

New Hampshire Peace Action News

SPRING

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From the Director

by Will Hopkins

Rabid Dogs: Let's Talk About ISIS.

"It seems to me," the chiropractor, who I had just met, said after learning what I did for work, "that ISIS is a bunch of rabid dogs, and the only way we will ever be safe, is if we destroy the whole lot of them." This is a dialogue I have found myself having over and over again for the past few months, and it is a hard one to have. Here are some of the realities of our situation.

#1. IS, ISIS, or ISIL, whatever you choose to call them, are a threat to American safety and security. I'm not saying they are a conventional military threat, but the next few years will, almost beyond a doubt, bring attacks on civilians, on American soil or abroad, orchestrated by folks involved with the Islamic State. Beyond that credibility, the media has done their job of getting Americans terrified- convincing folks that never has there been a scarier, more evil group than this. Across the political spectrum, folks are scared.

#2. Use of military force may have saved lives with the crisis with the Yazidi. ISIS is brutal, and kills civilians frequently- the peace movement is going to be interpreted at this stage primarily as knee-jerk pacifism, and disregarded. Further use of military force to attempt to deal with this problem is inevitable. Try as we might, the peace movement is not going to be able to take control of

the debate at this stage in the game.

#3. This situation is going to get worse- probably a lot worse. More civilians will die, ISIS will grow, and this problem is going to metastasize. This needs to be part of what we are saying.

In my albeit uni-polar view of things, the peace movement is not a bunch of silly naive pacifists- in fact we are the only ones who seem to make any sense at all. People by and large, especially when it comes to foreign policy, make decisions largely out of fear and in response to the American corporate media, which is in essence the most advanced, well researched, and far reaching propaganda system ever developed. If the media conglomerates who profit in a multitude of ways from American wars and military adventurism tell people that they are in danger, and that the only solution is to "eliminate" those who pose the threat- people will believe it. These decisions are made largely in a vacuum separate from any sense of historical consciousness, understanding of the psychology of those we are being encouraged to fear and hate. Get ready folks, the peace movement is going to lose. Military force is going to be employed to try to defeat ISIS, and the situation is going to get worse.

So what is the plan? A reasonable question. How do I talk to my neighbors and chiropractors about this in a way that will get through? Also reasonable- and I don't think you will get through today, but here is what I said to my chiropractor- planting seeds, so as things unfold maybe he will see sense.

#1. **Plant the seeds of a different way of understanding the problem.** Understand the history of the last twelve years or so. The Islamic State is finding recruits in droves, from the people who for the last decade or more, we have been bombing, shooting, maiming, and terrorizing. Those eight, nine, ten year old boys whose fathers and uncles I shot at, whose families I pointed guns at, whose homes our bombs destroyed eleven years ago when I was in Iraq- they are ISIS. Now they are angry young men looking for any way to fight the empire that destroyed their country.

American Military adventurism is the primary recruiting tool of the Islamic State- and it is a powerful one. The use of military force to combat ISIS is a "Hair of the Dog" strategy- one that will backfire. Say it now, and maybe folks will remember that you said it once it happens.

#2. **Emphasize that ISIS is a reaction to US activities.** Understand at least the history of the last two years. When Bashar Assad allegedly crossed President Obama's red line and used chemical weapons- the peace movement was narrowly able to stop a war with Syria- along with the help of right-wingers willing to do about anything to discredit the President- but the weapons manufacturers needed their cut, so congress went ahead and started arming and funding the opposition to Assad. Shortly thereafter, videos began appearing of that op-

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Nation's interventionist foreign policy favors those who profit from war - *continued*

war has become not only tolerable but profitable, and so there is no longer any great incentives to end it."

In his book *Pay Any Price*, Risen exposes how the old military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned about has evolved into what he calls the homeland security-industrial complex. This national security state, with an expansive view of the role of the military, has embraced the role of world policeman.

The quest is for total global military dominance. Whether via drones, special forces, manufactured proxy armies or the use of American troops, we apparently need to be ready to intervene in any hot spot in the world on a moment's notice. No place is off limits. The web of over 700 military installations and bases we maintain around the globe allows for the possibility of force projection almost anywhere.

To a disturbing degree our economy now depends on war. The livelihood of so many depends on producing and exporting arms and munitions. There are a massive constellation of roles related to our various military endeavors. As Risen points out, management consultants and academics make no money if they determine alleged threats are overblown.

We need to be asking how much is the desire for personal profit, status and power driving our policy?

Risen argues, and I would agree, our homeland security-industrial complex needs scary enemies to justify the expenditure of ridiculous sums of money. If Americans can be scared out of their wits, mountains of money can be thrown at contractors who fight, to use the words of George W. Bush, "the evildoers." That is essentially what we have done. We are a nation in search of an enemy.

This is an age-old story of greed and abuse of power. Those who stand to profit from endless war have a vested interest in the promotion and constant reinforcement of fear-mongering. The fact that there is some reality to the threat (ISIS) makes it harder to see our manipulation. No doubt ISIS is horrible, but it is the responsibility of Arab nations in the region to fight that battle.

By essentially deregulating national security, we opened the door to privatization and outsourcing. Risen's book is eye-opening about the outright theft of billions of dollars that the Bush administration lavished on Iraq. It is a story that has not been told enough. We really do not know where a ton of money transported to Iraq by the Bush administration disappeared to. Numerous contractors stuffed money away. Risen says that billions are still squirreled away in a bunker in Lebanon. If we still had enough investigative journalists, I would think they would be looking hard at that money trail.

Post-9/11 opportunists saw a chance to make a bundle as did all the policy intellectuals who supported the second Iraq War. Many of these same folks now support a ground war against ISIS. Considering their shameless track record, it is unbelievable that anyone would buy what they are selling, as if the Iraq War was not enough. These policy intellectuals, our latest incarnation of the best and the brightest, will not be doing the dying if we are foolish enough to go along with their future war plans.

Our role

I hope New Hampshire citizens ask the presidential candidates hard questions about the growth of the homeland security-industrial complex. Questions like: What is an appropriate national security strategy? What are the genuine threats to us in the United States and what are not? When is diplomacy more appropriate than military intervention? What is the strategic role for addressing poverty and

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From the Director, continued from page 1

position torturing and beheading Syrian army soldiers, even eating their organs raw- sound like anyone on the scene now? The funding and arming of Assad's opposition was the Islamic States basis for military equipment and power. Studies have shown that the vast majority of ISIS' equipment came from the US, we are still dumping arms and money in to oppose Assad- and guess what, reports are coming in that those weapons are ending up right in the hands of the Islamic State.

#3. Give productive ways to counter ISIS. We have not taken significant steps to economically work to oppose ISIS. The Islamic State is making a lot of money from oil and ancient antiquities on the black market, and we have done almost nothing to stop either. Stopping the flow of cash to ISIS may be the only step we can take that will have a positive impact at this point. For more information read Phyllis Bennis' "Six Steps Short of War to Beat ISIS"- you can find a summary of her six point strategy on page 5.

#4. Emphasize the importance of regional cooperation and peaceful relations with local stakeholders. We are going to need allies who are able to be effective socially and militarily- that means Muslim countries with interests counter to ISIS- those countries must fill certain criteria. They must not be viewed as American Proxies, they must be reliable partners who we can count on not to have back room deals with ISIS leaders, and they must have some credibility militarily. What countries are those? I'm so glad you asked. Saudi Arabia is definitely not on that list- they are both viewed as an American proxy AND are known to be in bed with ISIS, Jordan might be almost credible, but Egypt is still trying to find it's balance and develop its new identity post Arab Spring. Yemen is dealing with at least two civil wars, the Houthi uprising, and regional attacks from neighbors in response. Turkey could be on the list... maybe, except they have a reputation for genocide of the Kurds, who seem to be among the only people effectively fighting the Islamic State right now... Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, talk about your US proxies, and absolutely no credibility as military powers able to effectively block ISIS. Really, we are left with maybe Jordan, the Kurds, who have no nation of their own, but have been the cutting edge of anti-ISIS fighting, and... wait for it... Iran. That's right folks, there is more hinging on an agreement with Iran than meets the eye. Stopping a nuclear arms race, and keeping nuclear weapons out of the hands of the radical Shiite theocracy is not the whole picture. According to the reports from Iraqi's engaged in military action with ISIS, Iran has been their most important ally in the struggle. ISIS is a Sunni-wahhabist group and Iran has already played a very productive role in stopping their spread. But if we are going to keep people here safe from the inevitable blowback of over a decade of constant bombing, invasion, coercion, arming, funding, and slaughter- solving this problem will take some real "out of the box" diplomacy.

The peace movement is not going to have a place at the table, which has been set by war profiteers- but eventually, people will see that the hair of the dog approach is not going to work out and we will have the political will to reverse our course. Until then, all we can do is point out the obvious, and work hard for an Iran nuclear deal.

The thing about the peace movement is this: there are among us many absolute pacifists, but most of us just get the reality that most problems are not best solved by blowing up nations or sending in troops. Military force is usual-

ly not the right answer, it is expensive, ineffective, and creates blowback, which is what ISIS is. When it is clear that we do not have a significant voice in the narrative, as it seems the case is with this crisis, all we can do is calmly explain why we think the use of military force is going to backfire, when it does, as it inevitably will, maybe then folks will be ready to listen.

Will Hopkins is Director of NH Peace Action and NH Peace Action Education Fund.

The Peace Walker

Last year, when I decided to head off on my first peace walk with the Buddhist monks and other peace walkers through the mid-Atlantic states I considered myself on an adventure, something new. I had no idea where we would sleep or eat or even that I would be able to talk with them, seeing Japanese was not my language! I had never been in that position before; I had always been in control of those things.

I packed my sleeping bag and my clothes and jumped on a bus headed to Delaware. After 10 long hours I arrived, tired and hungry. Tim, the group's organizer, picked me up and informed me that there was a change of plans. Instead of staying in Delaware, we were going to Pennsylvania. I was already concerned about not being in control of my situation and this wasn't making it any better. When we finally arrived at our destination, the Buddhist monks and the rest of the peace walkers were there to meet me with open arms along with some people that were going to share their home so we could sleep. It was just like that for the whole trip. I was amazed by people's generosity. Some nights we slept in churches or Quaker meeting houses, other times total strangers shared their homes and their food with us. Often there were large gatherings at night with much discussion about the world's problems and other evenings would be spent at a dojo, the Buddhist sisters cooking meals and making paper cranes, all the time working on their letter to the Senators and Congress-people that they hoped to meet with in Washington, DC to share their concerns about nuclear weapons, as they have done for the past fourteen years.

Little did I know that these six people from the other side of the world were going to tell me their story and the more I listened and asked questions (some of them spoke limited English); the more their story became my story and other people's stories from here in America and elsewhere became interwoven. So closely interwoven that nuclear weapons, more US military bases being proposed in Okinawa (there are more than 23 on the tiny island), hunger, war and the environment, were all connected to a single word: peace.

This year, I couldn't wait for the Buddhist's arrival so that I could set out with them again. I am no longer on an adventure, I am a peace walker.

This year's Walk for a New Spring will end in New York at the Peace and Planet march on April 26th. This will be a major mobilization to end and prevent wars, increase peace and achieve economic and social justice. The website is peaceandplanet.org and newenglandpeacepagoda.org for Buddhist monks Walk for a New Spring. Join us.

Art Desmarais is a member of NH Peace Action and lives in Northwood.

Governing Under the Influence

By Arnie Alpert

Congressman Buck McKeon's list of campaign contributors looks like a "Who's Who" – or perhaps a "What's What" – of companies that sell weapons to the Pentagon. The top five on his all-time list: Lockheed-Martin, Northrup Grumman, General Atomics, General Dynamics, and Boeing, which between them donated almost \$700,000 to his campaigns from 1991 to 2014, the years tracked by the Center for Responsive Politics.

Representative McKeon, whose southern California district included several military bases and numerous manufacturing facilities for the weapons contractors, was a champion for ever higher levels of military spending and for armed intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. From 2011 to 2015, he chaired the House Armed Services Committee, whose decisions set priorities for military spending. It's no surprise that the corporations that take in billions each year from the Pentagon were his best buddies.

The cozy relationship between corporations that profit from militarism and the lawmakers who authorize funds for US warmaking is a prominent feature of what President Dwight Eisenhower famously called the "military industrial complex."

Eisenhower introduced the term into the political vocabulary in a 1961 speech in which he described the rise of "a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions."

"This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience," declared the former five-star general. "The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government."

The president went on to warn, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist." Fifty-four years later, the "conjunction" between arms and politics is no longer new, but Eisenhower's warning rings truer than ever.

That's why the American Friends Service Committee is calling attention to "Governing Under the Influence," or GUI. By activating volunteers to raise issues with the would-be presidents roaming around New Hampshire and Iowa, AFSC hopes to drive concerns about excessive corporate influence over government policy – for which the military-industrial-complex continues to be a stark example – into the heart of the country's political discourse. Already AFSC has trained hundreds of volunteers to be "bird dogs," citizen activists who will put candidates on the spot with well-crafted questions that also raise awareness and get attention from reporters covering the campaign. The GUI project has another branch at AFSC's office in Des Moines, Iowa, and a dynamic website that keeps up-to-date calendars of candidate appearances, publishes reports of encounters with candidates, and provides ongoing analysis of the GUI syndrome.

Military policy analyst William Hartung, who visited New Hampshire on a 4-day speaking tour sponsored by AFSC, NH Peace Action, and other groups, used Rep. McKeon's campaign fundraising as an example of GUI. In the post-Citizens United era of Super PACs and clandestine gifts to political groups, some of the techniques military contractors use to reward their political friends are "almost quaint," Hartung said. But there's a lot more to it than campaign cash, he explained at talks in Durham, Henniker, Keene, Concord, Canterbury, and Manchester.

First, there are lobbyists, hundreds of them, compared to a mere handful for organizations like Peace Action that advocate for

lower levels of military spending. The [Center for Responsive Politics](#), which tracks lobbying as well as campaign spending, says that "defense" lobbyists spent more than \$126 million last year, an amount that doesn't include activities for which Washington-based power brokers do not have to report.

According to the Center, 533 out of 866 registered lobbyists for "defense" companies were "revolvers," i.e. individuals who have gone through the "revolving door" between government service and employment as lobbyists.

Take [Lockheed Martin](#), the number one military contractor, as an example. It contracted with 21 firms last year on top of its own staff lobbyists to work Washington connections. All told Lockheed has 96 lobbyists, two-thirds of whom have gone through the revolving door, among them former Senators Alphonse D'Amato, John Breaux, and Trent Lott, and former Congressmen Bart Stupak and Sonny Callahan. In 2014, Lockheed spent half a million dollars on the services of the Podesta Group, headed by Tony Podesta and his brother John, who is in the news this week as the chairman of Hillary Clinton's officialy launched presidential campaign.

It's not just members of Congress and their staff. A Boston Globe [article](#) by Bryan Bender reported, "From 2004 through 2008, 80 percent of retiring three- and four-star officers went to work as consultants or defense executives, according to the Globe analysis. That compares with less than 50 percent who followed that path a decade earlier, from 1994 to 1998." Bender [reported](#) that the Pentagon even sponsors seminars to teach retiring senior officers how to move from military service to a lucrative career with a military contractor.

"In some years, the move from general staff to industry is a virtual clean sweep. Thirty-four out of 39 three- and four-star generals and admirals who retired in 2007 are now working in defense roles — nearly 90 percent," Bender found. Many of them also volunteer on Pentagon advisory committees.

And the revolving door doesn't just lead to K Street lobbying firms; it also opens the way to "think tanks" funded by the weapons makers and media institutions that cover politics.

The impact of the contributions and the lobbying can be seen in a military budget in the vicinity of a trillion dollars a year if you add up the regular Defense Department appropriation, add the special war budget (now known as "Overseas Contingency Operations"), the Department of Energy's allocation for nuclear weapons, the "homeland security" budget, the secret budgets of the CIA and NSA, and the expense of past wars. "There's a huge imbalance between what we spend on the military and what we spend on diplomacy," Hartung said.

The Pentagon has so much money and so many weapons its 1.5 million employees can't even keep track of it, Hartung explained. That the agency can't pass an audit is a fact that might even get attention from fiscal conservatives among the presidential contenders. The fact that the Pentagon "is unable to account for more than \$500 million in U.S. military aid given to Yemen," as the Washington Post [reported](#) in March, ought to get the attention of anyone with a shred of common sense.

Hartung also points to overseas weapons sales as another example of government on the side of the arms industry, which recently succeeded in moving arms sales licensing from the State Department to the Commerce Department. (Lockheed Martin's chief executive recently [assured](#) investors they don't have to worry about peace breaking out if the USA and Iran ink a nucle-

ar weapons agreement. There's enough "volatility" in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region to maintain a high demand for Lockheed's products, she said.)

And then there's what Hartung calls "party favors," little gestures the weapons makers make for their friends. When Rep. John Murtha headed the Armed Services Committee, Lockheed, Boeing, Northrup Grumman, and General Dynamics spread their largess to the Johnstown PA symphony orchestra, where Murtha's wife was a major supporter. "During the first six months of 2008, lobbyists, corporations and interest groups gave approximately \$13 million to charities and nonprofit organizations in honor of more than 200 members of the House and Senate," the *NY Times* [reported](#).

You can call it the military industrial complex, you can call it systemic corruption, you can call it GUI. Whatever you call it, catering to the self-interest of giant corporations that profit from war is no way to run a government that is supposed to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

That brings us back to Buck McKeon, who used to run the Armed Services Committee. When his wife, Patricia Kunz McKeon, ran for the California Assembly in 2012, she of course needed to raise money for her campaign.

Although her [pet issue](#) was repeal of the state's plastic bag tax, not arming the National Guard with missiles, military contractors were at her side with [\\$34,000](#) in campaign contributions. Lockheed Martin kicked in \$3000, and while she didn't win, they no doubt saw the expense as a good investment in their alliance with her powerful husband.

Buck McKeon retired from Congress last year, but he's apparently not headed for a quiet retirement. Instead, he has opened a consulting firm in Washington. According to a press release sent out from The McKeon Group in February, "Mr. McKeon looks forward to using his background and experience to provide strategic advice to clients, while continuing to be outspoken for a strong national defense." The Center for Public Integrity [reports](#) he's already lined up a contract with Aerojet Rocketdyne, "a world-recognized aerospace and defense leader providing propulsion and energetics to the space, missile defense, strategic, tactical missile and armaments areas in support of domestic and international markets."

Sounding his prophetic warning about the perilous alliance between the armaments industry and the government, President Eisenhower said, "We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted." He also called for the awakening of "an alert and knowledgeable citizenry" to keep the government on the side of peace. That's us. Get in touch with AFSC or NH Peace Action to get involved.

Arnie Alpert is Co-Director of the American Friends Service Committee - NH Program

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15 Years Later, Granny D's Long Walk for Democracy Continues by Dan Weeks

Fifteen years ago, a 90-year-old woman with arthritis and emphysema completed a historic march on Washington. Her cause was as old, and as bold, as the republic she loved: restoring American self-governance so that people of every age, race, class and creed could have their voices heard in Washington. She hailed from Dublin, N.H., and her name was Granny D.

Doris "Granny D" Haddock stood less than five feet tall but she was a giant of a citizen. With neither cash nor connections, position nor political power, the former shoe factory worker and great-grandmother of 16 set out to right a gaping moral wrong in the life of her nation. That wrong, she surmised, was nothing less than the systematic "selling of our government from under us" until the promise of American democracy had devolved into "government of, by, and for the wealthy elite."



For 14 tiresome months, Granny D trudged 3,200 miles through sun, rain and snow from California to Washington to rouse the American public to the cause of campaign finance reform. By her efforts, and those of countless others who followed in her stead, she helped persuade a recalcitrant Congress to pass the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, banning unlimited contributions and special interest spending

on elections – until the Roberts Court.

Five years after the Supreme Court eviscerated decades worth of campaign finance regulations in *Citizens United v. FEC*, American democracy is awash in special interest money. A tiny fraction of the wealthiest 1 percent now provides the lion's share of campaign contributions, spending billions of dollars to influence who can run for public office and what they stand for once they are elected.

The effects of *Citizens United* are keenly felt at every level of government, from city hall to the president of the United States.

For well-meaning presidential candidates and members of Congress, the pursuit of campaign cash has become an all-consuming occupation with little hope of escape under the current system. As one congressman recently confessed, between 50 and 75 percent of a member's time is devoted to raising money for reelection.

In return for the millions of dollars that wealthy individuals and industries invest in political campaigns, the donors expect – and too often receive – billions of dollars in special subsidies, tax breaks and government contracts at the public's expense. Empirical studies find that political influence may in fact be the best investment money can buy – for those who have the means.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of Americans who are unable to fund campaigns exert a near-zero, statistically insignificant im-

pact on policymaking whenever their preferences diverge from the moneyed elite.

Put differently, ordinary Americans seeking livable wages, affordable prescriptions, high-quality education or an end to catastrophic climate change are consigned to second-class status in Washington, D.C.

Taking their cue from Granny D, a bipartisan band of citizens here in New Hampshire is taking to the streets in a peaceful New Hampshire Rebellion against big money in politics. In January, they walked over 300 miles – 12,041 miles combined – from all four corners of the state, converging on Concord to emphatically declare that democracy is not for sale.

Some 500 Granite Staters, ranging in age from 15 to 85, joined the frigid walk. The state and national media took note.

With the presidential primaries already underway in New Hampshire and Iowa, the New Hampshire Rebellion and allied groups are challenging every presidential candidate to commit to bipartisan campaign finance reform, beginning with a small donor system of citizen-funded elections. Their goal is nothing less than the election of a president and Congress in 2016 who will make ending systemic corruption their highest priority on day one.

Never before in our country's storied past have we overcome the moral challenges of the day – from slavery to women's suffrage to civil rights – because politicians inside Washington led the way. Rather, change has always come when the citizens themselves stepped forward, out of love for their country and the ideals that make it great.

Daniel Weeks is executive director of Open Democracy, the nonpartisan organization founded by Granny D and based in Concord, NH.

**"Think of the millions of young men who died fighting for democracy. We spit on their graves when we let democracy slip away into the sewer of illegal money."
Doris "Granny D" Haddock, 1910-2010.**

Nation's interventionist foreign policy favors those who profit from war - continued from page 3

climate change? Are there other ways to oppose ISIS than the use of American troops? As I mentioned, how about the role and responsibility of other Arab countries to challenge ISIS?

A powerful argument can be made for a more modest, less expensive foreign policy based on an awareness of the limits of our power. I admit to a very dark view of the results of our frequently interventionist foreign policy over the last 50 years. Both parties seem oblivious to these awful results and blindly blunder forward.

Maybe the most positive thing that could be said is that we avoided a nuclear war with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. That could easily have happened with outcomes too catastrophic to contemplate.

We did not reap any peace dividend after the Soviet Union collapsed. The demise of the Russian threat almost seamlessly led to the War on Terror, with new justifications for military spending.

I cannot hope to catalogue all the bad things that came out of our interventions in Vietnam and the more recent Iraq War. If we were going to make a list, I would include: so many needless deaths, devastating injuries, including blown off body parts, traumatic brain injuries and PTSD, Agent Orange, napalm, tiger cages, return of torture, warrantless wiretaps, rendition and domestic surveillance of everyone. And that is right off the top.

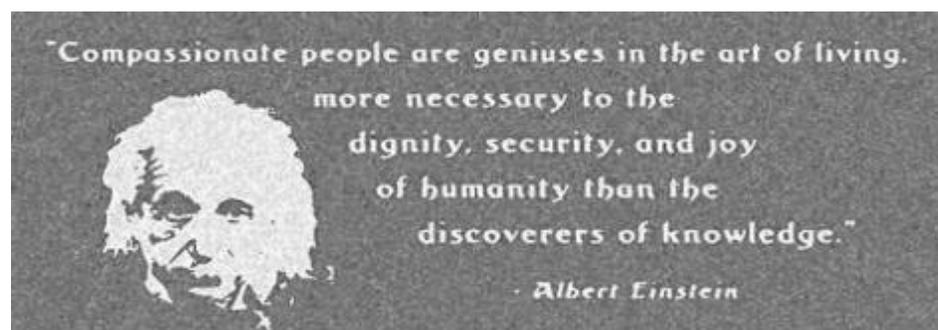
Generally speaking, we have lowered the bar on good reasons to go to war.

Among the candidates, with the exception of Sen. Bernie Sanders (who is not yet a candidate), no one is even talking about our excessive militarism. No one is asking if the growth of the homeland security-industrial complex poses any dangers for democracy. I do not see candidates saying caution is better than military adventurism.

Since my argument could be misunderstood or deliberately misconstrued, I did want to say that in no way am I criticizing our soldiers who have served honorably and bravely in Vietnam, Iraq and other war zones. Their sacrifices have been noble. My argument is directed at the architects of policies and the opportunists who profit from war. Too often they have sent soldiers to die for no good reason.

As the custodians of the still important first-in-the-nation primary, let's make our questions count. Maybe our questions and the candidates' answers can make some news.

Jonathan P. Baird of Wilmot is an administrative law judge. His column reflects his own views and not those of his employer, the Social Security Administration.



Tom Cotton's Iran Letter and the Logan Act

by Art Brennan

The other day I read a letter to the "Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran." (Links to the Senators' letter, the Iranian response and the Logan Act of 1799 are listed at the end of this Op-Ed.) The letter was apparently drafted by Republican Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas. A quick reading of the pathetic letter (which may be more than it deserves) confirms that it is aimed at undermining the ongoing talks between the US and Iran. The letter consists of two points with seventh grade descriptions of the terms, functions and limitations of the President and the Senate in international negotiations and agreements. The third point cautions Iranian leaders that they should be aware that any executive agreement resulting from talks could be revoked by the next president "with the stroke of a pen."

The letter goes on to warn Iran that President Obama will be leaving office in January of 2017, "while most of us will remain in office well beyond then--perhaps decades." Of course, the purpose of the US and Iranian talks is to reach an agreement on nuclear policies and thereby prevent further strife and even war between our countries and in the region. The UK, France, Russia, China and Germany are also at the table in Switzerland. If the talks result in a reasonable agreement then the world will be a safer place. 47 US Senators, all Republicans, signed Senator Cotton's letter. I'm from New Hampshire and based on NH Senator Kelly Ayotte's reputation, and the policies of the senior Republican Senators she follows, I assumed that I would find her signature on the letter. And sure enough, her name was wedged between Senator Mike Lee of Utah and Senator Dean Heller of Nevada--whoever they are.

Unfortunately, Senator Ayotte is nothing if not predictable in her official right-wing fear mongering and militarism. Prior instances of Senator Ayotte's actions include her "strong stand" against releasing "any" prisoners from Guantanamo; her support for a bill to legalize "enhanced interrogation (torture)," and her endless tub thumping enthusiasm for that US gulag in Cuba. These things and her support for US military intervention as a routine tool of US foreign policy are sad evidence of where US Constitutional law, the rule of law, and justice and humanity seem to rank on Senator Ayotte's official scale of priorities.

Some people, mostly Democrats, have suggested that the Republican Senators' letter to the government of Iran is illegal and in direct violation of the Logan Act of 1799. In fact, over its 216 years of existence, the Logan Act has been more honored in its breach than in its observance. Nevertheless, the elements of the Act establish a crime for which a US citizen could be imprisoned for up to three years. A jury instruction on the elements of the offense might look something like this.

In order to find the defendant guilty of the crime charged, the United States must prove beyond a rea-

sonable doubt that the US citizen:

- (1) Acted without the authority of the United States;
- (2) Carried on correspondence with a foreign government;
- (3) With the intent to influence the foreign government;
- (4) In relation to any disputes or controversies between the foreign government and the United States;
- (5) Or to defeat the measures of the United States; and
- (6) Did so intentionally.

If the 47 Republican senators were charged under the Act, their defenses would be numerous and interesting. The words of the Act are vague and there are serious questions about whether the Logan Act is constitutional in part or constitutional at all. For example, how does the US prove that a Senator signing the letter is "acting without the authority of the United States?" Or, doesn't the Act violate a citizen's rights under the First Amendment?

The reality of the US talks with Iran is that we probably needn't worry too much about the letter or the Logan Act. The Iranian foreign Minister's response to the Senators' letter shows a deeper understanding of the nuances of US foreign policy negotiations and international agreements under the US Constitution than the Senators' strange and condescending words of advice in its "Open Letter to the Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Further, in responding to the Republican Senators' letter the government of Iran has intentionally and effectively created the impression that the Republican Senators' letter is an amusing sort of US sideshow, albeit serious evidence that Republican Senators seem to view peace as an "existential threat." Poking fun at the letter is fair enough; the letter reads like a script from an old cowboy Western. If you read the letter out loud, it sounds like the stereotypical US cavalry character's bloviated speech about "the wisdom of the Great White Father" to the Native American characters who always seemed wiser, more patient, smarter, and more articulate than any other characters in the TV show.

Further, the chances of the US Attorney General authorizing prosecution of US Senators under the Logan Act are slim to none. Can anyone imagine The Department of Justice (DOJ) prosecuting 47 US Senators for sending such a patently ridiculous letter? The DOJ doesn't even have the moral courage to bring criminal charges against the high ranking perpetrators of US war crimes and torture from the Bush Administration. Admittedly, using the Logan Act against individual US citizens might be a different story. The US government under Bush and Obama is famous for prosecuting young, low ranking US soldiers, and US citizens of conscience.

The Obama Administration continues to persecute

and prosecute US citizens under the very seldom used US Espionage Act of 1917. His aim is to severely punish whistleblowers and journalists and thereby terrorize potential US truth tellers into keeping a lid of secrecy on US war crimes, unconstitutional surveillance, and US government corruption, negligence and recklessness.

In conclusion, perhaps the talks between the US and Iran will work out and an agreement can be reached for the benefit of both countries and the world. It seems that the Republican Senators' letter is an embarrassing joke on the senators that signed it. Unfortunately the aggressive militaristic policies of its signers, including NH Senator Kelly Ayotte, are a great and continuing danger to the health and safety of the people of the US and to innocent people living wherever "US interests" raises its ugly and aggressive head.

Full text of Senators' Letter @ <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2015/03/09/text-of-gop-senators-letter-to-iran-leaders-on-nuclear-talks/>

The Logan Act @ <http://law.jrank.org/pages/8357/Logan-Act.html>

<http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2015/mar/09/part-ii-iran-responds-gop-letter>

Arthur Brennan is a former Associates Superior Court Judge in New Hampshire; Deputy Director of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) as well as Director of the Office of Accountability & Transparency. He lives in Weare with his wife Nancy.

A Patriotic Crime

by John Lamperti

Crime: an action or omission that constitutes an offense that may be prosecuted by the state and is punishable by law

Criminal: a person who has committed a crime

Patriot: a person who vigorously supports their country...

Many of the greatest heroes of United States history were criminals. The people who helped slaves to escape were all criminals. Harriet Tubman, herself born a slave, escaped to become the most successful “conductor” on the underground railroad. Always at risk of horrible punishment if captured, she made 13 trips back into slave territory to help some 70 others escape. She was never detected, and did not lose a “passenger” on any of her rescue expeditions. This was a serious criminal!

Closer to our time, thousands fought non-violently in the civil rights movement: Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, the freedom riders, the lunch counter sit-ins, so many more whose names we don’t know, all criminals in some way. All the war resisters and draft refusers, the Berrigan brothers and other draft board raiders – also criminals, people who deliberately and non-violently broke the law of the land to promote a better world.

I have a special regard for those whose crime was uncovering hidden truth that we as citizens needed to know. Whistle-blowers like Daniel Ellsberg, Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden paid a high price to expose dirty secrets about hidden policy disasters and the misdeeds of public officials who led the country astray.

The criminals described in Betty Medsger’s *The Burglary* (New York: Knopf, 2014) performed a marvelous public service of just this sort. The book is subtitled *The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover’s Secret FBI*, and it tells how eight patriotic thieves broke into the district FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania on the night of March 8, 1971. They took all the office’s files and analyzed them; those files contained ample proof that the FBI was less a law enforcement agency than a political secret police. The primary enemy for Hoover’s FBI was not actual crime so much as political and social movements against war and injustice. Although that Media office was a backwater, its files provided the “Citizens’ Committee to Investigate the FBI” with the evidence they were looking for. The burglars set out to tell the story to American people, sending copies of FBI documents to people they respected, especially to journalists including Medsger herself who was then at the *Washington Post*. The effect was even more than they had hoped.

Antiwar activists, especially in the Philadelphia area, had felt sure that their work and their lives were spied on and harassed. The first document Medsger read confirmed those suspicions. It told agents to interview more dissenters since “it will enhance the paranoia endemic in these circles and will further serve to get the point across that there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox.” Really? The job of FBI agents was to “enhance paranoia”? It seemed that criminal activity was not their worry; disrupting the opposition to the Vietnam war was the agency’s goal. Other documents showed that Black students and civil rights groups were particular targets; the campaign against Martin Luther King was especially vile. The FBI itself, and the U.S. Attorney General, confirmed the authenticity of the documents by urging anyone receiving them not to publish – falsely invoking “national security.” The *Post*’s top management conferred with their lawyers and decided that the story should be told, and the first article, entitled “Stolen Documents Describe FBI Surveillance Activities,” appeared on March 24, 1971.

As the Media materials became known, the first cracks appeared in the FBI’s polished façade. Members of Congress who had always been subservient to J. Edgar Hoover now called for an investigation of the FBI. Editorials in major newspapers also took

up that cause. Although the surface was barely scratched, the FBI’s lawlessness was becoming clear – and even conservative Americans did not like what they were seeing.

Hoover, of course, was mightily offended that his personal empire had been penetrated, and ordered an intense and massive hunt for the burglars. Over two hundred agents focused on the MEDBURG case as it was called, and their chief expected that the thieves would be quickly caught and the precious files recovered. He was wrong. The FBI’s prime suspect was a prominent antiwar activist who had nothing to do with the break-in. The true burglars were never caught, and surfaced, safely, only last year.

Hoover used the blackmail potential of FBI files to try to deflect any official inquiry, with some initial success. But his near-absolute power, and his life, were coming to the end. J. Edgar Hoover died in May, 1972, and the long overdue Congressional investigation, led by Senator Frank Church, began its work in 1975. Some secrets of Hoover’s thought police came to light for the first time in half a century in those hearings – which would not have happened without the Media revelations. The extent of the FBI’s criminality, and of J. Edgar Hoover’s hypocrisy, were astonishing.

And who were the patriotic burglars Hoover’s men could not find? Their leader, the one who conceived the operation and recruited the others, was someone I knew! William Davidon taught physics and mathematics at Haverford College where I’d been a student twenty years earlier. (He joined the faculty after my time there, and our paths crossed elsewhere.) Bill was a dedicated and brave opponent of the war, but the FBI investigators convinced themselves that someone else was the Media mastermind. Two other members of the “Citizens’ Commission” were a married couple with three young children, and they worried a lot about their children’s futures if they went to prison. (Trusted family members were ready to take over.) Still others were single, and younger. They agreed not to meet after the job was finished, and they did not provide the FBI with the informers it relied on. A perfect crime.

The FBI closed its MEDBURG investigation in 1976; the burglars were out of danger although of course they couldn’t be sure of that. By then Hoover’s successor as director, Clarence Kelly, once a Hoover traditionalist and defender, had reconsidered what the FBI had done and become. In May 1976 Kelly actually apologized to the American people: “Some of those [FBI] activities were clearly wrong and quite indefensible. We most certainly must never allow them to be repeated.”

Betty Medsger’s marvelous book looks imposing (it’s 544 pages plus notes), but it’s engrossing and important. The book tells several stories. Beside the burglary itself, there is an account of the “Camden 28” draft board raid and subsequent trial, which turned into an emotional victory for the anti-war movement and a surprising defeat for J. Edgar Hoover. The history of the FBI is sketched, from Hoover’s first days as director through the unchallenged growth of his secret empire up to 1971. And tales of the pre- and post-Media lives of some of the burglars are fascinating and moving.

Finally, there is the post-Media and post-Hoover history of the FBI itself. “McCarthyism” did not die with Joe McCarthy, and that’s also true of the secret political police mentality exemplified by J. Edgar Hoover. The Church commit-

tee’s work was both praised and attacked; some reforms were enacted, but basic problems remained. During Ronald Reagan’s presidency the FBI massively investigated opponents of his war policies in Central America, and as Medsger writes “The ghost of Hoover seemed to be in charge.” Since then the bureau has had a checkered past, especially after 9/11. The FBI has boasted of solving “terrorism” cases largely created by provocateurs, and it displayed amazing incompetence regarding the Boston Marathon bombings. There are also brand new threats to freedom such as massive NSA surveillance. Still, today the American people also have better tools with which to fight back. And as some famous person said, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”

The story of the Media burglars is important to me because the people involved lived lives broadly similar to my own, and they risked losing their freedom and the white, middle-class advantages we share. As much as I admire Harriet Tubman, I cannot imagine myself in her place. But Bill Davidon was a respectable professor of physics and mathematics at my old college. Like me he taught those subjects and also tried to contribute some research of his own. And look what else he did for our country! I can almost imagine Bill asking me – as he did those others – “What would you think of burglarizing an FBI office?” Would I have had the guts to take part? It didn’t happen, and I’ll never know the answer. But maybe the example of the patriotic burglars can inspire me, and all of us, to turn up the heat on our social concerns and do something more. Let’s make that be so.

John Lamperti is Chair of NH Peace Action, and a Board member of National Peace Action.

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Members at the weekly Manchester Peace Vigil.

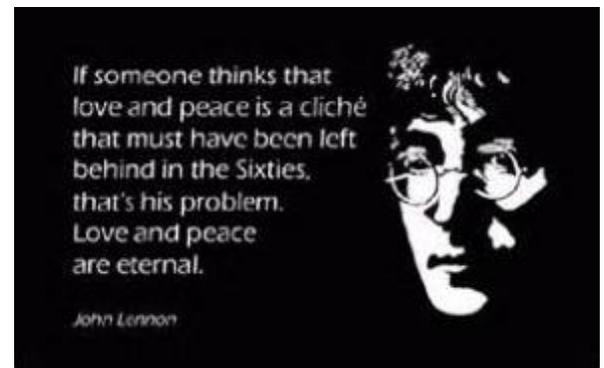
Events and Announcements

APRIL 22, 2015 Earth Day Rally. Join 350NH at the State Capitol in Concord from noon to 1 pm for a rally and presentation of a petition to the Governor and House and Senate Committees.

APRIL 24-27, 2015 Peace and Planet March, New York City. Trip to New York City for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference **Peace and Planet.** On April 24 and 25, there will be a massive Peace and Planet Conference, leading up a march and rally on April 26 at the United Nations as they review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. At least ten thousand people from all over the world are expected to come ask the United Nations to hold the Nuclear Powers to article six and move to eliminate the scourge of Nuclear Weapons. NH Peace Action is currently in the process of deciding if we will do a bus, 15 passenger van, or car caravan either for the full event, or just the march and Rally on the 26th. Please email Will (will@nhpeaceaction.org) if you would like to participate in any or all of Peace and Planet so we can make a better decision about the level of transport we are organizing. For more information on [Peace and Planet](http://www.peaceandplanet.org), please visit: www.peaceandplanet.org.

JUNE 13, 2015 NHPA Annual Membership Meeting. At the home of Lynn Chong and Rob Pearlman, 34 Wadleigh Road, in Sanbornton, NH. [Michael McPherson](http://www.nhpeaceaction.org), Executive Director of **Veterans For Peace** and Co-Chair of the **Hands Up, Don't Shoot! Coalition** will discuss how the epidemic of police violence against unarmed black men in the United States is a part of the struggle for Peace and Justice. There will be a potluck luncheon with barbeque. Details will be mailed soon. Please Email Doreen@nhpeaceaction.org to register.

Please see the website www.nhpeaceaction.org or call 603-228-0559 for more information and updates.



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