

War and Peace

Donald Trump moved ahead last night to bomb Syrian government facilities in retribution for an unproven claim, an event not yet investigated, with no grounded information, no warning and no discussion. He has taken his place on the tip of the spear of the war machine. But make no mistake, Mr. Trump pulled the trigger but he didn't aim the gun.

Hillary Clinton ran on a bigger version of this same scenario. The war machine has been geared up on invading Syria for years. It is so frustrating to watch the proxies muck around. And please be aware that, whatever you may read, the Russians and Chinese are taking this action very seriously. However, unlike our own government, they don't act without intelligence, consideration and a plan.

If you think this is about a chemical gas attack, then please read Ray McGovern's prescient article, The Sarin 'False Flag' Lesson, from last December. Apparently, we didn't get it.

So what can we do? Last week Doug Noble, Ted Wilcox and I met with Louise Slaughter and Kirsten Gillibrand's aides. We talked about the danger of making war on Syria and the many questions that arise from the massive propaganda campaign to support US military action there. We asked the Congress Woman and the Senator to support the Barbara Lee bill to restrain US placement of troops in Syria and the Tulsi Gabbard bill to stop US funding and arming of organizations that are affiliated with Al Qaeda in Syria.

We received the response at the end of this email from CW Slaughter's local aide, Sr. Beth, who quotes Jack, an aide in Washington DC who apparently didn't think our message was worth sharing with the Congress woman. Their response was a disrespectful brush off on all counts. The local people apparently didn't share the materials we provided and the DC

aide responded without consulting our representative. The local people are good people. I've known them for years. But at this time, they have dropped the ball, and when we reminded them, they responded with tea and sympathy – not comprehension and action.

If you are as offended as I am after reading the response at the end of this post, please give Jack a call at (202) 225-3615 or call Jeff or Sr. Beth at (585) 232-4850 and let them know that you oppose US imperialist wars. Let them know that you do not support attacks on the Syrian State or any attacks on Syrian soil. Tell them if you don't support the holocausts in Yemen and Mosul Iraq in which the United States is a participant and a primary enabler.

At the same time, they wanted to know why we don't have a movement behind us. And I wonder about that as well.

Of course we need to save the planet, so the environmental movement draws a lot of interest. We are clearly seeing the effects of environmental destruction around us. And, we are concerned about the plight of immigrants and undocumented workers in this country. America is a country of immigrants and the treatment of our most recent arrivals should concern all of us. But can we look beyond the ends of our noses?

For those who wish to focus on the environment, I would like to point out that:

- the fossil fuel industry is the immediate excuse for much of the US imperialist war mongering.
- The US military consumes more oil and gas than any other single entity
- The US military dumps untold quantities of toxins in their chosen war zones from Agent Orange to White Phosphorus to Depleted Uranium
- The US military burn toxic waste in the open when they are operating in war zones and leave behind stashes of

toxic weapons and ammunition buried in the ground or pawned off on local allies

- A nuclear war would free the planet of it's human burden, and unfortunately, most of the other flora and fauna that currently inhabit it's biosphere.

If it is refugees and immigrants that are your concern:

- Like other poor people and people of color, refugees and immigrants have a difficult life in this country
- Still, they come because
 - Someone is paying terrorists to kill and maim ordinary civilians in their home countries.
 - Someone is bombing their home countries without permission and without the requisite intelligence to avoid civilian casualties
 - Someone is supporting and has been supporting wars of aggression either
 - openly targeting internal political forces attempting to free the country of imperialist governance -as in Yemen;
 - disguised as as revolutions by (heavily armed) internal social movements (that are prepared to kill and maim their neighbors) - as in Syria and Ukraine;
 - using militarized chaos and misdirection on behalf of elite constituencies -as in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Honduras, Venezuela – the list goes on and on.
- Someone is:
 - Making life a living hell in their home countries;
 - Making it impossible to survive in their cherished homes;
 - Destroying their cultural roots and ethnic histories

Who might that 'Someone' be? It is the US, the exceptional imperialist. And the US is us.

Meanwhile, they come here where they can be mistreated and impoverished in many cases, patronized in some contexts, but they can't just be 'normal' until they have given up the last vestiges of their cultural and ethnic identities, until only skin color and gender identity remain. It isn't that these don't matter, but rather that diversity is so much more complex and rich in fiber than basic physical identifiers which, as we know, turn out to be not so physical in any case.

So, after a generation or so, some may prosper; they may forget and join the cardboard American consensus, while others continue struggling against racism and poverty in ghettos across the country.

So I ask you,

- Wouldn't it be nice if the the world were safe for it's inhabitants to live and prosper in their own homes?
- Wouldn't it be nice for people to be free to live in peace in their homelands and to visit others and experience the richness of diversity in some kind of context?
- Wouldn't it be nice if a civilized global political community were able to address the welfare of our planet and serve the welfare of people every where?
- Wouldn't it be nice if a predatory exceptionalist imperialist government bursting with armaments and indignant self-righteous outrage did not control the actions of all other entities with its big bad attitude problem?

Is there a "new sheriff in town" as Nikki Haley told the United Nations Security Council or is there just a new bandit at the helm of the greatest war machine ever built, a hungry machine that feeds on history, civilization, natural resources, human lives and everything those of us who love life hold dear?

And what responsibility do we bear in this context?

Letter from Louise Slaughter's Aides

Q: When might there be the emergence of bills like Barbara Lee's or others on war/peace on the congressional agenda? For example with budget and proposed amounts for military and wall versus domestic programs? We assume this will be a "hot" time? What do you think?

Jack: *Barbara Lee has been a leader on this issue for a long time and the Congresswoman has supported her efforts – I believe Rep. Lee even has a bill that would establish an Institute of Peace [apparently he doesn't know that there already is an 'Institute of Peace' in Washington DC populated by neocons]. In terms of the timeline, it's hard to say when you're in the minority. To move bills while in the minority, bipartisan support is key. With Republicans controlling the agenda and what comes up on the floor for consideration it's very hard for Democrats to have a say in what is considered. Also, with President Trumps "skinny budget" released and proposed increased in defense spending, we may not see an increase in domestic programs vs. defense programs in the near future. The Congresswoman stands ready to work to craft legislation that maintains important domestic programs, while preserving funding for our national defense in a reasonable, appropriate way.*

Q: Who are the key people in Congress who might work on peace legislation? What chance is there for them to emerge in a leadership/spokesperson role? They spoke of Representative Barbara Lee's legislation as a plus. HR 1473. For example is she a leader on this issue, is this a good piece of legislation that might move ahead?

Jack: *I think LMS would be supportive of HR 1473 though I haven't asked her to cosign the bill [apparently you don't see it as important]. One thing Rep. Lee and some others have*

tried to push for is a new authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) in our fight against ISIS in the middle east. This would help clarify what kind of actions US forces could take in that conflict, including a clear answer on whether or not troops could be deployed there. However at this point I don't see HR 1473 moving anywhere fast. [since you don't feel it's worth cosigning why would it?]

Q: What advice would you give peace groups like theirs and many others? What bills to watch, leadership to watch, what do advocate for and when?

Jack: *If they keep the pressure up I would recommend they keep looking for members and proposals that encourage a comprehensive dialogue on how the US can play a role in the peace process. [What 'peace process'?] Looking even at the Israeli-Palestine efforts, as well as the importance of robust international aid funding for the US worldwide so we can continue to be a leader and set an example to other countries and governments. Humanitarian and refugee issues I think are*

Q: What else should they be aware of or other advice for them and their counterparts?

Jack: *Not sure I have much else for them minus what I included above. I'm always glad to chat over the phone [(202) 225-3615] as well if that would be helpful to them to talk more specifically about questions/ideas they have.*