

Military Madness, U.S. Style: What's the Alternative?

by Kristin Dooley, WAMM Director

Imagine a chemical attack happens in your neighborhood. What do you expect would happen next?

From watching various (questionable, of course) horror movies, the National Guard would quarantine my neighborhood with sand trucks and bright yellow warning tape and fire fighters and police would converge on the area. Strange men and women in biohazard suits with oxygen tanks and protective gloves would enter the area and start taking samples of the soil, water and air in an attempt to identify the toxin. Our bodies and our neighbors' bodies would be thoroughly examined for symptoms and effects and the data would be collected to be analyzed. Our finest epidemiologists would be consulted and a treatment and clean-up plan would be developed and implemented. A cure or palliative care would be applied to my neighbors and my family.

What I would not expect even in a horror movie is that foreign heads of state would coordinate their militaries to bomb three buildings near Washington, D.C. and follow up with press conferences proclaiming their success.

Sometimes the best way to realize that we are being told lies about what is happening in a foreign country is to turn the narrative around and apply it to what would happen if it occurred in our own country.

In the reality show version of this scenario, military madness occurs when the government convinces the media and many of its citizens that the only correct course of action is sending missiles and dropping bombs on a country far, far away. This madness is what took place at 4:00 a.m. (Syrian time) on April 14, 2018, when the militaries of the United States, France, and England launched a joint military attack on Syria. The reason, the leaders of the U.S., England, and France provided was to punish Syria's use of chemical weapons in the town of Douma. They spoke as though the attack and who was responsible was fact, before there was an opportunity to investigate.

In April 2018, we experienced a near total black out of any alternative to this madness. Moreover, we who question the official story will be accused of being clueless or conspiracy-minded.

The WNYC radio program "On the Media" has created a series of Breaking News Consumer's Handbooks (tinyurl.com/yarb33b2) that listeners can use when breaking news is announced. The series includes such wise advice as:

"Remember, in the immediate aftermath, almost *everyone* will get it wrong." (Terrorism Handbook: tinyurl.com/hwk284q)

"Inevitably, whole populations and religions are scapegoated. Ignore this." (Terrorism handbook: tinyurl.com/hwk284q)

“Pay attention to the language the media uses: “‘We are getting reports’...’ could mean anything”; “‘We are seeking confirmation...’ means they don’t have it;” “‘[News outlet] has learned’...means it has scoops or is going out on a limb.” (Breaking News general handbook, recording and downloadable pdf: tinyurl.com/yaqjywqh)

We should ask that people living in the United States imagine what we would hope to happen if the even occurred here. Could we expect the propaganda to be as thick as it has been in the war on Syria?

“In war, truth is the first casualty” - something awake observers have remarked throughout the ages from the time of the Greek dramatist Aeschylus (525-456 BC). This is closely related to the tactic, “All warfare is based on deception,” which appears in *The Art of Warfare* by Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu (545-470 BC). This is well understood by those who, while investigating and/or analyzing the war on Syria, have tried to present views which conflict with the propaganda of empire.

Veteran Middle East journalist Robert Fisk asks, “Has there ever been a Middle Eastern war of such hypocrisy? A war of such cowardice and such mean morality, of such false rhetoric and such public humiliation? I’m referring to the utter lies and mendacity...” *Paste Magazine* commented: “Rank propaganda is the order of the day. Honest observers are appalled. Stephen Kinzer wrote that ‘coverage of the Syrian war will be remembered as one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the American press.’”

Some other journalists that present alternatives to war-promoting propaganda on Syria are worth hearing: Eva Bartlett, Vanessa Beeley, Seymour Hersh (relegated to “journalist in exile”), Time Anderson; websites such as Global Research, MintPress News, the Ron Paul Institute of Peace, Black Agenda Report, Near Eastern Outlook, United National Antiwar Coalition blog, Voltaire Network.

We can and should demand that the acceptance of mainstream media spin and the glorification of military madness ends now and that a sane and productive response becomes a possibility and the reality of our future.