honestly. Ending the war on our survival requires transforming the organizing principle of our society from greed to sustainability — this will require the cooperation of us all.

Barry Riesch



We know they are lying,  
they know they are lying,  
they know we know they are lying,  
we know they know we know they are lying,  
but they are still lying.  
Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn



Friend Eric J Garcia on facebook or follow at elmacheteillustrated @instagram.  
Political cartoon by VFP chapter 27 member Eric Garcia



# Malfeasance: America's Chief Export

By Paul Schaefer

How many Americans know or care about the horrors their nation has inflicted on others since WWII? In *The Myth of American Idealism: How U.S. Foreign Policy Endangers the World*, authors Noam Chomsky and Nathan J. Robinson present a powerful indictment: In the pursuit of global wealth and power, U.S. elites have used government policy to sustain one of history's greatest myths – that America acts only to promote democracy and the common good.

This myth has justified foreign policies shaped since at least 1939, when the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations and the State Department began "Grand Area" planning: ensuring key global regions served the needs of the American economy. Their goals of controlling raw materials and markets has been enforced primarily through violence. Look what happened to the thirteen countries below:

## Chile

Kissinger said it plainly: the U.S. couldn't allow Chileans to choose communism through democratic means. So, the CIA engineered a coup against Salvador Allende, replacing him with General Pinochet – a brutal dictator who killed thousands. America considered this a success.

## British Guiana

Cheddi Jagan's moderate socialism was too much for Washington. The CIA helped destroy his government, incited racial conflict, and empowered the vicious Forbes Burnham. Historian Stephen Rabe wrote that the U.S. "wrecked the economy of a small nation and incited racial warfare."

## Congo

Patrice Lumumba was a popular leader who hoped to use Congo's resources to benefit its people. The U.S. and Belgium orchestrated his assassination and installed Mobutu, a corrupt dictator loyal to Western interests. Lumumba's crime? Trying to govern independently.

## Cuba

After Fidel Castro ousted U.S.-backed dictator Batista, the U.S. imposed an embargo and launched the Bay of Pigs invasion. For over five decades, America has tried to punish Cuba for its "successful defiance," even blocking food and medicine.

## Guatemala

President Jacobo Arbenz dared to allow land reform and worker rights, angering the U.S.-based United Fruit Company. The CIA overthrew him, ushering in decades of military rule and genocide. Reagan called one of its bloodiest dictators, Rios Montt, "a man of great integrity."

## Nicaragua

When the Sandinistas overthrew Somoza, Carter supported the hated National Guard. Reagan escalated, funding the Contras in a brutal terrorist war that killed tens of thousands. Why? To show that the U.S. still controlled outcomes in Central America.

## El Salvador

Archbishop Oscar Romero begged Carter to stop funding El Salvador's military. Weeks later, he was assassinated. The U.S.-backed government launched a campaign of terror, including the El Mozote massacre, where over 1,000 civilians were killed by a U.S.-trained battalion.

## Indonesia & East Timor

In 1965-66, Indonesia carried out one of the 20th century's worst mass murders – killing up to a million people accused of communism. The U.S. cheered it on, even supplying names of those to be executed. In East Timor, Suharto – America's "kind of guy" – slaughtered one-third of the population after independence. U.S.-supplied aircraft were key to the massacre.

## Iran

Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh wanted to nationalize oil for Iranians. The CIA ousted him in 1953, installing the Shah—a brutal autocrat who ruled with torture and executions. The U.S. got oil access, and another "object lesson" in the costs of nationalism.

## Vietnam

Contrary to myths, the U.S. never intended to create a free Vietnam. It backed French colonialism, then installed its own puppet regime. Over 7 million tons of bombs were dropped across Southeast Asia – three times more than all bombs in WWII. Napalm, Agent Orange, and mass bombing campaigns turned Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia into wastelands. General Westmoreland infamously said, "Life is cheap in the Orient," justifying the mass killing of civilians.

## Laos & Cambodia

Laos became "the most bombed country in history." The U.S. dropped a ton of explosives per person, mostly in secret. Millions of unexploded bombs remain. In Cambodia, Nixon and Kissinger escalated illegal bombings, killing at least 150,000. Kissinger's defense? "I fail to see the moral issue involved."

## Afghanistan

After 9/11, Bush rejected the Taliban's offer to hand over Bin Laden and launched "Operation Enduring

*Malfeasance, cont'd on page 12*



# Waterfall Security Solutions

By Mike Madden

Waterfall Security Solutions (Waterfall) is a company headquartered in Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel. On October 1, 2024, it entered into a contract with Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) to provide cybersecurity for the water department's computer system.

The Committee to Cut the Waterfall Contract (the Committee) made first contact with SPRWS on May 19, 2025. In a letter to the Board of Water Commissioners, we named Israel's apartheid history and its current genocidal assault on Gaza as reason for termination of the Waterfall contract. A statement was later shared with SPRWS that read in part:

The non-violent strategy of economic isolation was successful in forcing South Africa to dismantle its system of apartheid. By the end of 1989, 26 states and over 90 cities had taken some form of binding economic action against South Africa. Many cities used selective purchasing policies, whereby preference in bidding on contracts was given to companies that did not reside in, or do business with, South Africa.

The dire situation in Gaza and the Occupied Palesti-nian Territories requires similar action today. Under the Genocide Convention, contracting parties, of which the United States is one, have an affirmative obligation to prevent genocide. It is not an obligation that is specifically assigned to Congress, the State Department, or even the White House. Indeed, by providing weapons to Israel, blocking UN Security Council resolutions intended to restrain Israel, and hosting rather than arresting the criminally indicted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the federal government has utterly failed in its legal responsibility to prevent genocide, and should properly be considered complicit in genocide.

In the dark shadow of this failure, we assume the moral responsibility to prevent genocide. As part of that responsibility, we call upon the City of Saint Paul to refrain from economic cooperation with any entity complicit in, or profiting from, apartheid or genocide. In particular, we call upon SPRWS to find an alternative to Waterfall as its cybersecurity vendor.

No substantive response was received for a period of two months, so approximately fifteen activists made an appearance at the July 15th Board of Water Commissioners' meeting. After two requests were denied, one to address the Board, the other to enter a written statement into the record, the activists staged a brief disruption. Holding signs that read 'Cut the Waterfall Contract,' we



*Anti-genocide activists, September 9, 2025.*

*Photo by Kim DeFranco*

filed out of the room chanting: "All that evil needs to succeed is for good people to stand by and do nothing."

Due to inaction of the Board, a required 60-day notice of termination was not issued by August 1st, and the one-year contract, set to expire on October 1, 2025, was allowed to auto-renew.

The Committee persisted. A request to address the August water commissioners' meeting was also denied, so we decided to address the Board on our own terms. Women Against Military Madness issued a call to pack the room on August 12th. Moments into that meeting, Nathan Phillips, an anti-Zionist activist and member of the Anti-War Committee, stood up and loudly proclaimed: "I am Jewish and I stand with the Palestinian people! Gazans are being starved and massacred!"

At first, the Board tried to ignore Phillips, and carry on with business as usual. But Phillips' voice only grew louder as he chastised the commissioners for their failure to cut ties with Waterfall.

When Phillips could no longer be ignored, the chair warned the crowd that continued disruption would result in adjournment of the meeting. That seemed to suit the thirty-or-so activists just fine as they began chanting:

"Free Palestine! Free, Free Palestine!"

This time the disruption resulted early adjournment, and much the Board's business was left unfinished.

The disruption seemed to get the Board's attention. We were notified that the Waterfall contract would be on the September agenda, and the Committee would be allotted seven minutes to speak. We were told that a resolution would be introduced to enable the issuance of a Request For Proposal (RFP) to search for a potential new cybersecurity provider.

*Waterfall, cont'd on page 12*



## Malfeasance, from page 10

Freedom,” targeting one of the poorest nations on Earth. Entire villages were bombed; civilians died in the thousands. Corruption, abuse, and a rigged U.S.-backed government led to the Taliban’s return. WikiLeaks exposed routine U.S. atrocities, while presidents denied wrongdoing. Biden’s withdrawal left behind a devastated country.

### Iraq

Chomsky and Robinson call the 2003 invasion “the crime of the century.” Iraq posed no threat. No WMDs were found. Half a million died – many from airstrikes and the collapse of infrastructure. Like in Vietnam, starvation and malnutrition followed, with children suffering the most. The justification? Lies about security. The real reason: control over oil and power in the Middle East.

### The Myth

America’s pattern is clear: it supports any regime – no matter how cruel – if it serves elite interests. Democratically elected leaders are removed if they threaten U.S. control. Popular movements are crushed. Whole countries are destroyed.

And the myth goes on – veterans of ill-conceived wars are still thanked robotically for their service. Memorials honor U.S. soldiers, but not the millions of innocent civilians who were killed. Textbooks still omit war crimes while presidents avoid apologies whenever possible. As Jimmy Carter said of Vietnam, “the destruction was mutual.” Really? How many American towns were bombed into oblivion?

In truth, many Americans remain unaware or willfully ignorant of what has been done in their country’s name. As one Cambodian refugee put it: “Who is grateful to a people who try to bomb you out of existence, then say you should be pleased to live in their wonderful country, just because nothing is left of yours?”

From Southeast Asia to Latin America, Africa to the Middle East, the U.S. has supported coups, genocides, invasions, and assassinations. Not to spread democracy – but to protect its own power and economic interests.

*Paul Schaefer, USAF '60-64, is an anthropoltergeist who haunts a farm in Wisconsin.*

## Waterfall, from page 11

Two business days before the September 9th meeting, we got our first look at the proposed resolution. The RFP had been downgraded to a Request For Information (RFI), and the resolution read as if it was an endorsement of Waterfall rather than an honest search. Indeed, the item on the agenda said the resolution’s purpose was to “affirm the use of” Waterfall’s product.

We used our seven minutes well. In an impassioned plea to cut ties with Waterfall, Cedar Larson detailed the sadistic cruelty being visited upon the people of Gaza, and called attention to the many experts that have determined Israel’s assault constitutes genocide. Mike Madden focused on the resolution itself, and called for specific amendments to the resolution to insure the search for the next cybersecurity vendor would be earnest and unbiased.

The Board of Water Commissioners’ newest member, Ward 4 City Councilperson Molly Coleman, rose to the occasion. She moved amendments to improve the resolution, and with her remarks, helped them to pass.

We didn’t get everything we wanted. The less rigorous RFI was the chosen process, but the language amounting to an endorsement of Waterfall was removed.

While our fundamental argument is that Saint Paul should cut ties Waterfall to economically isolate Israel, we also note worrisome statements made by the founder and CEO of Waterfall, Lior Frenkel. In an interview with International Focus Magazine, Mr. Frenkel had this to say about his personal history and his company:

“I started coding when I was 8 and started hacking systems for fun, because, you know, it’s fun. I started getting paid for my hobby when I was a teenager, like 16 or 17. Then I went to the Israeli Air Force and I was there for about 6 years doing technology and the intelligence part of the business. I finished my service, and I founded a company that was doing offensive cybersecurity for the Israeli Government. Really fun stuff. That was a lot of fun.”

Israel is acknowledged to be a leader in the development of spyware and other intrusive surveillance technologies. The most notorious, Pegasus, has been used to surveil, detain, and sometimes kill dissidents, journalists, and human rights activists. Compromised phones have also been used by Israel to geolocate individuals algorithmically targeted for assassination by aerial bombardment. It is disconcerting that a company with a history of “doing offensive cybersecurity for the Israeli Government” should be allowed any access to SPRWS computer systems which hold sensitive data on water customers in Saint Paul and the thirteen surrounding suburbs that receive its services.

*Mike Madden was in the USAF Reserve from 1973-78. His real service to country began in 2004 when he joined Veterans For Peace.*



# How to Turn an Activist Into an Anti-Semite

By Hilton Obenzinger

Dear Claire Shipman, President, Columbia University,

I received your letter and other notices about Columbia's settlement with the Trump administration, and I'm disappointed and angry. I know you have a tough job, but perhaps unwittingly you harmed me. By agreeing to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism, you have turned me into an antisemite. Since 1972 I have publicly criticized the State of Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians and have rejected Zionism, politically and religiously. As a writer and historian, I join many Holocaust scholars and historians in rejecting this definition.

According to the IHRA definition my critical stance would make me an antisemite. I consider Zionism to be a racist ideology, and like many others have compared Israel's policies toward Palestinians to the way Nazis treated Jews (such as starvation of Gaza being akin to Nazi starvation of the Warsaw Ghetto). And I reject the hysterical "whataboutism" that regards criticism of Israel as unlike criticism of other countries, when in fact Israel has been protected from criticism by its supporters for decades. All of this despite the fact that almost all of my extended family were killed at the hands of the Nazis, and I grew up hearing the horror stories of my aunt and my maternal grandmother who survived. Genocide is personal, always.

You know this, yet you allow yourself to be used by those who use the real scourge of antisemitism as a means to undermine all civil rights, to advance a starkly racist, xenophobic program. Once again, Jews are being used for somebody else's agenda, manipulated, no matter our objections, and this is actually, blatantly anti-Semitic. You know this, don't you?

You have accommodated yourself to a gangster who does not abide by the law, who has armed masked thugs to steal people from the streets, and who seeks to control higher education so it serves his interests – or force universities to die. You know all of this, I am sure. But you agreed to his terms – which he will ignore at his pleasure – because you thought it was in Columbia's best interests. Would you have succumbed to Hitler's control of German universities? I'm afraid to hear your answer. It's always easy to condemn fascism, hatred and genocide after the fact. But the mass murder is today, as is your collaboration with the Death Machine.

I was one of the students who occupied your office in 1968. We were outraged then about the behavior of Columbia, and we were proven correct: the university had continued to support research to aid the war in Vietnam despite protestations that it had stopped such research;

and the university had continued to push ahead with building the gym on public land despite the opposition of Harlem people and its leaders. We occupied your office out of love for our country, despite its imperialist hubris and racism, and love for our university, despite its acquiescence to those policies.

But as bad as the university was back then, you and your predecessor's administration have been worse. At least in 1968 university leaders said they were against the Vietnam War and for civil rights, mourning the recent assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. It was hypocrisy then, but at least they mouthed certain words, too ashamed to say otherwise. Today you have sided with those who attack students and faculty that cry out for the end to the starvation and mass murder in Gaza; you undermine all the efforts since 1968 to expand the scope of the university to include people of color and to foster democratic rights, to run a university with real input from faculty and students rather than the autocratic heritage handed down from Presidents Butler and Kirk.

I have nothing but praise and admiration for those students who won't stop screaming in the face of mass murderers, despite any of their excesses. Excesses can be corrected; excuses for allowing genocide and fascism to thrive cannot be accepted. Perhaps if more German students screamed and sat down peacefully for a picnic on a lawn of their university in Berlin to stop Hitler, my family might have lived. I'm not a rich donor, but I'm going to withhold my modest contribution until I can see a change in my Alma Mater. And I will weep – and take to the streets with millions of others in this country and around the world to stop Netanyahu's genocide and oppose the Gangster-in-Chief.

Sincerely,

Hilton Obenzinger, PhD (CC'69)

*Reprinted with permission from novelist, poet and critical writer Hilton Obenzinger.*



# The Unchilding of Palestinian Children

By Penny Gardner

Rami Khader is with the non-profit organization, Anar, based near Bethlehem, Palestine. The focus of Khader's work is psycho-social support, arts-based healing, and grassroots community empowerment. He spoke at New City Center in Minneapolis on June 20.

We all know the terrible toll the Israeli military has taken and continues to take on the children of Gaza. What is not as well known is what Palestinian children in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem experience.

Rami Khader recently shared some very hard realities of life for children living under Israeli occupation and oppression. Every Palestinian child is affected, resulting in a condition he calls "un-childing."

Khader's work with Anar is to "advance psycho-social wellbeing and resilience of children who have been impacted by violence and oppression." According to Khader, one way "unchilding" occurs is that children are instructed by their parents that when they pass through checkpoints they are to be serious, not laugh, smile or joke with their companions because these normal light-hearted behaviors by children can be viewed with hostility by Israeli soldiers and result in their being held at the checkpoint or worse.

The most severely affected by "un-childing" are children who have been held in Israeli military prisons. While children have been released in prisoner exchanges since October 7, 2023, the total number held has actually been increasing and some children have even been rearrested.<sup>1</sup> Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP) reported that as of May 2025, there were 323 children in Israeli prison – a number it says was obtained from the Israeli Prison Service. Of these Palestinian children, nearly 40 percent are being "detained," meaning that they are

held without charge or trial.<sup>2</sup> In June, the number of child prisoners increased even further – to 440, according to the Palestinian Authority's Commission of Detainee Affairs (CDA).<sup>3</sup> (Official figures are believed, by children's advocates, to be low.)

Unchilding begins even before a child is held in an Israeli prison. During night raids of Palestinian homes by the Israeli military, parents are forcibly kept isolated from the child who is being arrested. This sends a message to the child that their parents cannot protect them and that they are on their own. The message is further cemented as the child is imprisoned with other children who are now each other's only support and who offer advice such as "you are a man" and "don't cry." DCI reports that children "are enduring deplorable conditions inside Israeli prisons, brutally beaten with a shocking regularity, and denied contact with the outside world." Under these conditions, it's not surprising that suppressing emotion serves as a survival mechanism. Further, since October 7, visits from family and the Red Cross have been totally banned.<sup>4</sup> And the Palestinian Authority (PDA) reports that children are subject to systemic starvation and lack of medical care for illness and injuries from beatings at notorious Megiddo prison.<sup>5</sup>

When a child is released from prison, the community is elated and celebrates their return. But Khader says "mentally, they are still in prison, they suffer from panic attacks" and due to being denied any contact with their parents during incarceration, the parent-child relationship is damaged.

Anar works with these children upon their release to reintegrate them into the whole community as everyone

*Unchilding, cont'd on page 15*



*Children are helped to heal from trauma through playful, creative, and artistic processes.*



## Unchilding, from page 14

has been affected by a child's imprisonment. The primary goal would be to have these children return to school. But for some, the feeling is "school is for children. I am not a child." In these situations, vocational training is provided.

In addition to their work with former child prisoners, Anar conducts training sessions for community-based organizations to empower them to provide immediate assistance to children and caregivers in need of psycho-social support.

In its children and youth program (for ages 15 to 29), it supports children and youth to heal and grow by taking active roles as leaders in their own communities.

For younger children, there is a program based in the arts. The program facilitates healing through playful, creative, and artistic processes nurturing the imagination and enhancing coping mechanisms to allow self-expression. This program enables children to express their full range of feelings. During dark times the children's artistic expression reflects dark images – war, explosions, etc. The sun suddenly appeared in the children's pictures when the ceasefire in Gaza resonated hopefulness throughout the West Bank.

In the words of Rev. Munther Isaac, renowned as the pastor of Christmas Bethlehem Church who is involved with Anar, "Every child we impact is hope for the future."

*Penny Gardner serves on the board of Healing to Hope, the U.S.-support organization for Anar. She is a co-chair of Women Against Military Madness. Mary Beaudoin contributed research to this report.*

**More Information:** For more about the work of Anar and of Healing to Hope, a U.S.-based organization supporting the work of Anar, see: [healingtohope.org](http://healingtohope.org)

### Endnotes

1 "For every Palestinian freed in the ceasefire, it apprehended 15 more. The number of political prisoners has doubled since October 7, 2023," says a report by Mohamed A. Hussein and Mohammed Haddad. A Nation Behind Bars. Why Has Israel Imprisoned 1,000 Palestinians? Al Jazeera. April 17, 2025. [tinyurl.com/4budzkw9](https://tinyurl.com/4budzkw9).

2 37 percent of Palestinian Child Detainees held without charge as Israel blocks legal counsel and family access. Children's International Defense Fund. May 22, 2025. [tinyurl.com/23ewza5h](https://tinyurl.com/23ewza5h)

3 Commissioner of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, Palestinian Authority. Accessed June 25, 2025. [cda.gov.ps](https://cda.gov.ps)

4 Ibid 2

5 Palestinian minors in Megiddo Prison facing hunger, illness, abuse. Commissioner of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs. Palestinian Authority. May 28, 2025. [tinyurl.com/mpez9sy8](https://tinyurl.com/mpez9sy8)

**Note:** Another issue regarding Palestinian children under Occupation is beyond the scope of this article but needs exposure. Raising alarm and objections among UN Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights, Israel recently passed a law that allows children as young as 12 to be imprisoned for life. ([spcommreports.ohchr.org](https://spcommreports.ohchr.org)).

## BRICS Stands up to the U.S. Bully

By Mike McDonald

What is BRICS? It is a group of ten nations formed in 2009 to function as an economic counterweight to the Western-dominated global order. The charter members are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Indonesia joined later and 10 other BRICS partners are currently on a path for full membership. This group now represents more than half of the world's population.

Why was this group formed? For the most part, it was a response to U.S. hegemony. In the aftermath of WWII, the C.I.A. started overt and covert operations to usurp resources (mostly oil) from foreign countries. According to estimates, our country's insatiable appetite for petroleum has led to about 60 regime changes throughout the world.

Recently, President Lula of Brazil had a series of heated exchanges with President Trump over his threat to impose 50 percent tariffs on Brazil. Lula ended up telling Trump that he was not elected to be 'emperor of the world.' Now, our 200-year good relationship with Brazil has gone out the window.

Brazil is only one example of the growing number of countries that have had enough of U.S. dominance. While its empire is visibly crumbling in front of the world, much of the Global East and Global South are moving forward economically without us. The bully is no longer in charge, and ironically enough BRICS may just turn out to be a global savior.

*Mike McDonald is a retired educator and former president of VFP chapter 27.*

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### *Flower in the Hole!*



Little Falls, MN — Roger Cuthbertson and Jo Schubert brought a couple bags of Chrysanthemums and a flower-shooting tank to Camp Ripley's Open House again this year. The September 14th event showcased military equipment and gave rides to kids on Humvees. Tanks, but no tanks!  
*Photo by Craig Wood*