

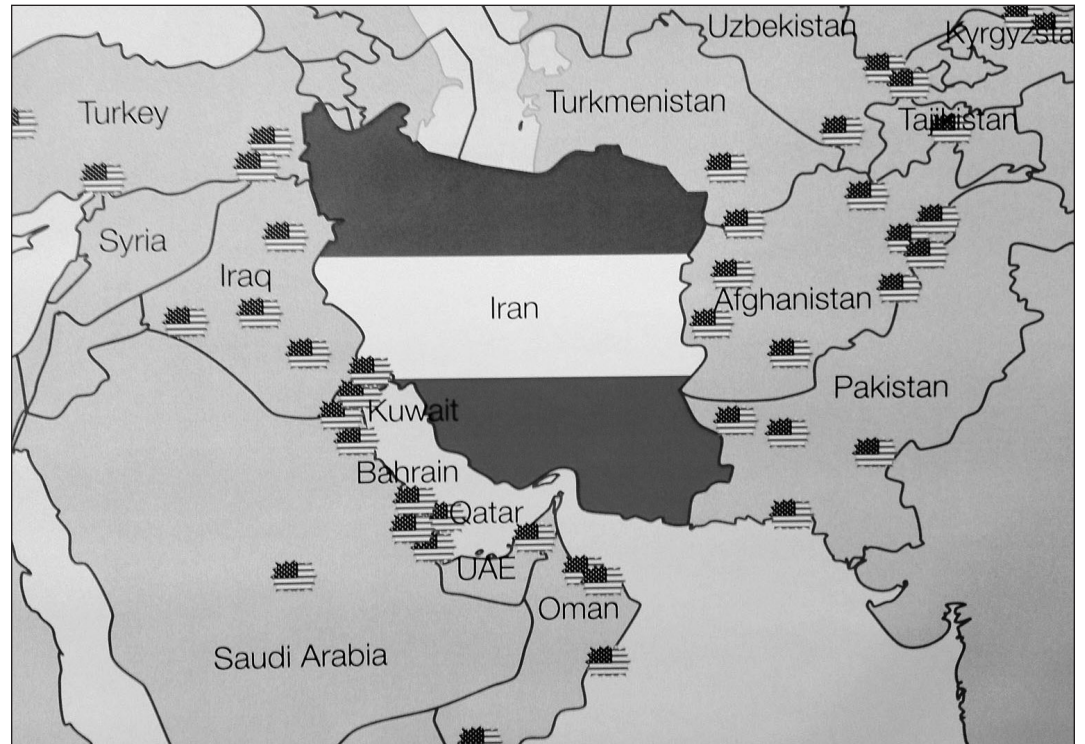


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## In Pursuit of Truth about the U.S. in the Middle East

This newsletter presents current issues of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East examined by two remarkable women. Each embarked on a decades-long, thoughtful journey toward truth that contrasted with what each had been conditioned to believe in her younger years, and resulted in justice and peace advocacy. Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich writes about Iran under U.S.-led sanctions during the devastating floods of this past spring and Alice Rothchild focuses on Palestine and the U.S.-enabled Israeli military occupation.



Who is threatening whom? U.S. military bases surround Iran. Source: Stopwar.org.uk

## Clueless on Iran

by Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich



*"Iran is now an old enemy, and has learned a lot about the U.S. But it is not clear how much the Americans, especially those in the current administration, have learned about Iran." – Christopher Dickey, "What the Last War with Iran Tells Us About the Next One," May 17, 2019*

clueless on Iran. American policy makers have an aversion to hearing and understanding the truth. It is the insistence on hearing the echo of their own thoughts, desires, and expectations voiced by none other than their handpicked, trusted Iran "experts" that demonstrably leads to foolishness – repeating the same mistake over and over with the hopes of a different outcome.

Although Iran is an enemy in America's imagination only, in truth, America is

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

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**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. W.A.M.M.'s purpose is to dismantle systems of militarism, economic exploitation and global oppression.

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## From Iranian Monarchist to Foreign Policy Analyst and Peace Advocate

*Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich is an Iranian-American analyst and peace advocate who was born in Tehran-Iran. Her stepfather, Shojaeddin Shafa, a prominent member of Iran's royal imperial court, was the deposed Shah's confidant, ghostwriter, and minister. It was not until after the 1978-79 Iranian revolution that she learned her paternal uncle, Col. Mehdi Sepahpour, commander of the Iranian air force (1951) had been a close friend of Dr. Mossadegh – the democratically elected prime minister of Iran who was overthrown in a CIA coup in 1953.*

*Like most of her cohorts, Soraya was totally oblivious to the truth and the facts which had left their mark on her life, that of her family, on her native*

*country, as well as her adopted country. Ignorant of the reality, Soraya was a dedicated monarchist. It was not until she began her studies here in the U.S. (1999), at a time when she was a loyal monarchist, that she learned of her native country's history and realized that she had been subjected to misinformation and censorship, to a false history rendering her reality a lie. This initiated her quest for truth, knowledge, justice, and peace.*

*Soraya has lived in the U.S. for many years now but she visits her family and friends in Iran twice a year. Upon return from her most recent trip to Iran (April–May 2019), she observed the effects of the disastrous floods in Iran which coincided with President Trump's "maximum pressure" tactics. Soraya recounts her experiences and observations.*

## Clueless on Iran

*continued from page 1*

**FOCUS ON IRAN** Reliance on disingenuous experts is Washington's downfall. For too long, Washington has relied on the "expertise" of some in the Iranian diaspora who have not visited Iran once since the revolution while other "expert" voices are dissidents whose interest lies in whispering sweet nothings in Washington's ears for personal satisfaction and/or personal gain. And of course, there are those whose livelihood – jobs – depend on the continuity of hostilities. So it is that decisions are made for us Americans, in our name, at our peril.

But our true downfall is embracing the narrative fed to us. And this we should refuse.

Inside Iran, it's clear that Iranians are diversified and complex. Briefly, to narrow it down crudely and as it relates to this narrative, there are some Iranians

who are opposed to their government and some who would sacrifice life and limb for the Islamic Republic. The latter are the vast albeit silent majority. Thanks to more recent American policies, the silent majority is growing by leaps and bounds. President Trump has managed to unite Iranians in a way not seen since the revolution of 40 years ago.

I arrived in Tehran a few days after the floods had begun (for more information about the floods, see: "Iran Floods March 2019 Ongoing" at reliefweb.com tinyurl.com/y599vbuz). Regrettably, I had not heard about the massive scope of the floods while still in my home state of California. From the moment I landed at the airport, I heard people speak about the floods and the victims of the disaster.

I have family and friends who live and farm in the Gorgan region, which is a six-hour drive away. It was hit hard by the floods. To my relief, their homes and farms had not been damaged; but untold number of others did not share





*Underwater: The city of Shiraz, a popular destination for Iranian visitors. Photo: Farsnews Agency*

my relief. In all, millions were affected throughout Iran. They were in for another rude awakening. America's sanctions prevented or slowed down aid from reaching them.

Every day during my stay in Iran, I was met with a barrage of questions. I did not have the answers Iranians wanted to hear. I witnessed despair turn to frustration, frustration to fear, fear into anger and defiance. It was a very emotional visit.

I noted that nothing had angered the Iranians more than to realize that the devastating floods in Iran had been left virtually unmentioned in the West/America. This was a harsh reality for those who were proponents of the Deal [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or Iran nuclear deal] and rapprochement with America. America's utter indifference hurt and angered them, an anger exasperated by the U.S. blockade of aid to the flood victims. Those who would sit and listen to Western satellite programs or follow "news" on their Instagram, those who had thought that the West cared for

Iranians (this group is my main contact in Iran, though I make every effort to meet Iranians of all stripes), woke up to the cruel reality.

And reality is cruel. I could see the destitution of the flood victims. The Iranian government was doing all it could to assist them. Aid was blocked, but propaganda and lies from overseas hastened in. Nonetheless, people in Iran were rushing aid to the victims: medicine, food, clothes. Many Iranians actually went to the flood areas. A family friend who was from the Shiraz province, a very popular destination for Iranians (and tourists) known for its beauty, poetry, and hospitality, showed pictures of Shirazis (people from Shiraz) holding up signs offering free room and board to those who were visiting the city and had been left stranded by the floods. Other family members and friends all mentioned someone they know who had gone to help.

I also saw the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander, Qasem Soleimani, go to the flooded

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## W.A.M.M. Committees

### Issues Committees:

- Book Club
- End War
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W.A.M.M. Peacemakers
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## Clueless on Iran

*continued from page 3*



areas. People were clinging to him as if to life. To them, his very presence was reassuring and gave them hope. This is the man the Trump administration calls a “terrorist.”\* But to Iranians, he is a savior. This insult did not go unnoticed. It cemented the bond between the people and the IRGC.

But not all victims were flood victims. On a visit to my aunt, whose son died of a stroke (after spending months in a coma), I still cannot remember if I felt more pain for her loss or for her frail sick body. She has had leukemia for years and had recently been getting treatment for osteoporosis. She was being treated with a medicine for osteoporosis that was administered once a year. This medicine came from America. I suppose her leukemia made her treatment more complicated. She told me that for now, given that no medicine was reaching her from America, she was relying on medicine that came from Switzerland and had to be administered every six months. She did not know how long this would be available.

She was not angry. Sick for years and having lost a son, she was submissive to whatever fate had in mind for her. I was not. I was angry and sick to my stomach. Cruelty up close and personal takes on new meaning. My heart broke and shattered into a thousand pieces. I left her not knowing if I would see her alive again.

On the heels of the floods and the assault on Iran’s elite IRGC, came the oil embargo – the siege. Reactions from ordinary Iranians varied. Some worried about much needed medicine



*Semnan Province, Iran. Unprecedented rainfall caused flooding that inflicted severe damage to parts of Iran’s infrastructure. Photo: Azar News*

which would no longer be available to them. Others worried about those stricken by floods who faced a bleak future in the face of the oil embargo. Some thought about the possibility of a full-out war. It is interesting to watch people be both defiant and afraid. A woman said: “Well, we have faced shortages before, and war (referring to the eight-year Iran-Iraq war). What can they do to us that we have not experienced already?”

What is important to bear in mind is that the effects of the floods and other disasters are ongoing. Yes, UNICEF sending tents and vaccines is a big help, but people need the infrastructure and agriculture that was swept away – they need to rebuild their homes, children need schools, and with the harsh, inhumane U.S. sanctions and the Europeans following U.S. orders, a huge number of Iranians are struggling to survive.

Iran has many natural resources – oil is one of them, but the U.S.-led sanctions are reducing Iran’s income to zero. It is this blockage of oil and other exports and the fact that Iran is cut off from SWIFT, the worldwide interbank financial system, that

prevents Iran from being able to trade with other countries.

How can there be a life for these flood victims? Though I am sure Iran is grateful for tents and vaccines, the world will forget, while the Iranian authorities will have a few million desperate people on their hands, under the threat of sanctions and war!

A friend’s husband who was a student in California in the early ’80s, now a successful, affluent businessman with a very keen mind living in Iran, was telling me how much he loved Americans. He had such fond memories of being a college student when he was here in the U.S. He told me he had been assigned an American family. They kept an eye on him, he spent holidays with them, and his fondest memories were the loving moments with this family whom he called every single Christmas until they passed away. He looked at me and said: “I think America has changed. Why?” He was puzzled and disappointed. I had no answer.

And then I met those who never trusted America. Washington’s actions had justified their suspicions. I did



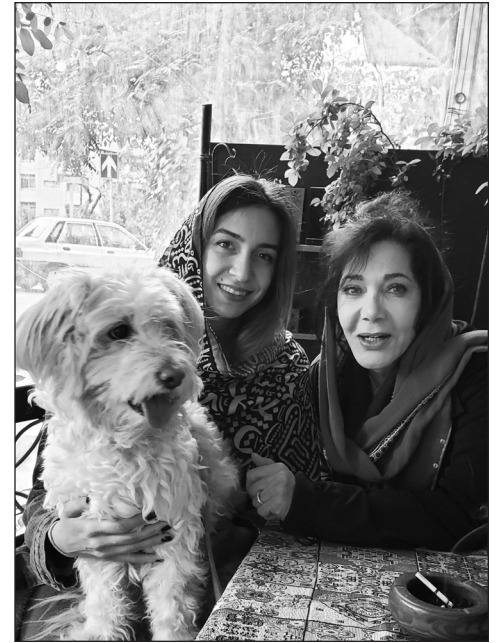
not have anything to say to them either. I could only listen and nod.

I left Iran with a heavy heart. Iran “experts” will tell us that Washington is doing the right thing. But Iran will never succumb, it will never be defeated. Iran had fought hard and sacrificed much for its independence. Although there are exceptions, the vast majority would not be weakened by hardship nor tempted with comfort. I was left with the impression that “maximum pressure” would only make Iranians more resolute to stand their ground. It is long past time that we Americans stop fooling ourselves into defeat and overcome our insanity of repeating the same senseless policies that have bankrupted

us morally and fiscally.

\*On April 8, 2019, Trump, in an unprecedented act of declaring a component of a foreign government a terrorist organization, announced the “designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.” [whitehouse.gov/briefing](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing). April 8, 2019.

*Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich is an independent foreign policy analyst. She holds a master’s in public diplomacy from the University of California Annenberg for Communication and USC’s School of International Relations. Her writings are published nationally and internationally, and she is a guest political commentator on radio and television.*



*Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich (right) with her niece while visiting Tehran this spring. The presence of Teddy, the dog, dispels the strange myth that such pets are not allowed in Iran.*

## Two-thirds of Iran Is Submerged under Water. What Does the U.S. Do? Wage Economic Warfare and Threaten Military Attacks.

A Chronology, 2019 Research/commentary by Mary Beaudoin

**FOCUS ON IRAN** **March 19** Flooding begins in the north of Iran after the country had been experiencing years of drought.

**March 26** Torrential rains hit most of the country. The amount of precipitation is unprecedented and causes flooding.

**April 1** 250,000 homes are destroyed as rivers overflow their banks. Flooding has spread from northern and central Iran to western and southwestern parts of the country. Iranian officials claim that the U.S.-imposed sanctions are hampering relief efforts.

**April 2** The flooding has affected at least 23 of Iran’s 31 provinces. Entire villages and cities are under water. Top U.S. diplomat, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, while offering words of condolence to the flood victims, seizes

the moment to publicly chastise Iranian officials for “emergency mismanagement and preparedness.”

**Zarif tweet** Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tweets that relief funds can’t get through due to illegal U.S. sanctions, and “Blocked equipment includes relief choppers: This isn’t just economic warfare; it’s economic TERRORISM.”

**April 6** Canada’s CBC interviews Kvah Modani, the former head of Iran’s Department of Environment and former vice president of the UN Environmental Assembly, now a professor at London’s Imperial College. He pleads for help for the Iranian people, “regardless of international politics.” Careful not to assign a single cause of the crisis, he cites multiple issues but several of them are related to the sanctions on Iran: During the long drought that Iran had

experienced prior to the torrential rains, “the country has been so paranoid about its food security and so concerned about food insecurity under international pressure that everything was about using water for additional crops and producing food.”

Reservoirs were developed where they shouldn’t have been, in river beds and valleys. He also attributes climate change to an exacerbation of the situation and says because of the sanctions, Iran lacks access to some forecast data.

**April 8** Two-thirds of Iran and 2,000 communities are underwater. DW, Germany’s public broadcast service, reports: “According to the Iranian Red Crescent, Washington’s sanctions on Tehran have blocked any foreign financial aid to enter the country.”

*continued on page 6*

## Iran is submerged

*continued from page 5*



Amir Hvasi, an AFP correspondent in Tehran, reports: “I would say that sanctions are indeed harming the [relief] efforts. First of all, if you ask your State Department, they would say that humanitarian aid is not sanctioned, and that is true in theory, but since banking transactions are basically impossible, no aid can possibly come in...”

The U.S. administration chooses this day to take the unprecedented step of designating the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) “a Foreign Terrorist Organization.” The IRGC is an official branch of the Iranian military, part of its government.

**April 19** UNICEF press release announces that nearly one million people and more than a thousand health facilities and a thousand schools have been affected by the massive floods. Disease-preventing vaccines arrive in the country. However, “the needs of flood-affected children in Iran are getting more acute by the day.”

**April 22** Trump announces that the U.S. will exert “maximum pressure” on Iran by taking action intended to bring Iran’s oil exports to zero and deny the country its principal source of revenue.

Pompeo announces that the U.S. will no longer grant waivers to allow the purchasing of Iran’s oil by its two largest oil customers, China and India, and its next largest customers – Japan, South Korea, and Turkey.

**May 2** Actual date that the waivers go into effect for the purchase of Iranian oil, “clearing the way for American economic penalties against all companies or financial institutions that continue to take part in transactions linked to buying Iranian oil,” as *The New York Times* states it.

**May 5** The U.S. Administration announces an “imminent,” though undefined, attack from Iran, which U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton says will be met with a response of “unrelenting force.”

**May 6** Pompeo makes a surprise visit to Iraq as a warning to Iran not to interfere with U.S. interests in the region.

**May 7** The U.S. sends an aircraft carrier strike group and bombers to the Persian Gulf.

**May 8** Responding to intense economic sanctions, Iran announces that in 60 days it will not abide by some commitments of the JCOP (the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or Iran Nuclear Deal) unless it receives the economic relief that it was promised for abiding by the deal, which it has done. Robert Kelley, a former UN

nuclear inspector who is now with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, said the commitments Iran was dropping had nothing to do with developing a nuclear bomb.

**May 12/13** Holes are blown by apparent explosions in several oil tankers in the Persian Gulf; two belong to Saudi Arabia and one to Norway. There is no proof of who is responsible. Suspicion abounds of a Gulf of Tonkin type incident in which Iran is to be blamed.

Surprise – it’s Pompeo again! This time, in his pop-up style of diplomacy, he crashes a Brussels meeting of the EU. Though the EU and European countries are compliant with the sanctions themselves, they warn Pompeo that an accident could inadvertently plunge the Gulf region into war, tell him that the U.S. needs to de-escalate.

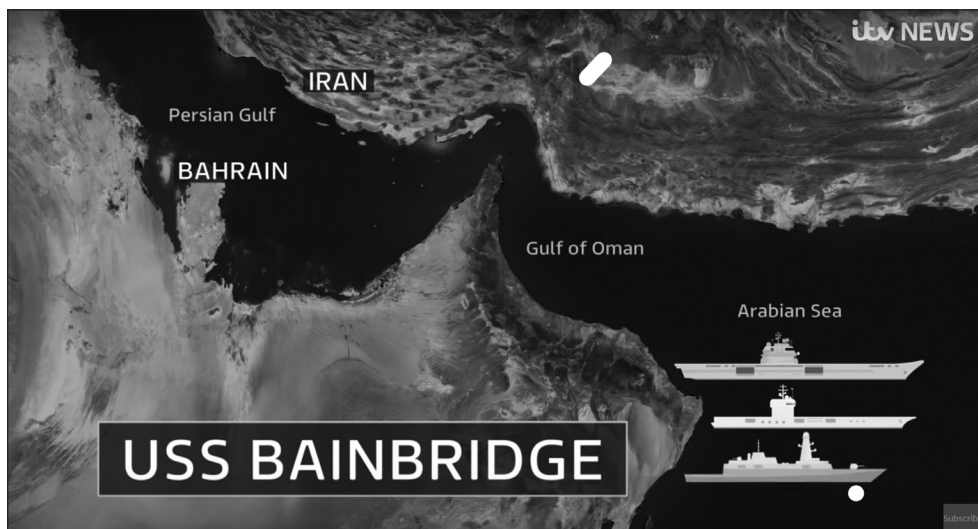
**May 15** The U.S. withdraws non-emergency personnel from its embassy in Iraq.

**May 19** There is a rocket attack within one mile of the U.S. embassy in Iraq. Iran-backed commanders disavow launching it. There is speculation again of a false flag attack and this is the reason the U.S. withdrew embassy personnel. Doing nothing to alleviate suspicions, Trump tweets, “If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran. Never threaten the U.S. again.”

**May 21** U.S. walks back verbal military threats against Iran, after hearing from the EU and Japan to rein it in. However, the EU and Japan continue compliance with the sanctions.

**May 22** The Pentagon announces it wants to send 10,000 additional troops to the Gulf region.

**May 25** Bypassing Congress and citing a “federal emergency,” and at the behest of war promoters, Trump-whisperers Pompeo and Bolton, the President approves \$8 billion in weapons sales to the Middle East – most of it to







Yemen-bombing countries, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

**May 29** Escalating further military threats, Trump orders 1,500 additional U.S. troops to the Gulf region.

Re-energized, National Security Advisor John Bolton, anxious for a casus belli, threatens Iran, reasserting his claim, without proof, that “it must be Iran” that attacked the Saudi oil tankers. He says he’s going to bring proof to the UN. Does he think that we haven’t forgotten Secretary of State Colin Powell’s 2003 command performance that led to the war on Iraq when Powell held up a model vial of anthrax before the Security Council?

Team Kushner arrives in Israel, supposedly to prep for a June meeting in Bahrain designed to provide Palestine with “the Deal of the Century,” which Palestinians have already rejected. Trump’s son-in-law, senior advisor Jared Kushner is accompanied by rabid anti-Iran hawk, Special U.S. Envoy Brian Hook, who issues more threats of military attacks on Iran. Speculation abounds that the team has an ulterior motive to gather Middle Eastern countries together to unite against Iran.

**May 30** *Press TV* updates a report stating that seven Iranian children suffering from a very painful condition called epidermolysis bullosa have died and the lives of 300 more are in danger because

Swedish supplies needed for treatment cannot enter Iran. The U.S. government blacklisted Iran’s Parsian Bank, which processed much of Iran’s humanitarian trade transactions.

In addition to being unable to obtain life-preserving medical supplies due to the sanctions, Iran experiences losses in livestock and agriculture due to the floods which will affect food supplies.

**June** Activists in the West who opposed U.S.-led sanctions on Iraq are deeply concerned, recalling that sanctions period (1990–2003). On the CBS program *60 Minutes*, May 12, 1996, journalist Leslie Stahl confronted Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in an interview: “We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima ... is the price worth it?” Albright responded, “I

think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it.”

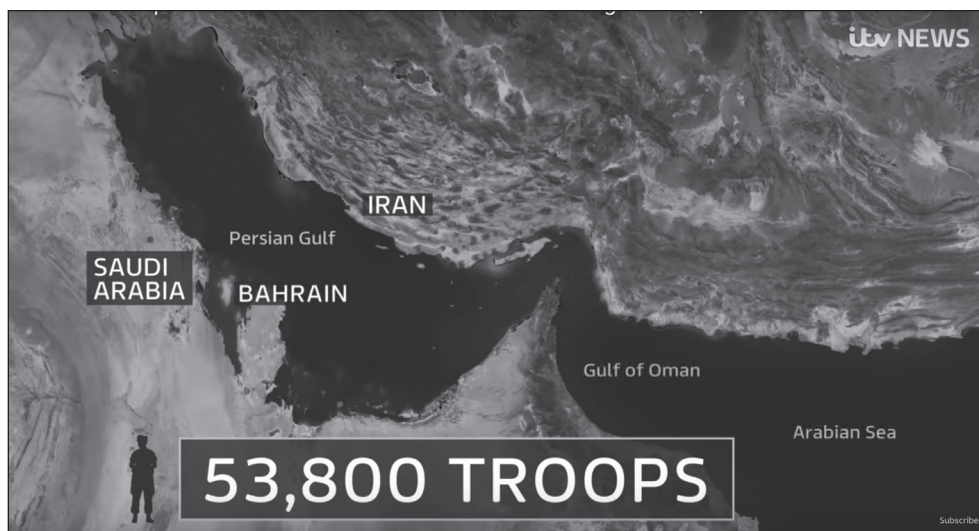
The terrifying truth is that dying as a result of sanctions on Iran has already begun.

A recent example of the lethality of sanctions is a study (April 2019) by Mark Weisbrot and Jeffrey Sachs of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., that revealed the deaths of 40,000 Venezuelans were the result of sanctions placed on that country since 2017.

Both political parties in Congress supported the sanctions on Iraq and Venezuela. Will Mike Pompeo, John Bolton, Brian Hook, Donald Trump, and any others in the Administration’s cast of hawks (yes, that’s the actual name for a group of the predator birds) be allowed to determine U.S. policy on Iran? It’s up to grassroots movements to act.

*Mary Beaudoin is a writer and the editor of the Women Against Military Madness Newsletter.*

**ACTION:** U.S. citizens are urged to take actions to oppose sanctions and war on Iran! Call your congressional representatives. Watch for actions organized by the peace and justice community.



# From “Progressive in Everything but Palestine (PEP)” to Condition Critical

*Newsletter staff summary of a talk by Alice Rothchild*



*Alice Rothchild is an activist, author, and documentary filmmaker who has for more than two decades been concerned with Palestine/Israel issues and the relationship to U.S. foreign policy. A retired ob-gyn physician who worked in health-care reform and women’s movements for years, she served on the staff of Beth Israel Hospital in Boston and Harvard Medical School. Her most recent book is Condition Critical: Life and Death in Israel/Palestine (Just World Books, 2017). More about her work, as well as her recent 2019 blogs, can be seen at [alicerothchild.com](http://alicerothchild.com).*

*Dr. Rothchild had just returned from Palestine/Israel this past spring when she gave a talk in Minneapolis entitled, “A Jewish American’s Journey: Heartbreak and Hope in Israel/Palestine.”*

Alice Rothchild described her journey as starting life “in a very traditional American Jewish place” in post-WWII Massachusetts, laden with messages of concern over anti-Semitism and alienation. Her grandparents were Orthodox. She attended Hebrew School. Her mother wrote a book, *Voices from the Holocaust*, and was “progressive in everything but Palestine.”

Rothchild became increasingly aware of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In the 1990s, she began an active search for narratives she had never heard – “not out of a desire to destroy Israel,” but because she felt personally responsible as a Jewish person. Between delivering babies and raising two children she read

everything she could find about colonialism, imperialism, and U.S. history. She said that it is painful for people to give up the narrative of the victim and the chosen people and that Israel’s most impressive characteristic is “ignoring what is near by” but it has become increasingly toxic for Israel and hard to defend war, colonialism, racism, and brutality. The ’67 Arab-Israeli war complicated the accepted narrative of Israel for her, as did what was done to the Palestinians in 1947. She could not ignore the fact that the founders of Israel included such men as Menachem Begin, leader of the Irgun, the para-military who “were basically terrorists” and drove the Palestinians out of their homes and homeland; Begin later became the Prime Minister of Israel.

Rothchild believed then, as now, that it is important for Jews who are U.S. citizens not to ignore the truth.

She began listening to dissenting voices in the Boston area and with them began a Palestinian/Jewish dialogue group (This eventually led to a number of grassroots, activist groups including Jewish Voice for Peace). They organized speakers and events but their own Jewish communities did not want to hear another narrative about Israel and Palestine and they were harshly criticized for introducing the subject.

The women in her dissenting group discovered that many of them were physicians as was she. Rothchild went with health and human rights delegations to the Middle East – three of those times to Gaza. She has made many trips to Palestine/Israel since.

Language is critical when talking about Palestine/Israel, she said. It is a myth that the Palestinian territories are “administered”; they are “occupied.” She cited some examples of injustice:

The new Jewish Nation State Law legitimizes the privilege of being Jewish over being Palestinian. It’s a weird dichotomy: At the same time the Jewish state claims it is supposed to be “ethnically pure,” there is an “other” it dislikes. It is a very racist society. In addition to Palestinians, it discriminates against Mizrahi Jews, who are of Arab or Muslim origin.

Three-fourths of Palestinians are forced to live below the poverty line and on a small percentage of the land. But their population is growing. As a result they decide to build homes, but their homes can be demolished by the state of Israel. Since the year 2000 more than 12,000 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli authorities, who abuse them. This has created an epidemic of bedwetting among traumatized children. Rothchild said that no amount of Israeli culture can erase this injustice.

Palestinians resist and have a belief in the Right of Return, enshrined in UN resolution 194, thus part of international law. [Al Nakba is a key issue for Palestinians – 750,000 were driven out of their homes and country when the state of Israel was founded in 1948. Today, the population of Palestinian refugees has grown to seven million, dispersed around the world.]





*Under Israeli military occupation, so many Palestinian children have been arrested and abused that trauma is epidemic.*

What are the obstacles to seeing the truth about Palestine and Israel?

There is massive guilt in the world over the victims of the Holocaust.

After 9/11, the fight against terrorism was significant in the Middle East. “Security” is the holy word. Our victimization gives us permission to do “whatever is necessary to survive.”

Any criticism of Israel is called “The New Antisemitism.”

International activists are not being let into Israel.

Israel is a very segregated society and mostly secular. There are Jewish-only buses and roads. 99% of Israeli schools are segregated through high school. People do not know what is happening on the other side of the wall between Israel and Palestine.

Propaganda – called hasbara in Hebrew – is working in the background to control messages about Israel in the U.S. and other countries. The powerful Israeli lobby organization AIPAC, working through front groups like StandWithUS, claims that there is rampant anti-Semitism on college campuses and that Jewish students feel “unsafe.” Activists who support Palestinian rights and

criticize Israeli policies are smeared. Another hasbara program, the Canary Mission, blacklists Palestinian rights advocates.

Israel’s political leadership has been moving to the right. Israel is a neo-liberal, militarized, segregated state.

Jews are leaving Israel.

Rothchild went on to say that Palestinians feel largely abandoned by the international community. The U.S.’s defunding of UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees) has caused people to die from diabetes and other treatable illnesses.

Hamas has long supported a truce with Israel, but this is largely unknown.

Rothchild praised non-violent Palestinian resistance movements: “I have a tremendous respect for the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement and the Great March of Return.”

She said that though BDS is a non-violent, Palestinian-advocacy campaign, inspired by the campaign that ended apartheid in South Africa, it is looked at by Israel as “a military challenge.” BDS is also opposed by Lawfare, which uses law for political or military reasons.

She lamented that more than 200 Gazans were killed and many more seriously injured during the first year of the Great March of Return. [There have been more deaths and injuries since March 29, 2019, when UNWRA reported 195 killed and 29,000 injured. “Great March of

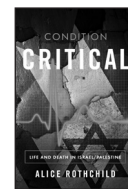
Return: Scores of People Killed and Injured Over One Year,” [tinyurl.com/y4pjjwhl](https://tinyurl.com/y4pjjwhl)]

Where does she find hope when resistance movements are met with such violence?

There is intersectionality in global movements involving issues of indigenous rights, civil rights, and justice, and against colonialism and ecological disaster. People are starting to question the Zionist myths about Israel. Youth are pushing back, refusing to accept false narratives about Palestine. Black Lives Matter, those resisting the occupation of Palestine, and Diaspora Jews are joining together. Groups like Jewish Voice for Peace and If Not Now are actively opposing the occupation.

**ACTION:** Urge your congressional representative to co-sponsor H.R. 2407, a bill introduced by Rep. Betty McCollum prohibiting U.S. taxpayer funding for the military detention of children. See the calendar [womenagainstmilitarymadness.org](https://womenagainstmilitarymadness.org) for vigil, talks, events, BDS.

**Further Resources:**



*Condition Critical: Life and Death in Israel/Palestine.* (Just World Books, 2017 by Alice Rothchild)



*Alice Rothchild*

[alicerothchild.com](https://alicerothchild.com) Current 2019, and archived blogs. Plus video: “Voices Across the Divide,” now available for streaming in educational institutions.

# PM: Be Aware of Death by Drone!

by Polly Mann

## FOCUS ON DRONES

We read and hear about drones and how they can improve the American ability to get what is needed in as little time as possible, with a minimum cost, etc. but we don't hear too much about how these unmanned flying machines are actually being used by the military and the CIA. A *New York Times* article of March, 2019 provides some misinformation via the Pentagon, which says that "American air strikes in Somalia have killed no civilians since President Trump accelerated attacks against Shabab militants there two years ago." (The reports don't distinguish drones among the air strikes.) Yet, Amnesty International investigated five of the more than 100 U.S. strikes carried out in Somalia since 2017 by drones and manned aircraft and found that at least 14 civilians were killed. But there have been many more since 9/11. People in the Somalia diaspora were hearing of deaths by drone from the time that G.W. Bush declared the "War on

Terror" – victims could be nomadic shepherds in the north and even innocent individuals sitting in a city internet café. In 2015, the news site, *The Intercept*, released "The Drone Papers," an investigative report by Jeremy Scahill, revealing drone strikes in targeted countries under Obama.\*

So the American public is misinformed, lied to, hoodwinked. Drones have been the military's weapons of choice for many years. A limited attempt to acknowledge civilian deaths was made in July, 2016, when President Barack Obama issued an order requiring the government to make annual reports on the civilian deaths in places like Yemen, the border region of Pakistan and North Africa. President Trump revoked that order. His National Security Council called it "superfluous" because Congress had passed a law that the Pentagon publicly report any civilians killed in its operations. But that law covered only the Pentagon, not the CIA drone campaign.

Under President Trump, airstrikes have surged in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Somalia.

The Afghan Peace Volunteers in Kabal began the Fly Kites, Not Drones activity because children in Afghan villages had stopped flying kites out of fear of being struck by a weaponized drone. Inspired by the Afghan youth, Women Against Military Madness developed a Fly Kites, Not Drones activity in which WAMM volunteers supply children with paper kites to decorate and fly.

*Polly Mann is a founding member of WAMM and regular contributor to the Women Against Military Madness Newsletter.*

\*Instead of lauding Scahill's source as patriotic paragons of integrity and halting drone strikes, in a travesty of justice, the U.S. government is trying to prosecute Scahill's sources.

**ACTION:** Demand that Congress provide accurate data regarding casualties from drones, and an immediate halt to drone warfare.

Invite "WAMM Fly Kites, Not Drones" activity to your community groups, camp, or family picnic. The WAMM Drone Committee will provide small, easily, flyable kites for children to decorate and keep (can serve as an art activity only, if no wind is blowing). A brief handout to the adults about the dangers of the U.S. military and CIA drone program will be given to adults. Call 612-827-5364 or email: [wamm@mtn.org](mailto:wamm@mtn.org)



U.S. drones have killed many innocent civilians. In response, WAMM created a "Fly Kites, Not Drones" program. See ACTION. Photo: Khaled Abdullah/Reuters



# 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 Peace/ Justice Vigils

### *Vigil to End War*

Every Wednesday, From 5:00 to 6:00 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.

## Immigrant Solidarity Vigils

### *Every Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.*

Stand up for justice, say NO to family separation, deportation. Gather weekly with signs (bring your own or use one provided) at ICE entrance closest to Fort Snelling light rail station. Vigil on Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis by the sign at the driveway entrance to ICE. Rain or shine. (If using GPS—6000 Minnehaha Ave, Minneapolis).

FFI: Call Pepper 612-701-6963 or Mary Lou 612-280-0354

### *Second Tuesday of every month, 7:30 a.m.*

Interfaith Coalition on Immigration (ICOM) gathers in solidarity with immigrants and refugees to achieve justice and stand up to systems of oppression. Vigil outside the Bishop Whipple Building, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling. St. Paul. FFI: Facebook: Interfaith Coalition on Immigration (ICOM).

## 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*

Episcopal Senior Living Complex, Welcome Center, 1860 University Avenue West, St. Paul. Call WAMM for meeting time and date.

FFI: Call 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*

Times/dates pending. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

### *Middle East*

Second Monday of every 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

### *People of Faith*

### *Peacemakers Breakfast*

Second and fourth Wednesdays of every month, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues So, Minneapolis. Peace with justice resource, support group. FFI: justviewpoint.org or call 612-333-4772.

### *Grandmothers for Peace*

First Wednesday of every month, 12:45 p.m. Edina Public Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Justice issue programs for understanding our role in changing systems.

FFI: Call 952-929-1566.

### *Pax Salons*

Call for details and location. Small donations accepted. FFI: Call 651-227-3228.

### *Middle East Peace Now*

Usually second or third Saturday. Refreshments 9:30 a.m. Program 10:00 a.m. Location varies. FFI: 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 612-827-5364 or email wamm@mtn.org.

### *The Indian System* July 8.

Dakota oral history of 1862 war, hangings of Dakota 38 Plus 2, removal of Dakota from Minnesota, cheating role of governors, Sibley and Ramsey. Filmmaker Sheldon Wolfchild leads discussion after.

*Suffragette* August 12. Story of early Women's Suffrage Movement in England. Radicalization, civil disobedience, imprisonment, hunger strikes when women couldn't win the vote. Meryl Streep as Emily Pankhurst. First in series about women activists.

Miss a movie? DVD collection is available for check-out in the WAMM office.

## Special Events

### *Update on Iran*

Monday, July 22, 7:00 p.m. Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich will provide an update via Skype. 4200 Cedar Ave. in Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

### *Critical Realignments and the Future of American Politics*

Every Church a Peace Church (ECAPC). Monday, July 15, 6:30 p.m. Potluck supper meeting. St. Albert the Great Catholic Church, 29th St. and 32nd Ave. So., Minneapolis. Talk by David Schultz, Hamline U political science/U of M Law School professor. FFI: 612-724-3643 or saintalbertthegreat.org.

### *Peacestock 2019: "Homeland Security or Empire Building?"*

Saturday, July 20. All day. Begins 9:00 a.m. Hobgoblin Music Barn, 920 Hwy 19 Boulevard, Red Wing. Keynotes: Ann Wright, worldwide peace activist. Danny Sjursen, U.S. Army Major, (Ret.), Writer: *Ghostriders of Baghdad; Truthdig*. Music. Food wagon. Tickets: door or advance: VFP, 4200 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis. FFI: Call Bill Hadedank 651-764-1866; Mike McDonald 651-986-9757 or vfpchapter27@gmail.com Sponsors: Veterans for Peace, Chapter 115, Red Wing; Chapter 27, Minneapolis.

Correction: U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer was misidentified as from Missouri in the Vol. 37 No. 2 newsletter article, "New Nuclear-Capable Bombers Coming Soon to a Location Near You." Rep. Blumenauer represents the Third Congressional District of Oregon.



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“There can be no compromise with war. It cannot be reformed or controlled; cannot be disciplined into decency or codified into common sense, for war is the slaughter of human beings, temporarily regarded as enemies, on as large a scale as possible.”  
 – Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress. She voted against WWI and cast the only vote against WWII.

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