



W.A.M.M. NEWSLETTER

Women Against Military Madness

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Women Against Military Madness

A Holiday Invitation from Iraq to Donald Trump

by Sami Rasouli

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Above: The Sami and Suad Rasouli Family

Dear Mr. Donald Trump,

Warm greetings from Iraq! Though I became an American citizen and lived in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for 30 years, I returned to my native Iraq to work for peace after my adopted country attacked my original home in 2003.

My family and I would like to invite you and your family to visit us in Iraq for as long as you would like. We, and many other Iraqi families, will be delighted to have you as honored guests at our homes. Guest visits as part of our exchange program (Muslim Peacemaker Teams) have been ongoing between citizens of Najaf and of Minneapolis since the two officially became "sister cities" in July 2009.

The purpose of your visit will be educational in nature and focused on learning about Arab-Islamic culture and will include opportunities to visit major Iraq historical cities including Babylon and holy cities such as Karbala and Baghdad. You will learn about Hammurabi, who wrote the first code of law, and visit the countryside in the south where the wheel was invented by an Iraqi woman thousands of years ago. You will also personally witness how Iraq has continued to be destroyed by the continuing U.S. military presence since 2003.

We will show you how ISIS is smuggling our oil out of Iraq and who is laundering it into the funds supporting the terrorism which threatens us all.

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NEWSLETTER

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.

Newsletter Editor

Mary Beaudoin

Newsletter Committee

Polly Mann, Carol Masters, Margaret Sarfehjooy, Sarah Martin, Mary Beaudoin, Linda Hoover

Proofreaders

Ilze Mueller
Carol Walker

Layout

nigelparry.net

Women Against Military Madness

is a nonviolent, feminist organization, founded in 1982, 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.

WAMM Staff

WAMM Director: Suzanne Al-Kayali
Office Manager: Jamie Swezey

WAMM Office

4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407
612-827-5364 (phone)
612-827-6433 (fax)
wamm@mtn.org
WomenAgainstMilitaryMadness.org

WAMM Office Hours

Mon-Fri: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

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Psychological Warfare

by Sue Ann Martinson

War is no longer simply an instrument to be used by political powers, but a form of rule, a general condition of the social order itself—a permanent social relation and coordinating principle that affects all aspects of society.¹

—Henry A. Giroux, “Politics as Pathology in the Warfare State”

Christopher Simpson’s book *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960* explores the development of mass communication research in the field of social science and its relationship to U.S. military programs and agencies.

The links between the social sciences in academic institutions and U.S. foreign relations policy produced what Simpson calls the “science of coercion,” a massive psychological warfare program of domination-through-communication. As we have moved into the 21st century, the use of these techniques has increased within the United States, threatening and sometimes decimating democratic institutions and values.

The direction that the social sciences were to take in the development of mass communication as psychological warfare originated with two social scientists, Walter Lippmann and Harold Lasswell. Active after WWI and during WWII in the fledgling field of communication research, their influence has lasted well into the 21st century. “Put most bluntly,” Simpson says, “they contended that communication’s essence was its utility as an instrument for imposing one’s will on others, and preferably on masses of others.”³

“Lasswell and Lippmann favored relatively tolerant, pluralistic societies in which elite rule protected democracies from their own weaknesses—a modern form of noblesse oblige so to speak. But the potential applications of the communication-as-domination zeitgeist extended far beyond the purposes that they would have personally

approved.”⁴

Lippmann and Lasswell established the concept of “communication as domination.”⁵ While Lippmann’s analysis took the direction of psychological warfare later known as “white” propaganda, Lasswell’s darker interpretations resulted in the field of “black” propaganda and operations.

In 1947 the National Security Act established two key organizations, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC).⁶ President Harry Truman authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) in a memo, which was formalized on November 4, 1952.⁷ Since Truman’s memo was a classified document, the existence of the NSA was not known to the public at that time and it was referred to as No Such Agency.⁸

During these critical years the NSC created documents that covered two areas: the first was “white” propaganda such as Voice of America, scholarly exchange programs, cultural centers abroad, and similar overt programs put in place “to counteract effects of anti-U.S. propaganda.”

White propaganda was followed by the creation of a “top secret” black area that encompassed black psychological operations, authorizing the CIA to conduct “officially nonexistent” programs.⁹ Under the auspices of the CIA, the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) was created; its tasks included:

...propaganda; economic warfare; preventative direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground

movements, guerrillas and refugee liberations [sic] groups and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world. OPC simultaneously created a specific branch for managing assassinations and kidnapping of “persons whose interests were inimical” to the United States, as well as for murdering double agents suspected of betraying U.S. intelligence agencies.¹⁰

Intelligence projects created during WWII such as the “analysis of newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts and postal censorship intercepts”¹¹ were a basis for the development of psychological warfare in mass communication.

Albert Hadley Cantril, another “founding father” of mass communication, “specialized in international surveys intended to determine how factors such as class, nationalism, and ethnicity affected stereotypes present in a given population,” and how in turn they affected national behavior toward the U.S. If foreign audiences did not view U.S. goals as good for them, they had misunderstood U.S. intentions—not that Western behavior itself could possibly be flawed.¹²

The CIA funded much of Cantril’s work during the 1950s. Simpson notes examples of studies and counterinsurgency worldwide and says that “international communication studies are largely an elaboration of methods for imposing one’s national will abroad.”¹³

Increasingly sophisticated tools of covert psychological warfare are constantly being developed and include special operations (CIA and classified military actions), targeted assassinations, random acts of disruptive violence by mercenaries, and cyber warfare (e.g., computer viruses).¹⁴

According to Simpson, social science researchers offered very little resistance to the direction of mass communication as psychological warfare because funding came from government and connected foundations, the military, and the CIA. Careers, prestige, and academic status were tied up in this research. Those who criticized the prevailing

paradigm of domination were ostracized and discredited.¹⁵

The NSC policy decisions also helped insulate the social scientists from the reality of the often violent end-results of their work. Simpson notes:

...the phrase “psychological warfare” enjoyed multi-layered, often contradictory meanings. ... For the public, the terms seems to have implied basically overt, hard-hitting propaganda. ... For the national security cognoscenti and for psychological warfare contractors, the same phrase extended to selected use of violence—but defining exactly how much violence was often sidestepped, even in top-secret records.¹⁶

Linkages and networks included foundations, academics, military personnel, Wall Street, and media. The seeds were planted early in 1942 during the war, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt appointed Wall Street lawyer William “Wild Bill” Donovan director of the CIA’s predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

Donovan was “among the first in the United States to articulate a more or less unified theory of psychological warfare.” He called it the “engineering of consent” with the idea that peacetime propaganda campaigns could effectively be adapted to open warfare.¹⁷

Also in 1942, the White House redirected “white” (official) propaganda functions into a new agency, which became the Office of War Information (OWI); Donovan reorganized the intelligence, covert action, and “black” propaganda functions under deeper secrecy as the OSS,¹⁸ echoing the earlier divisions established by Lippmann and Lasswell in the communication-as-domination paradigm.

U.S. centers of psychological warfare during WWII included the U.S. Army, the Department of Agriculture, Treasury

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W.A.M.M. COMMITTEES

Issue Committees:

- Book Club
- End War
- St. Joan of Arc/
• W.A.M.M. Peacemakers
- Ground All Drones
- Middle East Committee
- Tackling Torture at the Top
- Second Monday Movies

Administrative Standing

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- Thank you to all the generous businesses and services, and all the wonderful volunteers who made the annual W.A.M.M. Silent Auction a success.

Give to W.A.M.M.

And help end war.

See back page.



Psychological Warfare

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Department, and Library of Congress, and were led by various social scientists, army personnel, and the OSS and OWI. Dozens of prominent social scientists participated in these organizations.¹⁹ Participants later became the heads of foundations such as Carnegie, Russell Sage, Rockefeller and Ford, which then funded social science research in the 1950s and '60s.²⁰

Other OWI participants later became the publishers of *Time*, *Look*, and *Fortune*, and editors of magazines like *Holiday*, *Coronet*, *Parade*, and *Saturday Review*, and included newspaper editors, partners in large advertising agencies, and noted social scientists.²¹

During the war, these parties had “engaged in tacit alliances” and “shared several important conceptions

about mass communication research. They regarded mass communication as a tool for social management and as a weapon in social conflict.”²²

Interlocking committees and commissions that linked mainstream academia with U.S. military and intelligence communities enabled these former OWI leaders to exercise power as part of the ruling “elite” in America.²³ This networking has carried forward into the present.

A recent example from October-2016 of using mass communication as a weapon of psychological warfare is the work of the public relations company Syria Campaign, which was created to garner support for U.S. involvement in Syria. Max Blumenthal describes the Campaign: “Posing as a non-political solidarity organization, the Syria Campaign leverages local partners and media contacts to push the U.S. into toppling another Middle Eastern government.” As part of the campaign, the White Helmets were promoted as

international heroes helping civilian victims, particularly in Aleppo. In this extremely slick campaign, they were featured in the mainstream corporate media, including *TIME* magazine and on the major TV and radio networks, and even on the alternative news program *Democracy Now!* The idea was to win the “hearts and minds” of the American people who are drawn to “do-gooders” or “shining knights.” But this seemingly impartial group was funded by the U.S. to create sympathy for U.S. military intervention and regime change in Syria by over-vilifying Assad, just as Saddam Hussein was over-vilified in Iraq.²⁴ The legacy of the science of coercion continues. ☺

Sue Ann Martinson is a longtime WAMM member and peace and justice activist with a special interest in media and communications. Watch for more on the science of coercion and psychological warfare on her blog, Rise Up Times at riseuptimes.org.

“Psychological Warfare” Endnotes

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2. Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1994). A digital edition with a preface by Christopher Simpson and an introduction by Robert McChesney is available on the web: New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2014 <http://tiny.cc/199mfy>. A later edition available in print: Oxford University Press; Reprint edition (March 14, 1996).
3. Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, 17-19
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7. Andrew Glass, “The National Security Agency is established, Nov. 4, 1952,” Web. Politico, November 4, 2010 <http://politi.co/2fbvMr3>
8. Anne Gearan, “‘No Such Agency’ spies on the communications of the world,” Web. *The Washington Post*, June 6, 2013 <http://wapo.st/1MJA4NQ>
9. In December of 1947 the NSC created two important documents: NSC 4 covered “white” propaganda such as Voice of America, scholarly exchange programs, cultural centers abroad, and similar overt programs put in place “to counteract effects of anti-U.S. propaganda.” NSC 4-A, followed six months later by NSC 10/2, was “top secret” and described covert psychological operations. It authorized the CIA to conduct “officially nonexistent” programs. NSC 10/2 created the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) under the auspices of the CIA. “It was translated to mean that a declaration of war had been issued with equal if not more force than if the Congress had so decided.” Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, 37-41
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13. Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, 72
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24. Max Blumenthal, “How the White Helmets became international heroes while pushing US military intervention and regime change in Syria,” Web. Alternet, October 2, 2016 <http://bit.ly/2dOUcK7> and “Inside the Shadowy PR Firm That’s Lobbying for Regime Change in Syria,” Alternet, October 3, 2016 <http://bit.ly/2dOUcK7>

PM: Known Knowns and Known Unknowns

by Polly Mann

According to a September 2016, report of Dr. Neta Crawford, professor of political science at Brown University, the U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost taxpayers nearly \$5 trillion (“Costs of War,” Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Brown University).



Above: Dr. Neta Crawford

This is in addition to a widely reported astounding fact: a recent Inspector General’s audit report showed that **\$6.5 trillion in “defense” spending could not be accounted for.** How much housing, food, medical care, and education could have been provided for with these trillions?

In addition, separate reporting by the U.K.-based Action on Armed Violence, found that the Pentagon could only account for 48% of the small arms shipped to Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11 — meaning that more than half of the approximately 700,000 guns the U.S. sent overseas in the past 15 years are now missing.

On October 30, Canadian-based Global Research published documentation showing how the

Pentagon and U.S. allies channel weapons and ammunition through the illicit arms trade to “moderate” terrorists working to overthrow the government of Syria.

Then there is the known weapons trade in foreign sales. Israel couldn’t expect that the U.S. cash cow to go on infinitum, but the U.S. power elites found a way to stay on the good side of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and keep faith in the U.S. weapons industry, as well as the Israeli lobby, both of which, by and large, determine U.S. foreign policy.

While Israel’s government continues a brutal siege on Gaza and continues to bulldoze Palestinian homes for land grabs, Obama allocated \$38 billion for 10 years to that benevolent bastion of the Middle East (\$3.8 billion per year beginning in 2018), effectively giving Israel even more money in U.S. foreign aid.

However, there’s a little catch: Israel must spend the money on arms which have to be manufactured in the U.S. Altogether, this is quite a coup, resulting in the good will of the U.S. weapons manufacturers while the Israeli lobby may be placated till 2028. ☸

Polly Mann is a cofounder of Women Against Military Madness and a frequent contributor to this newsletter.

Suggested reading: *War Against the People: Israel, Palestine and Global Pacification* by Israeli anthropologist/activist Jeff Halper. University of Chicago Press. 2015

Dear Mr. Donald Trump,

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I'm not rich, but my family and I are renting a house in Najaf where I was born. It's small, cozy, and full of love. You will stay with us and share what we have. There are other Iraqi families in addition to ours who would love to have you spend time with them as well.

When you (as an “infidel”) meet me (as a “terrorist”) at my home in Najaf, I assure you that you will find we are all brothers and sisters sharing the same bread and the same universe together. You will even learn that our peoples, also including those who are Jews, all share the Old Testament as the core foundation of our respective religions. We share more values in common than

differences. We are all “people of the Book.”

Certainly, your visit will help tremendously in countering the ongoing negative stereotypes about Muslims and will serve to discredit those who promote Islamophobia in America. We fear what we do not understand, and the visit we offer will deepen your insight into, and enlighten your perceptions regarding the part of the world we call home.

In return, should you accept our offer to visit Najaf, I promise you that our family will, if it pleases you, visit with you in the U.S.—even in your Atlantic City or Vegas where we would spend some money having fun despite the fact that our faith as Muslims bans us from entering “Sin City.” We will break the rules to exchange visits. So if you can provide your own transportation to come to Iraq, we will gladly cover the cost of everything else.

I know you're busy preparing to move into the White House so, understandably, if you can't make it at the present time, our offer will remain open for you to visit us at any time you choose.

Mr. Trump, I guarantee that you will fall in love with Arab-Islamic culture. Aside from some superficial cultural differences, our people and their desires are really little different than yours and you will quickly feel at home among us, even grow to love us. The resolution of all conflicts begins with an open mind and productive discussions. We can think of no man better than you to extend the offer of this opportunity to. Please give it thoughtful consideration. ☺

Happy Holidays,

Sami Rasouli
Muslim Peacemaker Teams
Najaf, Iraq

Iraq: Forgiving the Unforgivable

by Marie Braun

For the past 12 years, Marie Braun has organized speaking tours for Sami Rasouli whenever he visited Minnesota from his home in Iraq. She and her husband John frequently traveled with him. This article reflects some of the remarks that Sami shared with audiences on his most recent tour in August of 2016.

When the Dominican Sisters of Racine, Wisconsin, wanted a keynote speaker to address the subject of forgiveness at a recent retreat, they did not seek someone known for his/her piety. Instead, the Sisters asked that their keynote speaker be someone whose reality is solidly based in one of the greatest tragedies of the 21st century. They chose Sami Rasouli, an Iraqi-American, who had lived in the U.S. for 30 years before moving back to Iraq in 2004.

On March 20, 2003, while still living in the U.S., Sami sobbed as his adopted country started bombing his country of origin. And he continued to grieve as the invasion was followed by a brutal occupation that lasted until 2011. [Although the occupation ended officially in that year, U.S. military involvement continues in some form to this day.]

When he visited Iraq in 2003 to commemorate the death of his mother, Sami witnessed firsthand the crumbling of the ancient cradle of civilization; the loss of basic services such as electrical power, sewage, and garbage disposal, in addition to the inability to have adequate food and clean water. Along with this came the almost total collapse of the modern Iraqi health and educational systems that had been some of the most advanced in the Middle East. In describing Iraq

at that time, many employed the metaphor of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—death, famine, disease, and war—galloping through the land.

In speaking of his personal journey, Sami said that in 1976, Iraq's former president, Saddam Hussein, addressed Iraqis saying, “If you are not with me, you are against me.” So Sami left his country at the age of 24, eventually ending up in the United States. Following 9/11, the democratically elected President George Bush addressed the citizens of the U.S. and the whole world announcing, “If you are not with me, you are against me.” So, Sami, in November of 2004, left the U.S. and went back to live in Iraq.

At the time, Sami made a commitment to stay in Iraq for five years and do whatever he could to bring reconciliation between his country of

origin and his adopted country. He also made a commitment to come back to Minnesota each year to give a firsthand account of what was happening in Iraq. And return he did, year after year, to give eyewitness reports about the war and occupation.

In the early years, Sami spoke of the terrible pain and destruction that the war brought, but his reports were also laced with hope. Today he sees little hope for Iraq and its people in the foreseeable future, at least not until the U.S. leaves the Middle East, which he does not expect to happen soon. When the Bush Administration bombed Iraq in 2003, Saddam Hussein was in power; today ISIS is there. He wonders if U.S. citizens believe these wars, which could cost up to \$6 trillion, were worth it. And he wonders why Iraqi people had to pay the price for the voracious appetite of the U.S. for oil and the desire to control the flow of oil in the Middle East.

Najaf, where Sami lives, is in an area that has not been overrun by ISIS. But it is the city where the dead are brought from the nine southern provinces of Iraq to the hallowed Wadei As-Salaam [Valley of Peace] Cemetery, the 1,400-year-old Shiite burial ground. Sami says that each day the bodies of 100-150 Iraqi youth arrive there in body bags. They are killed fighting foreign armies bent on conquering Iraq. The apocalyptic horsemen continue to gallop across Iraq! These days some of the fighters have different names and different methods, but they perform the same function—conquering and dividing Iraq.

Sami reports that there are four million internally displaced people in Iraq; Najaf is host to half a million of them. Many had left their homes in other parts of Iraq when bands of ISIS entered their village or city. ISIS soldiers frequently meted out such horrific brutality that the inhabitants of other villages or cities, terrified that the same thing would happen to them, would abandon their homes and flee for their lives. Others



fled when their villages or cities were shelled or bombed by Western and Iraqi-government forces in efforts to retake their villages or cities.

Iraq's borders have been very porous since the U.S. invasion of 2003, when the army, police, and border guards were all "let go" as part of the purge of members of the Ba'ath party by U.S. Civil Administrator Paul Bremer. Sami said it is still very easy for anyone to enter or leave the country – criminals, contractors, mercenaries, foreign military, and others. And, while ordinary Iraqis have inadequate services and cannot easily move about, weapons, food, and water continue to be supplied to ISIS, a creation of the U.S. and Israel, whose propagandists are so unfamiliar with the language of the land that they often speak broken Arabic.

The questions many Iraqis ask include "Who are these people? Where do they come from? Who finances them? Who benefits when Arab nations are split into

smaller entities?" And "Who are the professionals who run the 11 oil wells that are under the control of ISIS?"

Coming from a country forced to live with such catastrophic tragedy from the U.S. war to the present, Sami was yet able to share with his audiences what he, growing up as a Muslim, had been taught about forgiveness. Perhaps he was able to do so because, as an adult, it was necessary to contemplate the subject out of the depth of his experience.

To illustrate his thoughts, he related an anecdote. He had recently received a letter from an American veteran, who was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the unforgivable war on Iraq. It read: "I was asked by my government to fight for our way of life and freedom in Iraq. I was given an assault rifle that was designed to fire 20 bullets every 3 seconds, 400 bullets per minute, with a large clip designed to kill as many of

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The Privatization of the Military

by Linda Hoover

A globalized economy based on profit for the few necessitates a military occupation of the world and requires a huge military operation. For the U.S., that occupation is organized by the Department of Defense and the Department of State. By channeling billions of dollars to private contractors, these two departments are instrumental in the rapid privatization of the military. This privatization garners troops and support for a military that no longer has the support of enough Americans to sustain a military draft. It also makes the U.S. policy of endless wars possible for at least the immediate future.

Organizing and funding of the privatized military industry results in real and potential conflicts of interest, as well. While the practice of using a private military is not new, its use raises particular concerns in a globalized economy.

The word “mercenary” comes from the Latin *merces* (“wages” or “pay”). History is full of examples in the use of a private military, dating back a couple of thousand years B.C.E. However, some people say that the origins of modern private military companies came from the British in the early 1940s. More recently, in February 2016, Richard Norton-Taylor wrote in *The Guardian*, “Britain is the ‘mercenary kingpin’ of global private military industry, which has been booming ever since the ‘war on terror’ began 15 years ago...”¹

While the UK may be the largest *supplier* of private military personnel, this boom has been driven by the U.S., which is, by far, the largest *employer*. Today’s private military market is often referred to as a “monopsony”, meaning a market with a single buyer. In 2012, the U.S. spent \$129 billion on contracts that included pay for 670,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

In a 2014 Oxford University Press book, *The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies*

and What They Mean for World Order, author Sean McFate argues that there are two main types of private military companies. One type is mercenary companies. They are private armies that can conduct autonomous military campaigns, offensive operations, and force projection. He says that at present there are no large mercenary firms.

The other type of private military company is the private military enterprise. This type of business raises armies that are hired and commanded by others. Most modern private military companies are of the enterprise type. For example, the United States has relied on contractors to develop the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.² These companies work under the direction of the U.S. departments of Defense and State. They provide fighters, drone pilots, cooks, grounds and maintenance workers, laundry workers, and other skilled and unskilled laborers.

This diversity of private enterprise (contractor) support roles is seen in today’s U.S. operations in Iraq. According to Marcus Weisgerber of *Defense One*, as of October 1, 2016 there were 2,992 private employees working under contract to support 4,400 plus troops in Iraq.³ Contract workers made up 68 percent of the personnel, even without the additional 500 contract workers that are expected to be added to the U.S. military operation as “trainers” and “advisers,” as the U.S. government refers to them.

Strategic security analyst David Isenberg, writing in October 2012, said that about one-third of the private military personnel working under contract were from countries other than the U.S. or the country in which they were working. “According to the most recent quarterly contractor census report issued by the U.S. Central Command, which includes both Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as 18 other countries stretching from Egypt to

Kazakhstan, there were approximately 137,000 contractors [personnel] working for the Pentagon in its region... Of that total, 40,110 were U.S. citizens, 50,560 were local hires, and 46,231 were from neither the U.S. not [sic] the country in which they were working.”⁴

Even the U.S. Airforce is turning to privatizing its work force. The increased use of drones has led to a shortage of drone pilots. Currently, private drone pilots are doing surveillance only work and cannot legally fire weapons. A policy change could quickly alter those orders.

Private military companies are used at sea as well as on land and in the air. Maritime armies, often British, are used to protect oil shipping routes in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere. In an article cross posted to the online news services *Somalia Report* and the *Huffington Post*, author David Isenberg notes that several African and Middle Eastern countries opposed the use of private armed guards on ships docking at their ports. Such guards have been arrested and jailed in Somalia, Egypt, and Kenya. And in the Netherlands, the Dutch Labour Party proposed a motion in Parliament that would ban private armed guards on Dutch flagged merchant vessels.

In addition, in accordance with a United Nations (UN) Arms Embargo, armed guards are banned from ships entering some 19 countries. Yet shipping companies find ways around the UN regulations and inspections. For example, it is often cheaper to buy weapons in developing countries and dump them in the ocean prior to docking than it is to be fined.⁵ Consistent with the mission of private enterprises, the purpose of the private maritime armies is to make money for their shareholders, even if it means avoiding aspects of international agreements.

The hiring of a private military puts the majority of the world's population at odds with those benefiting from the global economy. **Several questions and objections are raised by critics. They include:**

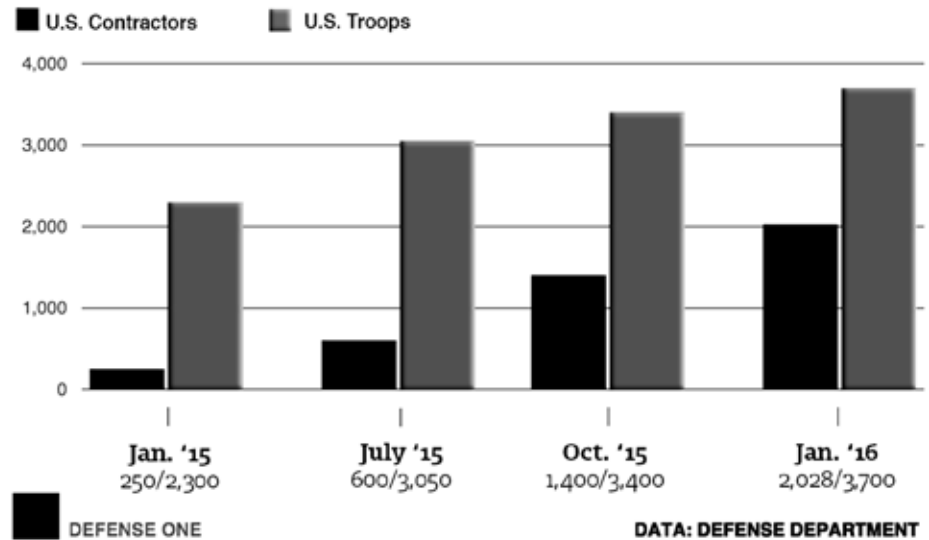
A privatized military creates an armed interest group in the national politic; it is likely to have split loyalties between national and corporate interests. Private military companies are based on the U.S. military model because they work almost exclusively for the U.S. departments of State and Defense. These companies are familiar with how the U.S. military operates because many of their leaders are former military personnel. Possible split loyalties between corporate and national interests make it difficult to know how these private companies might operate in a time of internal national conflict. The number of possible conflicts of interest seems unimaginable.

Private companies are responsible first to their shareholders and then to their hiring nation. They are not held to the same reporting and public accountability standards as is the public military. For example, they are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Even when regulations do apply, a report issued in July 2016 notes that Army officials responsible for evaluating private contractors do not necessarily provide documentation supporting the performance rating given to a contractor.⁶ Also, American soldiers can be court-martialed but armed contractors cannot.

Protecting workers and others is difficult in situations involving multiple jurisdictions. Human rights may be denied. For example, U.S. citizens are granted immunity according to an agreement between the U.S. and Colombia. Therefore, military and other U.S. personnel are not prosecuted in cases of rape or other misconduct in Colombia. Yet private contractors cannot count on collaboration with the U.S. military. In 2014 the U.S. Airforce evacuated military personnel from Balad, a city in Iraq.

U.S. Contractors Flood Back Into Iraq

8-fold jump since January 2015



As ISIS approached the city, U.S.-hired private contractor pilots resigned and the remaining contractors had to await their evacuation by the Iraqi military.

Hire-to-kill is an inhumane practice that pits impoverished workers in one country against victims of warmongers in other countries. Citizens in countries from which the U.S. has looted their wealth are placed in do or die situations. Writing in *Foreign Policy* magazine, Kristina Mani says that in 2007 a private security company, Triple Canopy, recruited almost exclusively from Latin American countries (Chile, Peru, El Salvador, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua) even though these countries did not all support U.S. military interventions around the world.⁷

American nationalism has an impact on how U.S. peace and anti-war movements organize and work for change. It has been reported for over a decade that battle deaths and injuries are significantly higher in the private military than in the U.S. military. Americans talk about the poverty draft in the U.S., but there is little awareness that the poverty war machine recruits workers from impoverished countries.

Maybe it is time to call for the U.S. to ban

the use of private military companies on land, at sea, and in the air and space. ☮

Linda Hoover is a member of the WAMM Newsletter Committee and is a longtime peace and justice activist.

Endnotes

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Iraq: Forgiving the Unforgivable

continued from page 7

the enemy as possible in the shortest period of time. Like many of my fellow veterans with whom I served in Iraq, I am haunted by what was done, and is still being done, to the Iraqi people because of our invasion of your country in 2003. Please help me out. Can I be forgiven?"

Sami said that he was being asked as an Iraqi: "Can this man be forgiven when over one million of my fellow Iraqis died as a result of this American war in which he was fighting as a soldier? Can anyone who participated be forgiven?"

It is not easy for Iraqis to forgive, Sami said, because of the anger and bitterness they naturally feel about what has happened to their country. Forgiveness requires courage, strength, and awakening. It takes a very long time and immense internal struggle to heal and to learn and practice the true principles of forgiveness.

Sami went on to say that while the annual Islamic observance of Ramadan means different things for many Muslims, they all take note that the 30 days of fasting is generally a time for mindfulness; a time to focus inward and look at what it means to feed oneself spiritually rather than physically. This focus on mindfulness helps lead one to understand the importance of giving and forgiving.

Furthermore, Islam as a faith means submission. Being a Muslim means submitting, physically and spiritually, to the Almighty. Muslims meet Salaam (Peace) five times a day. They kneel down twice at each prayer time. At the first, they say: "I am from earth," and at the second: "And to earth I shall return." Bowing down on the earth, or the clay stone which the Shi'a carry, "reminds us that we are nothing but dust and helps us to feel modest and humble. It awakens in us the ability to see that we are all one humanity, to feel empathy for our fellow human beings, to realize that all human beings are potentially capable of making

terrible mistakes, and to understand the necessity of adopting forgiveness as a way of life."

Sami feels honored to be part of the Islamic culture where he learned about "unity," and the Christian culture where he learned "unconditional love," both of which have guided him to forgiveness. He learned that "to forgive is to set the prisoner free, and to realize that the prisoner was *me!*"

So Sami wrote his American friend, the Iraq veteran, assuring him that he, too, is forgiven. ☺

Sami Rasouli is founder of Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT) in Iraq which are modeled after the Christian Peacemaker Teams that he met there. MPT engages in projects to promote peace and reconciliation between Iraq and the U.S. Marie Braun is a leader in the Twin Cities peace community which has opposed war on Iraq and all other wars.

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WAMM Calendar

Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other groups' 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 Vigils for Peace

Vigil to End War

Every Wednesday, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Lake Street/ Marshall Avenue Bridge. Signs available on St. Paul side. Brief circle up for announcements after the vigil on St. Paul Side. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine

Every Friday, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. corner of Summit Avenue and Snelling Avenue, St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

Peace Vigil

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

Grandmothers for Peace Vigil

Every Wednesday, 4:45 to 5:45 p.m. 50th Street and Halifax (1 block west of France), Edina. FFI: Call Marian Wright 612-927-7607.



Ongoing WAMM Committee Meetings

Board Meeting

Third Tuesday of every month, 6:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

Book Club

Third Saturday of every month, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. NEW LOCATION: Episcopal Homes Welcome Center, 1860 University Ave. West, St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

End War

First Monday of every month, 6:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

Ground All Drones

First Thursday of every month, 4:45 to 6:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

Middle East

Second Monday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers

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

Tackling Torture at the Top (T3)

Second Wednesday of every month, 10:00 a.m. 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

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: Visit stopfbi.net and mnStopFBI.wordpress.com.

People of Faith Peacemakers Breakfast

Second and fourth Wednesdays, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues South, Minneapolis. A resource and support group for those concerned about peace with justice from a faith perspective. FFI: Visit www.justviewpoint.org or call 612-333-4772.

Grandmothers for Peace

First Wednesday of each month, 12:45 p.m. Edina Public Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Programs around justice issues that help us to understand our role in changing unjust systems. FFI: Call 952-929-1566.

Pax Salons

Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. 943 West Seventh Street (St. Paul Gallery), St. Paul. Please come. Topics vary. Call for details. Small donations accepted. FFI: Call 651-227-3228.

Dignity, Not Detention Vigil

First Sunday of every month, 3:00 p.m. Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center, 425 Grove Street, 425 Grove Street, St. Paul. Vigil for civil immigrant detainees. Sponsored by the Coalition for Immigration, Advocates for Human Rights. FFI: Email InterFaithOnImmigration@gmail.com or call Michele 612-341-3302 (x117).

Middle East Peace Now

Usually second or third Saturday. Refreshments 9:30 a.m. Program 10:00 a.m. Location varies. FFI: Visit mepn.org.

WAMM Second Monday Movies

Second Monday of every month, 7:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Avenue South (enter on 42nd St.), Minneapolis. Projected on big screen. Free admission, popcorn. All welcome. Discussion follows film. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364 or email wamm@mtn.org.

Special Events

Monday at the Mansion

Every Monday, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. (time may change due to winter darkness) 1006 Summit Ave., St. Paul. Peaceful, family-friendly vigil. Gather at the Governor's Residence in memory of Philando Castile, Jamar Clark, Marcus Golden, Michael Kirvelay, Map Kong, Phil Quinn, Jaffort Smith, and 15 more Minnesotans killed by police in the last year. Bring a candle or lantern. Co-hosted by Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace, St. Anthony Villagers for Community Action, St. Paul Eastside Neighbors for Peace, St. Paul Neighbors for Peace, and Women Against Military Madness (WAMM). FFI: 612-827-5364 or on Facebook.

Leslie Reindl Peace Essay Contest

February 28, 2017 - Essays due!

Second annual Leslie Reindl Peace Essay Contest for Minnesota high school juniors and seniors. Top 3 winners to be showcased, awarded scholarship prizes of \$1,000, \$750, and \$500 at World Storytelling Day, March 21, 2017 at Landmark Center in St. Paul. Sponsored by the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers (MAP) Full topics, guidelines, suggested resources, as well as classroom speakers, available. FFI: Larry Johnson at 612-747-3904 or larryjvfp@gmail.com



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