

Women Against Military Madness

Newsletter

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Women Against Military Madness

The U.S. uses South Korea in playing dangerous war games aimed at China. What is the connection to the food crisis the people of North Korea experience and their leader's nuclear threats against the West?

U.S. versus North Korea: the Hunger Games

*excerpted from a talk
by Christine Hong*

North Korea has always served as a “devil function,” an enormously useful enemy for the United States.

The Korean War, coming as it did on the heels of World War II, sparked an economic boom domestically and legitimated the unprecedented worldwide garrisoning of large numbers of American troops in a network of bases around the world. In essence, it furnished the occasion for a remilitarized remapping of the globe that in turn enabled the reconstruction of the world market under American auspices.

It began in 1945 when the occupation line was drawn at the 38th parallel. Two junior U.S. Army officers, Charles Bonasteel and Dean Rusk, armed with nothing more than a National Geographic map, split Korea in two within half an hour. This separated one in three families and prompted a war of national reunification.

During a three-year window, 3.5 million North Koreans, the majority of them civilians, were killed. At the hands of the United States, North Koreans suffered one of the most appalling, unrestrained bombing campaigns in our genocidal 20th century, and ever since they have been shouting themselves hoarse at a nation of amnesiacs [the United States] who aren't listening.

For Americans, the Korean War may have slipped into the ash heap of history and is, at best, a vague footnote. For the North Koreans, the so-called “Forgotten War” has had indelible consequences.

Never in the mainstream U.S. media do you hear that North Korea has asked the United States for a peace treaty more than 100 times. The image of North Korea as a country that actively seeks peace is not consonant with the jingoistic caricature that we're typically confronted with in mainstream media policy discourse.

Sanctions are no less devastating than bombing

in their effects. Although they're regularly tightened, fortified, and expanded with each North Korean nuclear test and attempted satellite or rocket launch, sanctions—including financial, trade, and investment restrictions—have been in place against North Korea since mid-century.

The UN and U.S. sanctions are primarily aimed at dissuading North Korea from further developing its nuclear and missile programs, but they have failed this objective. In fact, a recent UN report evaluating implementation of UN Security Council sanctions that were leveled against North Korea in 2006 and 2009 following these nuclear tests attests to just the opposite.

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*Art by Woomi and Bomal.
South Koreans on JeJu
Island respond with creative
resistance to the construction
of a U.S. naval base,
part of the “Pivot” to
the Asia Pacific.*

The statements and opinions reflected in this newsletter are the views of the author and not necessarily official positions of WAMM. We encourage a diversity of opinion to represent the range of perspectives that coexist under the banner of WAMM's mission statement.

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Women Against Military Madness is a nonviolent, feminist organization that works in solidarity with others to create a system of social equality, self-determination and justice through education, action and the empowerment of women. WAMM's purpose is to dismantle systems of militarism, economic exploitation and global oppression.

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A MEMBER OF



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PM Messages Made Manifest

by Polly Mann

In my article in the March/April issue of the WAMM newsletter I overlooked one category of reasons why women might join the military, and an important one at that – they may truly believe that they can help spread democracy and bring freedom to other nations. That's because people are trained by the media to believe the misconception that democracy is the same thing as the American economic system, and one that should be adopted by the entire world.

Needing a broader perspective, for many years I've been a subscriber to the left-leaning British newspaper *The Guardian Weekly*, which carries information not often covered by U.S. corporate media.

Here are a few examples: The Pentagon not only authorized, but set up methods used at Iraqi detention and torture centers to extract information from prisoners. U.S. Army Colonel James Steele and retired Colonel James H. Coffman, who organized the centers, reported to General David Petraeus. Iraqi General Muntadher al-Samari said of the two, "They knew everything that was going on there . . . the torture, the most horrible kind of torture." And, according to *The Guardian Weekly*, which published the information, "they were sometimes present where torture took place . . ."

On March 31, 2013 *The Guardian* reported that 19-year-old Israeli conscientious objector Natan Blanc has refused to join the Israeli military for the eighth time. In his statement he said, "It is clear that the Netanyahu government, like that of his predecessor Olmert, is not interested in finding a solution to the existing situation, but rather in preserving it . . ."

I also subscribe to a periodical entitled *The Other Israel*, edited by Israeli Uri Avnery, a peace activist who publishes this quarterly supporting Palestinian rights. Earlier this year, he offered this judgment: "Israel actually has a free press and they air their dirty laundry every day. But that is not allowed in the US. The phonies in the media and academia, plus a numbed-out public, remain in a constant state of cowardice and numbness."

As an underscore to this, at the National Conference for Media Reform in April, it was said that unless it's in the *New York Times* or you hear it on one of the major networks, it doesn't exist. Case in point—for the very first time (in my lifetime, that is), the *New York Times* carried a story about the illegal Israeli

Self-described "bad boy" basketball star Dennis Rodman and Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un, a basketball fan, watch a game together in North Korea.

occupation of Palestine and it was actually sympathetic and moving. Entitled "The Resisters," it begins, "In the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh, every Friday is the same march, the same unarmed demonstration, the same retreat from an overpowering Israeli military. Could this be a way to end the occupation?"

Another come-lately revelation by the paper of record: Of course we knew all along that the United States was sending arms into Syria, even though the Obama administration declared only "nonlethal" aid was being provided. However, in March 25, 2013, the *New York Times* reported that 160 planeloads of armaments have been furnished by the CIA to antigovernment armed units in Syria since 2012. The article stated that, authorized by the Obama administration, the CIA conducted a massive clandestine operation to pump guns, heavy military equipment, and money to fuel the war destroying Syria—and at the same time the administration has publicly urged "caution" in arming the rebels.

But there was no such confusion about the message when bad-boy basketball star Dennis Rodman visited Kim Jong-un who happens to be a basketball fan. Rodman returned to the U.S. with a simple message for President Obama from North Korea's Supreme Leader: "Call me." The serious message, delivered as it was by the flamboyant celebrity, merely received derision from the US media and administration. Yet for all that, in its simplicity, it did reveal the ease with which the standoff between the US and North Korea could be broken.

Echoing this, Franklin Graham, the son of the late evangelical leader Billy Graham, who manages the humanitarian organization Samaritan's Purse, which has operated in North Korea for more than 20 years, said, "I think it would be very wise for him [President Obama] to pick up the phone and call him and begin a dialog." I agree with this message. How about you?

Polly Mann is a co-founder of Women Against Military Madness and a regular contributor to this newsletter.



Hunger Games,
continued from page 1

It's also ludicrous for pundits to believe that China would align itself with U.S. interests when U.S. strategies in the region involve the military encirclement of China.

Far from a surgical strike on North Korea's leadership, the effects of U.S. sanctions, despite the State Department's repeated assertions to the contrary, are borne by the people of North Korea. In fact, as many scholars have acknowledged, sanctions signal the likelihood of humanitarian catastrophe.

We have to understand North Korea's situation in the post-Cold War world order in order to grasp the lethal implications of sanctions. No country in the world is food self-sufficient, but North Korea had eradicated hunger by the 1970s. But during the post-1990s period it lost concessionary fuel and fertilizer when the Socialist Bloc broke up. During that time it lost anywhere from 600,000 to a million people from famine.

Those of us in the West tend to think of famine or food crises in North Korea as a result of something sinister caused by the North Korean regime. But in broader historical perspective, what explains the recurrence of food shortages in North Korea? David Austin, program director for the humanitarian aid organization Mercy Corps, had this to say about North Korea:

The food security situation is a symptom of the greater political problem . . . which is that the U.S. is still at war with North Korea. And so there are sanctions on North Korea. They are not allowed to get fuel. There is no fertilizer. And so the greater political situation has a tremendous effect on the lives of the ordinary people . . .

Sanctions must be considered as particularly cynical levers of influence when considered in conjunction with the deliberate withholding of food aid by the United States. Sanctions policies have been steadfastly pursued by U.S. administrations with the hope that prolonged economic pressure will inspire North Korea's government to succumb, its citizenry to rebel, or the state to collapse.

The people of North Korea were viewed as collateral damage with the goal of regime collapse.

About a year prior to his death, Kim Jong-il reached out to the U.S. through back channel negotiations—this happens all the time, whether or not we hear about it. And he said, "My



From photo series, "Repeatedly Destroyed, but Continuously Constructed Art" by Emily Wang, Sung-Hee Choi

Sisyphus Resist: Antiwar activists carry rocks up a hill and pile them in formations to block construction of a U.S. naval base on South Korea's JeJu Island, only to have them removed again by authorities.

meteorologists tell me that the forecast is grim. Next year is going to be terrible. We need food aid."

And the U.S. responded: Make the request formal, and open up your country to unprecedented food assessment inspections. North Korea made the request formal. It opened the country up to unprecedented inspections by four teams: one was of U.S. NGOs; one was from the U.S. government; one was from the UN World Food Program, FAO and UNICEF; and the fourth was from the EU's Echo program. They went to North Korea and every single report, except for the U.S. government's report, concluded that things were moving from a chronic to an acute crisis.

The Obama administration has done away with ever-dwindling U.S. food aid, even as it has applied sanctions.

When you think about North Korea being under siege for all these decades, when you think about all these war games that are

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WORD UP!

Tactics

North Korea knows that its threats will not make the allies end their drills, said Andrei Lankov, a professor at Kookmin University in Seoul. Instead, it's largely an excuse to build tensions, mostly for "an aid-maximizing strategy" aimed at scaring donors into providing food and money. . .

—Japan Times, April 13, 2013

Consider the source

The view propagated by Western officials and, in train, the Western mass media, is that the sanctions are aimed at correcting North Korea's "bad behaviour" and that the war games are carried out to deter North Korean aggression. But what's called "bad behaviour"—the building of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles—is Pyongyang's reaction to the US-led permanent state of siege.

— "Armistice Agreement Withdrawal: North Korean Belligerence?," Stephen Gowans, Global Research, March 17, 2013



Photo: U.S. Air Force (training exercise)

In March, U.S. nuclear-capable stealth bombers dropped dummy bombs off the Korean coast.

Mary Feeney in honor of
Dave List

Dr. Thomas Olson in honor of
Connie Fuller

Sarah Martin in honor of
Pepperwolf's mom

Marilyn and Joe Schmit in
honor of Pepperwolf's
mom

Marian Wright in honor of
Pepperwolf's mom

Vanessa Lawrow in honor of
Pepperwolf's mom

Bob Jones in honor of
Laura Ingalls and
Jeanette Rankin

Margaret Gerhard in honor
of Pepperwolf's mom and
Marte Carlin

Footnotes:

1 Ross, Jenna, "TCF Bank's closing of Iranian students' accounts is questioned," *Star Tribune*, January 8, 2013. www.startribune.com/local/185960172.html

2 Letter from Concerned Faculty and Staff, William Beeman et al., January 22, 2013. www.mndaily.com/2013/01/24/profs-protest-closings-tcf-student-accounts www.mndaily.com/2013/02/25/university-professors-close-tcf-bank-accounts

3 Farhang, Kia, "Campus banking to get look from feds," *Minnesota Daily*, February 5, 2013. www.mndaily.com/2013/02/05/campus-banking-get-look-feds

TCF ad. "The best in banking" apparently does not apply to 22 Iranian students studying at the U of M who had their accounts inexplicably closed at the end of last year.

Confronting the Sanctions on U of M's Iranian Students

by Lucia Wilkes Smith

After three months of diligence and one \$37.00 overdraft fee, I finally managed to close my accounts at TCF Bank. I was inspired to do this by the experience of Iranian students at the University of Minnesota. During their winter break in December, at least 22 students from Iran were abruptly notified that TCF Bank was "exercising its right . . . to discontinue our banking relationship."¹

This apparently blatant discrimination drew severe criticism from several university faculty and staff. Their January 22nd letter to TCF executives stated their "disappointment" and "dismay" at the unilateral closing of the Iranian students' accounts and the prejudicial manner in which this was done. They announced: "[We will] switch our direct deposits from TCF Bank into a different institution and/or will close our accounts. We no longer feel comfortable having TCF be the responsible institution for our deposits."²

Members of the Middle East Committee of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM-MEC) perceived TCF's action as grossly discriminatory, perhaps part of a growing, U.S.-wide campaign to portray Iran and its people as somehow menacing. We called upon the U of M Board of Regents to ensure the university promise to "provide equal access and opportunity to the programs and facilities without regard to national origin."

Looking at the Regents website, we observed that the chairperson has served in the past as a "consultant" to TCF Bank in establishing relationships and internships within Minneapolis high schools. (Hmmm.) Other connections between the U of M and TCF Bank? If you follow sports or drive on University Avenue near Oak Street, you'll be aware of "TCF Bank Stadium" emblazoned on the huge structure that, in 2009, made the U of M the only Big Ten campus with a new stadium. According to the *Minnesota Daily*, the federal government's Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is scrutinizing the relationship between our public university and TCF Bank, which paid \$35 million for stadium naming rights plus about \$1 million each year in "royalties." By agreement,

TCF holds the "exclusive right to offer checking accounts linked to the U's photo ID cards. Nearly 30,700 students and employees have signed up." Because I found it so difficult to disentangle my own financial life from TCF, I assume that most of the 30,700 would continue indefinitely as TCF customers, the path of least resistance. TCF pays \$200,000 each year to market this system, and a number of students report feeling pressured to open accounts during freshman orientation. Because the contract between the two institutions extends until 2023, my prediction is that the hard sell will be unrelenting.³

Meanwhile the chairperson of the U of M Board of Regents replied to the WAMM-MEC letter, writing that TCF would evaluate the Iranian student accounts "on a case-by-case basis." We were "assured" that students were being helped and that the board "fully supports the actions taken by the University administration regarding this issue." It wasn't a satisfactory letter. WAMM-MEC members imagined that the visiting students certainly might feel vulnerable.

One of the 22 Iranian students, Alireza Asari, spoke publicly about the situation before the Interdisciplinary Perspectives on International Development (IPID) student group. Some of our WAMM-MEC members attended the hearing. Asari reported his impressions: neither TCF nor the U of M administration had been helpful or hospitable; Iranian students in other states also had accounts closed by TCF; some students were advised by relatives at home to be silent.

Asari believes it's up to the American people to bring changes to our systems. I looked for letters from irate students to the *Daily* and sadly saw only one letter regarding banking options. I didn't hear of demonstrations on the U of M campus. A cluster of faculty and staff have closed TCF accounts, and I've followed suit. Chipping away at these enormous, discriminatory, fear-mongering institutions demands a painstaking, determined strategy. It will take many tiny strikes.

Lucia Wilkes Smith is a member of the WAMM Middle East Committee.

Campus Checking

"Working with universities to bring you the best in banking"





Women Against Military Madness 6th Annual

Walk Against Weapons

SATURDAY JUNE 8, 2013 - RAIN OR SHINE



10:30 AM

Volunteer/Walker Check-In
Bakers Square Restaurant
928 Prairie Center Drive
Eden Prairie
(parking lot)

DIRECTIONS to BAKERS

- From either direction on I-494 take Highway 5 WEST.
- Take the first exit - Prairie Center Drive and **continue forward at the stop light.**
- Turn left into Bakers Square.

WALK SCHEDULE

10:30 AM Check-In
(see above)

11 AM
Walk Begins

3 mile stroll encircling
Eden Prairie Shopping Center

12:30 PM

Walk Ends/Rally at ATK
7480 Flying Cloud Drive
(shuttles back to Bakers)

I WISH I WAS WALKIN' TOO!

I can't walk this year, but will support *anyone* who can! Please thank them for me...

Amount: \$ _____.

Donor: _____.

Please send your *I Wish I Was Walkin'* donation to WAMM, 4200 Cedar Av. S., Suite 3, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Participate in the **WAMM Walk Against Weapons**, a highly visible, three mile walk encircling Eden Prairie Center and ending at Alliant Techsystems. Sign up as many sponsors as you can — ask family, friends and co-workers to sponsor your walk for peace and justice.

Request payment by check to Women Against Military Madness (WAMM). Ask your sponsors to pay when they commit, saving you from having to collect after the event.

You might be asked why Alliant Techsystems?

Alliant Techsystems (ATK) has been the primary supplier to the DoD of depleted uranium munitions, cluster bombs, landmines, Hellfire missile motors, fired from drones, and nuclear missile rocket motors. ATK markets their products through 60+ international sales offices.

This facility currently provides the primary support for ATK's 12 corporate officers, located in their headquarters, outside the Pentagon, in Arlington, VA.

more information about ATK online

AlliantACTION.org

WAIVER: I certify that all the information provided on this form is true and complete to my knowledge and that I will abide by the rules and instruction of event officials and management. In consideration of my participation in the WAMM Walk Against Weapons, I, on behalf of myself, my heirs, personal representatives and all those claiming by or through me, consent to herby discharge and forever hold harmless Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and all other participating sponsors, organizations, municipalities and individuals from responsibility for any injuries or damages I may suffer as a result of my participation in this event. I certify that I am physically able to participate in this event and that I shall voluntarily collect and submit any and all sponsorship money collected for the Walk Against Weapons to Women Against Military Madness (WAMM). I have read this waiver and certify my compliance by my signature below (under 18 requires Guardian signature):

Signed _____ Guardian _____



Walkin' with WAMM. Walkin' for PEACE.

directions and maps online: www.worldwidewamm.org



W.A.M.M. Sixth Annual Walk Against Weapons

Saturday, June 8, 2013
928 Prairie Center Drive, Eden Prairie to 7480 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie

Please have sponsors pre-pay with checks payable to WAMM and bring this form along with all contributions to the Walk Against Weapons on Saturday, June 8, 2013 when you register. Can't make it to the event on June 8? Mail collected pledges and this form to: WAMM, 4200 Cedar Ave. So., Suite 3, Minneapolis, MN 55407

WALKER'S NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
 EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

SPONSOR'S NAME	ADDRESS/CITY	ZIP	PHONE	AMOUNT
1				
2				
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Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) is a tax exempt, 501(c)3 organization and all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. In accordance with the IRS definition, no goods or services were provided in exchange for contributions to the Walk Against Weapons. Receipts will not be issued for donations to WAMM for the Walk Against Weapons unless requested by the sponsor. Cancelled checks may be used as receipts for tax purposes.

TOTAL \$

need additional sponsor forms or info? online at www.worldwidewamm.org

May 2013 WAMM Calendar

Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other group's events is not meant to convey or endorse any action contrary to public policy that would be inconsistent with exempt purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) i.e., charitable purposes.

Ongoing WAMM Vigils for Peace

Vigil to End War:

Every Wednesday, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge spanning the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and St. Paul. FFI: Call 612-522-1861 or WAMM 612-827-5364.

Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine:

Every Friday, 4:15 to 5:30 p.m. at Summit and Snelling Avenues, St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

Peace Vigil:

Every Tuesday, 5:00 to 6:00 pm on the Eastside of the Franklin Avenue Bridge, Minneapolis. Sponsored by: Prospect Hill Neighbors for Peace. FFI: 612-379-7398

Grandmothers for Peace Vigils

50th St. and Halifax (1 block w. of France) 4:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. FFI: Marian Wright, 612-927-7607

For information on additional peace vigils in Minnesota and Wisconsin, call the WAMM office at 612-827-5364 or visit www.worldwidewamm.org.

Ongoing WAMM Committee Meetings

Board Meeting: Third Tuesday of each month, 6:00 p.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

The WAMM Book Club. Third Saturday of each month, 10:00 a.m., AFRO Deli: 1939 S. 5th St. Minneapolis (Riverside and 20th Avenue). Meet in the rear left room, behind the Deli. FFI: Suzan Koch: suzykoch@comcast.net

End War Committee: Acting Against War and the Threats of War. First Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. FFI: Call Marie 612-827-5364

Ground All Drones. First Thursdays of every month, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Cedar Center, 4200 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis

Middle East Committee: Second Monday of each month, 9:30 a.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364

Media Committee: FFI: Email the committee, [wammmedia@gmail.com](mailto:wammmmedia@gmail.com).

WAMM Occupy: FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

St. Joan of Arc/WAMM

Peacemakers: Fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc Church, Parish Center, 4537 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Barbara, 612-722-4444

Tackling Torture at the Top

(T3): Second Wednesday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at 4200 Cedar Avenue, Minneapolis.

Ongoing Events

Committee to Stop FBI Repression. Stand with the people subpoenaed in a witch hunt, defend civil liberties. Learn what you can do. All who stand up and act for justice and solidarity are welcome. FFI: See stopfbi.net and mnStopFBI.wordpress.com, or call (612) 379-3585.

People of Faith Peacemakers Breakfast: Second and fourth Wednesdays, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at new location: African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues. A resource and support group for those concerned about peace with justice from a faith perspective. FFI: www.justviewpoint.org or call 763-784-5177

Grandmothers for Peace:

First Wednesday 12:45 p.m. at Edina Public Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Program around justice issue that helps us to understand our role in changing unjust systems. FFI: 952-929-1566

Tea Time Conversational Salons:

Most Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Mad Hatter's Teahouse, 943 West Seventh St., St. Paul. Through March: Dakota-U.S. War of 1862. Salons are open to all. Suggested donations \$3-\$5 include tea, treats. FFI: 651-227-2511 or 651-227-3228.

Third Thursday Global Issues

Forum: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church, Groveland at Lyndale Ave., Minneapolis. FFI: globalsolutionsmn.org

Middle East Peace Now:

Usually 2nd or 3rd Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Refreshments, 10:00 a.m. Program. Location may vary. FFI: www.mepn.org

Dignity, Not Detention Vigil:

Every first Sunday, 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. at 425 Grove Street (Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center). Vigil for civil immigrant detainees in jail at request of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Sponsored by: Interfaith Coalition for Immigration,

Advocates for Human Rights and others. FFI: Email interfaithonimmigration@gmail.com

Special Events

WAMM Walk Against Weapons!

Saturday, June 8, 10:30 a.m. Meet at Bakers Square, 928 Prairie Center Drive, Eden Prairie. Annual three-mile walk to Alliant Techsystems (ATK). A protest and fundraiser for WAMM in collaboration with AlliantACTION. Use pledge form this newsletter and start raising funds today! Organized by: WAMM. FFI and more pledge forms: Call 612-827-5364 or download at WomenAgainstMilitaryMadness.org

Additional upcoming events are listed at www.worldwidewamm.org, or you may call the WAMM office for more information: 612-827-5364. Other peace and justice events can be found on Minnesota Alliance for Peacemakers at www.mapm.org.

Announcement from the WAMM Board

On July 16, the Board of Directors will be voting on two issues.

- 1) A change in the WAMM Personnel Policies and Procedures: Delete the line under Staff Relations: "Exiting staff members are not eligible to serve on the WAMM Board for eighteen months after the end of their employment."
- 2) Article XII Amendments to By-Laws: To the line "Allow notice of announcements to the general membership to be made through publication in the newsletter," add "either by print or electronically."

Members are invited to attend and participate in the decision making. The meeting is the third Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm at the site of our office 4200 Cedar Ave, Minneapolis. Any questions can be answered by calling the office.

Shaymaa, an Iraqi Mother: 2013 Update

by Marie Braun and Mary Beaudoin

Chalk Talks

Infrastructure of violence, or infrastructure of peace?

—spotted on a blackboard at Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis, where visitors are encouraged to make comments

Breakdown

The final breakdown of every tax dollar spent by the United States to rebuild post-invasion Iraq was presented to Congress earlier this month—a down-to-the-nickel analysis of nine years and \$60bn worth of waste, arrogance and ineptitude unequalled in American history.

The conclusive report by Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), was a 186-page document titled “Learning From Iraq,” which followed that mis-spent money on a tragic joyride through the expensive and embarrassing mega-blunders that have become synonymous with US’ nation-building” efforts in Iraq since 2003.

—Charles McDermid, “Shocked and Audit,” Al Jazeera online, March 27, 2013

Photo: Jeff Grosscup

Shaymaa Abulkadham Hasan Hasan and her son, Mustafa, now 11 years old.

In February 2011, an article appeared in this newsletter about Shaymaa Abulkadham Hasan Hasan (“Hasan” appears twice in her name), a young Iraqi mother whose nine-year-old son, Mustafa, had received extensive injuries from an errant industrial electric cable, part of the jerry-rigged electrical system erected in Iraqi cities after the country’s infrastructure was destroyed. His left arm was severely burned and hung limp at his side. He lost his left leg just below the knee and two toes on his right foot. Through private donations, Shaymaa was able to bring her son to Minneapolis for medical care, which was also donated. The following year an update of Shaymaa’s story appeared in the March/April 2012 issue of this newsletter; in it Shaymaa described how life continued to be so difficult in Iraq that she, her husband, and six children wanted to leave and eventually be resettled somewhere where there was hope for the future. (*Both articles are archived and available online at www.worldwidewamm.org*)

Here is how Shaymaa’s story has unfolded since then. Shaymaa’s husband, who worked as a taxi driver in Iraq, sold his car so that the family of eight could go to Turkey where they planned to apply for asylum or refugee status. Their 14-year-old daughter broke off her engagement with a young man in Baghdad as she did not want to be separated from her

family, but instead wanted to go with them to Turkey.

In September 2012, the family took a bus from Baghdad to Ankara. They found a small apartment in the city of Eskisehir, five hours from the capital. Shaymaa describes the city as a beautiful place near the mountains. But it has been very cold there and all eight members of the family sleep in one room because it is the only room with heat. The family receives a small stipend from the Turkish government. They barely survive. Their oldest son, Hussein, frequently goes to a mosque, asking for food. He and Mustafa also go to the market at the end of the day and ask for the food that will be thrown out when the little fresh food shops close.

Shaymaa’s hopes for her children’s education were only partly fulfilled. Refugees can attend public school in Turkey through the age of 16, and her six-year-old twins attend school and her five-year-old daughter will go next year. But her 15-year-old son is not in school. Her 14-year-old daughter does not attend school either. That is because it is too distant to get to except by bus, there is no money for the bus, and a school closer to home doesn’t allow the head scarf which her religion requires.

When the family tried to send Mustafa to school in Turkey, he was bullied. His family then kept him out of school because they were concerned that his arm, miraculously almost fully functional after doctors in Minnesota operated on it, would be injured again. But he is able to walk on the streets better in Turkey because they are well maintained and even, unlike the roads in Iraq. And the city is very safe.

However, the situation in Turkey had changed since the family had first thought about moving there. Tens of thousands of asylum seekers and refugees had been flooding into Turkey from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. Turkey is host to approximately 300,000 Syrians, who fled the violence in their country (UNHCR Briefing Notes, 12 April 2013); the UN agency is expecting to host 500,000 Syrians by the end of this year. Processing for resettlement of the enormous number of refugees is slow. There are no guarantees and it may take a couple of years.

The family has begun the process. Their preference is to resettle in Minnesota. In the meantime, as an applicant for refugee status, Shaymaa’s husband cannot work.

In March of 2013, Mustafa, now 11, and



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Shaymaa,

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accompanied by Shaymaa, came back to Minneapolis so that he could receive a new prosthesis, as he had outgrown his.

At the age of 31, Shaymaa is visibly thinner than she was a year ago when she last brought Mustafa to the United States for treatment. She had become ill in Turkey and required two blood transfusions. She may have developed anemia, or it may have been something else.

Mustafa's physical condition was evaluated by medical specialists in Minnesota, who again donated their expertise. His arm is doing very well. He was fitted with the new prosthesis and is receiving physical therapy. While in Minneapolis, he attends Dowling Elementary School, as he has on his two previous visits. He is happy there.

Shaymaa and Mustafa expect to return to Turkey this month and, like the millions of refugees whose lives have been disrupted in some way by war, they will wait for their numbers to be called until a country will accept them and they can settle in a permanent home somewhere away from the ongoing chaos in Iraq.

Marie Braun visited Iraq during the Sanctions Period and is the founder of Twin Cities Peace Campaign and the chair of the End War Committee of Women Against Military Madness. Mary Beaudoin is the editor of this newsletter and a member of these organizations.

Hunger Games,

continued from page 3

annually performed by the U.S. and South Korea—can you imagine something like that happening on the Canadian or Mexican border against the United States?

Christine Hong presented the talk, sponsored by the WAMM Middle East Committee, Macalester-Plymouth Peacemakers, Korean Quarterly and Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace on November 29, 2012. She is with the Korean Policy Institute and an assistant professor at the University of California-Santa Cruz, specializing in Korean diaspora and critical Pacific Rim studies.

Editor's Note: *On April 26, 2012, a report, "Foreign Assistance to North Korea," written by U.S. specialists in Asian Affairs and Nonproliferation, was completed for Congress, demonstrating that the U.S. was aware of the food crisis in North Korea and that there is linkage to political issues and nuclear weaponry. The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported on March 2013, that the food situation is dire and "must not be contingent on political developments." Then last month Secretary of State Kerry pressured China, an important trade partner, to tighten sanctions on North Korea as a way of pressuring it to abandon nuclear ambitions—a tricky proposition since China is the target of the U.S. pivot into the Asia Pacific.*

RESOURCES:

- Nonviolent resistance to U.S. naval base construction on their South Korea's JeJun island, 300 miles off the coast of China
- Save JeJun Now**
savejejunnnow.org
- Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space**
space4peace.org



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 Of a drone, bomb, or gun.*

**WISHING EVERY MOTHER
 PEACE THIS MOTHER'S DAY**

**STOP MILITARY THREATS!
 END UN AND U.S. SANCTIONS EVERYWHERE!**



Photo: Jung Yeo-Je/AFP/Getty

(See: U.S. versus North Korea: the Hunger Games, on page 1.)

Central to all of this is ending the Korean War, with the United States signing a peace treaty with North Korea. But it will take more than signing a document to end over half a century of enmity and mistrust—it will take a new approach to achieving security. This is why it will take women's leadership, because women realize that genuine security means having health, education, and freedom to live without fear and want. From Ireland to Liberia, women have stood up to end violence and conflict. We can and must do the same for Korea.

*—Christine Ahn, Just Foreign Policy, March 6, 2013
 (adapted from an address she gave to the UN Commission
 on the Status of Women on March 6, 2013.)*