Why We Persist: Activists Have Protested US Drone Base for Over a Decade

by Ed Kinane, published on Truthout.org, December 22, 2019

“All human beings possess the basic right under international law to engage in non-violent civil resistance activities for the purpose of preventing, impeding, or terminating the ongoing commission of [international crime].” — International law expert Francis Boyle

Nonviolent civil resistance against international crime is about effectiveness and persistence. Or as Dorothy Day might say, faithfulness. We sow seeds — awakening the cogs in the machine of imperial crime and informing those who, with their federal taxes, help finance that crime.

But it’s about us — getting off our duffs and out of our comfort zones. Here in Syracuse, New York, we call it “street heat” — baby steps toward resistance, dipping our toes into the waters of risk and sacrifice. The “streets,” where Chris Hedges and Noam Chomsky keep telling us that, if things on this planet are going to turn around, that’s where it has to happen.

In the fall of 2003 in a series of front-page stories, the Syracuse Post-Standard announced with satisfaction that our local Hancock Field Air National Guard Base was becoming the hub for the wondrous weaponized MQ9 Reaper drone. For several days over that Thanksgiving weekend, several of us protested and fasted in downtown Syracuse.

Since then, for the past decade, immediately outside Hancock, with over 170 more protests, activists from what soon became
the Upstate Drone Action Coalition have sought to expose the ensuing Reaper drone terrorism in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Allies from the Syracuse Peace Council, Veterans For Peace, Voices for Creative Nonviolence and the Catholic Worker have provided the campaign’s life blood.

The Campaign

For 45 minutes every first and third Tuesday of the month, a handful of us locals demonstrate across from Hancock’s main gate. Yes, these are brief demos, but some of us are differently abled and some are “octos” — activists over 80 years old. We face the vehicles going in and out of the base at afternoon shift change. This is also rush hour along East Molloy Road. Our signs and banners urge, “STOP THE KILLING” and “ABOLISH WEAPONIZED DRONES” and “DRONES FLY, CHILDREN DIE.”

A second, more dramatic element of the campaign is our episodic (roughly twice a year) “tableaux” and street theater blocking the driveway into that main gate. Both approaches – the first with little risk of arrest and the second with inevitable arrests – seek to poke the conscience of the 174th New York Air National Guard’s Attack Wing operating out of Hancock.

Here at our very doorstep, 174th personnel pilot remotely controlled Reaper robots laden with bombs and “precision” Hellfire missiles. Via rapid satellite relay, from within the riskless anonymity of Hancock’s fortified base, those warriors and their chain of command spew death and destruction.

Maybe our repeated poking will afflict their consciences. To the extent that they have eyes to see, the pilots get to witness firsthand on-screen the carnage they perpetrate – scattered and smoldering body parts. Such exposure just may induce “moral injury,” the psychic wound caused by betraying one’s core values. We hope that, despite being offered hefty
bonuses, these technicians will refuse to re-enlist. The fewer enlistments, the less death.

Their targets and their civilian victims are mostly uncounted, undefended, unidentified Muslims inhabiting oil-rich lands. Here is Islamophobia with a vengeance. Multitudes are terrorized. If they survive, many become internal or external refugees. And why wouldn’t some also become the imperium’s die-hard foes? As the Pentagon surely counts on, the inevitable blowback generates further mayhem. Such mutually reinforcing (but extremely asymmetrical) mayhems reliably produce the high-tech contracts Lockheed Martin and its ilk thrive on.

It’s usually mid-morning when two of our Upstate Drone Action members and a videographer approach Hancock’s main gate, unannounced, to hand-deliver a letter through the barbed wire fence to the armed gate-keepers. Addressed to the 174th Attack Wing, the letter urges personnel to uphold their oath to protect the U.S. Constitution. We cite Article Six of that Constitution, which mandates that international treaties and international law are the “Supreme Law of the Land.” Such law, including the legally binding UN Charter, supersedes federal, state and local law. It stipulates that such military aggression amounts to a war crime.

Simultaneously, down the base driveway, our flash mob sets up banners and dramatic props. These, along with our bodies – vertical or horizontal, sometimes clad in hijab or draped in bloody shrouds – block any incoming traffic.

Within minutes, soldiers pop out from behind cement barriers to divert incoming vehicles to Hancock’s other entrances. An officer marches out to inform us — with profound understatement — that we aren’t wanted on base property. Working hand in glove with the military, the town, county and state constabularies arrive, red lights flashing. These, helpfully, draw the public’s gaze to our event. The cops
schmooze with the soldiers, taking an hour or two to assemble their forces. Then, having dutifully warned us for the third time to leave, they handcuff us while soldiers confiscate our props. Our supporters across the road chant and sing. Surveillance cameras and police and military videographers record the scene.

At our tableaux and die-ins, up to 38 of us at a time have been arrested. We are driven to cells in area police stations. Despite these many forays onto federal property, military police never arrest us and we’re never charged with federal crimes. Invariably we keep getting two contradictory state charges: trespass (private property) and disorderly conduct (for public places). Both charges are “violations,” a minor matter. Violations for others generally lead to quick release with an appearance ticket. But we get special handling: strip searches along with the protracted tedium of being booked. After some hours, we are arraigned. In the late evening, we may be released with dates for the DeWitt Town night court. Often there’s bail, not because we are flight risks (we relish our days in court) but as a kind of pre-trial chastisement. Some of us refuse to post bail.

Sometimes, arbitrarily, misdemeanor charges are piled on: obstruction of government administration (OGA) or contempt of court for allegedly defying Orders of Protection (OOP) forbidding us to return to the base. Those stay-away orders “protect” the base commander who has alleged that we physically threaten him. This fiction parallels the perennial propaganda trope that migrants from afar — in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Afghanistan — threaten the U.S. The local judges impose OOPs on dozens of us. Bizarrely re-purposed, OOP wording is derived from child or spouse abuse boilerplate.

Such OOPs have been enforced unevenly. Several years ago, Mary Anne Grady Flores, a grandmother from Ithaca, New York, got a yearlong sentence for allegedly violating her OOP. Her sole crime: photographing protesters (who subsequently were all
acquitted) from Molloy Road’s shoulder. After a few months in Jamesville Penitentiary, Mary Anne won release pending appeal. If eventually her appeal fails, she’ll be re-incarcerated.

We’ve long lost track of the numbers, but well over 100 of our cases have been tried before either of the two elected part-time DeWitt Town justices, Robert Jokl Jr. or David Gideon. Those are mostly bench trials, in which a judge determines verdict and sentence; or, if involving misdemeanors, a six-person jury renders the verdict. In this court, not shy about doling out maximum sentences, juries are forbidden to hear what the max can be.

On the brink of a trial, the prosecutor may suddenly drop the misdemeanor charge, cleverly disrupting our defense prep. Jury trials in DeWitt are only occasional, since these burden the court calendar and the town budget, while providing us the opportunity to testify about drone atrocity. In an arrest-happy time and place, law enforcement and the court prop up the ambient militarism, particularly where a community embraces its military base as a “job-provider.” Conveniently for stoking public buy-in, multitudes of redundant military installations are spread widely over congressional districts across the land.

Central New York is one of the nation’s major drone technology incubators, housing a branch of Lockheed Martin and SRC Inc., a defense research company. This gravy train seems to mesmerize local mainstream media, the Chamber of Commerce, nearby citadels of higher learning, and those of all political stripes dependent on government jobs and grants: co-optation broad and deep. Even liberal activists compartmentalized in their domestic issues shrink from acknowledging Hancock’s war crimes.

When we point out to police that war crimes occur just yards from where we’re being arrested, we hear, “It’s not our jurisdiction.” The court dismisses out of hand our
International Law and Necessity defenses. Nor, of course, does it acknowledge that Hancock, in violation of the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, occupies Haudenosaunee Indigenous land. Note the historical continuity: most Reaper victims are themselves tribal or Indigenous people of color inhabiting formerly colonized but now nominally sovereign lands such as Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. All areas, it happens, the U.S. has yet to even officially declare war upon. Those Hellfire missiles – talk about trespass!

The disorderly conduct charge is bogus; as the base’s surveillance cameras attest, we treat everyone with respect and don’t resist arrest. (Before each demonstration, every participant signs a pledge of nonviolence.) Nor do our blockades discommode the public. The OGA charge is likewise bogus: trial witnesses, citing “security,” refuse to reveal details of Hancock’s illegal and clandestine operations, which we call out and allegedly disrupt.

At trial, we defend ourselves pro se or with pro bono attorneys. Our lead attorney travels well over 300 miles from Long Island at his own expense. On the witness stand, we speak to what drone strikes do to human flesh, psyches and souls, and thus why we risk prison opposing brutality. We note that we don’t do civil disobedience – we do civil resistance. We don’t disobey law; we seek to enforce law – both U.S. and international. We observe the Nuremberg injunction that those aware of war crimes must try to expose and impede them – or else we would be complicit ourselves.

For the DeWitt court, international law is an alien concept. In many of this rogue nation’s law schools, international law apparently isn’t taught. U.S. superpower exceptionalism prevails. The Constitution’s First Amendment – which validates our right to petition the government for redress of grievances – is also alien.

In the early days, seeking to deter continued civil
resistance, we were each customarily fined the maximum amount of $375, and some of us were also sentenced to 15 days in jail. In a further attempt to deter, the DeWitt judges – in apparent cahoots with the base – eventually conjured up those aforementioned Orders of Protection. Fortunately, suburban juries can’t always be counted on to find scrupulously nonviolent defendants guilty. Sometimes they find us not guilty on one or more counts, or the court feels compelled to dismiss a lackadaisically prosecuted charge.

Nowadays, the DeWitt court seems to be kicking the judicial can down the road. As I write in December 2019, our July 2018, June 2019 and September 2019 arrests have yet to be assigned trial dates. In DeWitt, New York, the notion that “justice delayed is justice denied” is quaint. This past summer, one judge, without explanation or apology, simply didn’t show up for a motions hearing or to set a trial date. More recently, one evening’s judge told us, after we’d all traveled to a mandated court hearing, that our case wasn’t on that evening’s docket. Can it be that the validity of our cause is now dawning on the judges, making it hard to know what to do with us?

Reaper terror, first under Bush, increasingly under Obama, then far more under Trump, keeps escalating. We may never know if our efforts somehow slow the pace. But we do know that here in our backyard, if we don’t stand up and speak out against war crimes, it’s unlikely anyone else will. And we know that if no one speaks out, the Pentagon will keep operating as if it has a popular mandate to keep up the killing.

So we persist.

For video footage of Hancock actions, see upstatedronaction.org. For updates on our arrests and trials, see nukeresister.org. To glimpse the horror of weaponized drones, see the Stanford and NYU Law Schools’ joint 2012 report, “Living Under Drones.”
Ed Kinane is a cofounder of the Upstate Drone Action Coalition. With Voices in the Wilderness in Baghdad in 2003, Kinane survived “Shock and Awe.” He has been jailed numerous times for civil resistance at Hancock and elsewhere. Reach him at edkinane340@gmail.com.

Drones Fly, Children Die

by Judith Bello

Hancock Air National Guard Base was one of the first domestic drone bases to come on line. The base is located in a pleasant suburb of Syracuse New York, along side the International Airport. The 174th Attack Wing at Hancock is tasked with flying Reaper Drone missions over Afghanistan and other places on the far side of the world that they are unwilling to name. They also fly Drones berthed locally over the Adirondacks to the East and Lake Ontario to the West. I saw one 100 miles west of there heading for Rochester International Airport one day. Hancock is the domestic center for training Reaper pilots and mechanics. The men of the 174th are proud of their work, which is important to the imperial U.S. international policing mission. At least in some cases, the human consequences of their work is not entirely clear to these men.
About a week ago, a small group of protesters went out to Hancock Air National Guard Base to exercise their civil rights and petition the government for redress of grievances. They believe that the use of hunter, killer Drones to attack people in countries we are not at war with, mostly countries that do not have the international status or military capacity to defend their people, is morally wrong and a violation of international consensus in general and international law. Further, they believe that the use of Drones piloted from the neighborhoods where we live and work endangers us in the long run.

Video by Heriberto Rodriguez

International law protects the rights of civilians. It also says that it is fair to retaliate against an attacker in the location where the attack is coming from. That would be Hancock, or more generally, Syracuse New York. Drone attacks rarely target anyone who is an immediate threat to the United States or countries at war with the U.S. They protect U.S. ‘Interests’ abroad. Drones attack people in their own lands, often in countries that are destabilized by competing foreign interests. Drone bombs take out anyone who happens to be in the same area as the target. Though the targeting is technically precise, it is often inaccurate due to misunderstanding of the actions of innocent people on the ground.

But ‘Why protest military Drones now?’ The United States is currently at war with Afghanistan (after nearly 18 years), has a significant presence in Syria and Iraq and Yemen where it is engaged in proxy wars, and is threatening Venezuela and Iran very directly. The Russiagate enthusiasts and China-phobes are making plans for a ‘limited’ nuclear war and developing tools for a war in space that could isolate the earth from the rest of the universe for a very long time. Meanwhile, President Trump withdrew the United States from the Intermediate Range
Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) with Russia, which limits the development of medium range nuclear missiles. In early June, Russian President Vladimir Putin complained that the U.S. has been unwilling to engage in negotiations which must be completed by 2021 to renew the New START treaty which is the only remaining strategic nuclear arms control agreement in place between the United States and the Russian Federation. We are entering the world of Dr. Strangelove. The Atomic clock is a few seconds from midnight and global nuclear annihilation is now a serious risk.

*Video by Heriberto Rodriguez*

So, why devote ourselves to protesting military Drones? Well, I’ll get to the concerns that mobilized us in a minute. But first, the universe provided a perfect example of the significance of Drones in the above context a day or two before our protest. The Iranians shot down a U.S. surveillance drone over their coastal waters. It was a Global Hawk, large and expensive, but unarmed. Trump and the ‘B’ team (Bolton, BiBi, Bin Zayad, Bin Salman) immediately went into action, preparing a retaliatory strike. The Pentagon worked out a plan and initiated it. Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, choking off oil shipping in the region, and asserted that they would defend their sovereignty to a very bitter end. But, according President Trump, he called off the attack, 10 minutes before the strike because he was told there would be 150 casualties. If a U.S. attack were to trigger a larger war there might be tens of thousands of casualties, including U.S. casualties.

Instead he called for new sanctions against individuals including sanctions against the Javad Zarif, a long time diplomat and peace maker who went to school in the U.S. and is very friendly to Americans, and Supreme Leader Khamenei, who does not have any assets outside of Iran. Since Iran is a relatively large country with an identity and history going
back several millenia, and is very closely affiliated with Russia and China, starting a war over a piece of machinery would indeed have been a pretty stupid thing to do. But they didn’t, this time.

*Video by Heriberto Rodriguez*

There were a number of factors that motivated the protesters to go out to Hancock in June, and that wasn’t one of them. It was a total surprise. We haven’t heard much about Drones lately, until the Iranian shoot-down, but not because they weren’t in play. Military Drones are ubiquitous messengers of U.S. aggression. A friend who did several tours of duty in Iraq pointed out that they provided protection for the soldiers on the ground. Of course, we don’t have any soldiers on the ground in Libya, and supposedly, our soldiers in Iraq and Syria are keeping the peace, not engaged in open warfare. What soldiers are they protecting in the battlefields where U.S. soldiers are not supposed to be present on the ground?

Over the last couple of years, the Africom has built several large military bases across Africa to support a massive expansion of the Reaper drone fleet there. Currently, Somalia is a primary target. Somalia became a failed state the last time the U.S. tried to democratize them. Armed Drones fly routinely over Yemen, where they target al Qaeda, Islamists who are allied, with our proxy, Saudi Arabia. They fly over Iraq and Iran. Reapers continue to be the primary air force in Afghanistan. When you hear a report that 3 or 5, or 10 or 50 people were killed in an airstrike there, most likely it was a Reaper Drone strike. A 500 lb Paveway bomb will kill a lot of people in a wedding tent or at a town meeting or in a multi-family household, a compound, as they like to call it. Of course, this is just the way people live in Afghanistan, at least people who can afford a decent home.

Drones are deeply embedded in every U.S. warzone and area of
military interest. Drones are used to seek out individuals where they live and work. Maybe they are bad people, or maybe they just appear to be the bad people. And usually, they are in the company of their families and friends, engaged in the normal activities of their community when the Drone catches up with them. Targeted assassinations often rely on a cellphone to identify the target, so don’t borrow anyone’s phone there, don’t walk in the store where a targeted individual is shopping. One man told me he sleeps in the mountains to protect his family. Heaven forbid someone should think he is home one night and take them all out while they are sleeping.

Signature Strikes, which target people who appear to be ‘acting like militants’, are still approved. So, men gathering for a meeting or emerging from their workplace, people praying after lunch along the roadside, schoolboys in a bus, people at a wedding firing their guns into the air, all might seem like good targets. The possibilities are endless when drone pilots who have never left the U.S. and never met anyone from Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, or wherever, and knows nothing about Islam. But at least our guys are safe over here.

Video by Heriberto Rodriguez

Drones violate international law. You have probably heard that before. What does it mean to say that military Drone strikes violate International Law. It means that they tear the very fabric of global society. It means that those who fly them do not feel constrained by the boundaries of nations or the rules of war. Drone warfare dehumanizes targets who are far away, and at least on the surface, appear to be more ‘enemies’ in a video game than humans living in society. The United States, having first launched a campaign of armed drones as weapons of war, is a role model for others coming on line, Russia, China and Iran. Israel pioneered Drones over the last decades, and also contempt for international law and the rights of other
nations. Drones are consistently used against presumed ‘fighters’ who are not on a battlefield. Whatever war plans are in the making, Drones will be a central part of their enactment.

Now ‘unarmed’ Reapers are patrolling our borders. With the growing hysteria over illegal immigration, how long will they remain unarmed? ICE agents routinely check out the passengers on buses with dogs, and dust the baggage at train stations along the Canadian border for explosives. Drones have been used to target a couple of high profile criminals in this country. China and Russia, and even Iran now have their own military Drones. Armed Drones are not useful for dogfights, but they are very useful for policing. Just as in the interior of our cities, suspects are routinely killed to avoid risk and confusion, around the world suspects and anyone near them are routinely annihilated by hellfire missiles and Paveway bombs.

**Video by Heriberto Rodriguez**

Is this the world we want to live in? Members of Upstate (NY) Drone Action say no. And they put their bodies on the line to say it. If you want change, you have to do something about it. It is difficult to be heard these days, but it’s important to make the effort. If more people were to protest regularly in the name of peace and justice, it would become easier to be heard. Lots of people don’t like U.S. wars and interventions. But if you don’t come forward and put something on the line then your voice will be silent. Voting is a good idea, but so few candidates oppose the wars that most people don’t have access to them. Donald Trump, of all people, ran as an advocate for withdrawing from the many ongoing U.S. wars around the world, but he seems to have forgotten now that he is in office. He has doubled down on military Drone use around the world. Obama ran as a peace candidate but he too presided over a huge increase in lethal Drone activity, the destruction of Libya and Syria and Honduras (to name a few), and the
beginning of the Saudi war to occupy Yemen.

So, on the appointed day, we met at 6:45 with the items for our tableau, in the pouring rain and decided to go ahead anyway. Drones Fly; Children Die. War is an ugly and dark theme, why not roll it out in the rain. People set up the Tableau blocking the ingress lane of the road leading to the main gate at Hancock Field, and went to the Guard Shack to read the guards our complaint and ask them to forward it to the Colonel who is responsible for the Base. A soldier in a rain slicker immediately went into the main road to direct traffic to a different gate, and a lone policeman arrived. Sherri began chanting. She called out the names of some of the dead children killed in drone strikes. We joined her in a lament. Sherri and Peg chanted, sang and wailed through the entire event in the pouring rain, a couple of hours until the police took those practicing civil resistance to a holding pen in Onondaga County Jail.

*Video by Heriberto Rodriguez*

And all the while it rained and rained and rained. The rain poured down like tears from a universe where people’s lives are a matter of consequence.

The clips embedded in this article were taken from footage filmed by Heriberto Rodriguez, who somehow captured beautiful clean footage in the pouring rain, including nice cameos of activists stating their reasons for protesting at the base and images of the vivid tableau in which they embedded themselves and the supporters across the street who held signs and chanted.

On June 20th 2019, 8 protesters outside the front gate of Hancock were arrested and charged with Trespassing and Disorderly Conduct, both violations, and Obstructing
The False Narrative of Unmanned Drones and Trump’s Responsibility to Lead

by George Cassidy Payne, Published on Talker of the Town, June 24, 2019

The unmanned drone narrative is wrong. Someone is always operating these highly sophisticated killing/surveillance machines. Militarized drones may be maneuvered thousands of miles away by human pilots, but they are always being flown by someone. More to the point, they are being used by human beings to launch missile strikes that have killed at least 2,000 people since the beginning of Bush’s “War on Terror.”

Although estimates of civilian deaths attributed to drone strikes are notoriously difficult to establish, several courageous organizations have made it their mission to uncover the origin of these deaths so that the world can know what is happening in places such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. For instance, the New America Foundation has stated that from 2004 to 2011 alone, 15% of the 2,551 people killed by drone strikes were either known civilians or unknown. It has been widely reported that at least 150 children have been killed by militarized drones in Pakistan and that over 1,000 have been maimed or injured. Of course, these statistics say nothing about the extraordinary levels of PTSD inflicted on these populations. Civilian casualties from...
**U.S. drone strikes**

Whether someone agrees or disagrees with their use in combat, no one can effectively make the argument that these drones are in any way benign or innocuously unmanned. Whether equipped with weaponry or not, they represent the terrifying reality of American firepower and the severe cost of making the United States an enemy to be resisted. That is why they are flying above — or dangerously close to — the sovereign airspace of Iran. That is why Donald Trump authorizes their use every day. In fact, that is why the American president even went so far as to stop the mandatory reporting of civilian deaths and casualties due to drone strikes. (An act that reversed an Executive Order signed by Barack Obama in 2016.) What is more, that is why the United States military has been authorized by the American people to spend over 100 million dollars on a single piece of drone aircraft, which, we are learning, is the estimated cost of the one recently shot down by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

And that brings me to my second point. When that American drone was blown out of the sky, what an immense waste it truly was. I don’t mean a waste of insanely expensive technology. I mean, what an immense waste of potential to do good! What has a shot down airplane resulted in but further geopolitical brinkmanship, mutual distrust, and the growing likelihood of another costly and protracted war in the Middle East? And don’t try to tell me that drones are the only way that the U.S. military and intelligence apparatus can attain footage of Iran’s nuclear program. That line of reasoning is absurd and outright mendacious.

I always wonder how that money could be spent differently to achieve better results. With that same amount of money, just imagine what could have been accomplished in the way of actually improving international relations between the two historic foes. If Trump really wants to “make Iran great again”, as he stated to Chuck Todd in his recent *Meet the
Press interview, then he must change how money is invested and the way he uses resources to make his presence and priorities known. Just think about it. 100 million dollars, even today, goes a long way in the arena of peacemaking. Examples abound from cultural exchange programs and humanitarian aid relief to joint commercial ventures and the lifting of economic sanctions. Even direct support of Iranian-American institutions and citizens and the sponsorship of diplomatic talks would, if allocated strategically, cost far less than 100 million dollars and open up the potential for hundreds of billions in new trade opportunities, regional stability, and scientific cooperation. During the Cold War, the Soviets still collaborated with the U.S. to achieve incredible feats of space exploration. To merely assume that Iran would refuse direct investment — not to mention one less drone in their airspace — is not rational.

Now, I do agree with Trump’s wise decision to restrain his military options after the drone was shot down. The fact that he is looking into other retaliatory options besides bombing Iranian civilians is a good sign that he has not completely lost his grip on reality and the responsibility he has to maintain global peace. But in general, Trump must be far more creative and proactive when it comes to Iran. He must realize that drones are not “unmanned” and that they represent to millions of people in the Middle East a horrific example of indiscriminate slaughter and omnipresent terror. It is, by any calculation, a hugely expensive means for exacting political leverage. Whether or not they have been effective from a combat standpoint is a matter of academic debate, but there is no debating that the use of these weapons has destroyed thousands of lives in some of the most unethical acts of combat in military history. Morally speaking, the price we pay as Americans far exceed the 100 million dollar price tag that each of these vehicles comes with.

For all of these reasons, the time has arrived for President
Trump to rethink everything about Iran, the use of force, and the cost of what some pundits call “hard diplomacy.” On a heart level, I ask myself: Why does Iran need to be a mortal threat to the national interests of America? That is not what the people of Iran want. That is not what the region, as a whole, wants. And, if Trump looks at this problem from a big picture perspective, that is not what has to happen, at least not if the U.S. is truly the leader of the free world. As such, we all have a choice. We can choose peace and prosperity or destruction and poverty. War is never inevitable, and the future can belong to those who truly believe that humanity is fundamentally alike and intrinsically good. It does not have to turn into a situation in which all sides pay a price that cannot be put into numerical form.

Come to think of it, Trump actually said something akin to this in his Meet the Press interview. To paraphrase, the U.S. president said, “I am from NY. I know a lot of Iranians. They are good people.”

Yes, they are. That you are right about Mr. President. Because they are good people, the time is now to show the world that you can lead with thoughtful reflection on your own experience, resolute compassion for others (not in your base), and an honest desire to make people’s lives better because that is the sacred duty of the office you hold.
Voices Rising for Yemen — Final Day

*Header and photos all from Voices for Creative Nonviolence*

by Kathy Kelly, published on [Voices for Creative Nonviolence](https://vcnv.org/), November 8, 2018

Over these past three days, Voices and a coalition of justice-minded organizations have been at and around the United Nations in New York City protesting the ongoing U.S.-Saudi attack on famine-imperiled Yemen. Details are available at [www.vcnv.org](https://www.vcnv.org) along with next steps for people looking for ways to get involved. Participants Kathy Kelly, Brian Terrell, and Jules Orkin write here about the third and final day of protests:

**VOICES RISING FOR YEMEN: FINAL DAY**

We started our NYC activities this past Tuesday in soggy style, but yesterday, under brilliant sunny skies, the action became a moving procession. About 70 people formed a single file to carry backpacks, placards, signs bearing the names of children, and various banners, past the U.S. Mission to the UN, past the Saudi Mission, and over to
the consulate. Today we did the same, anticipating that those who stood in front of the consulate would be arrested.

By 11:30 this morning, on Dorothy Day’s birthday, about 90 people had gathered at the Isaiah Wall for a procession to the Saudi consulate. The mourning women led our march, garbed in large masks and veils, holding limp grey dolls that represent the thousands of children facing death in Yemen. Jun Sun and a companion followed, their drumbeats guiding us. Six people carried placards describing the terrible attack on a children’s schoolbus in northern Yemen. The attack happened on August 9, 2018.

This week in Yemen, children who had survived were going back for the first time to their classes, carrying their blue U.N. backpacks from the day of the attack, splattered with their classmates’ blood. So today in New York, people willing to risk arrest carried blue backpacks and signs naming the children who had been killed. Others followed with banners. Nick Mottern joined us with a drone replica, an apt reminder of U.S. aerial attacks and drone surveillance in Yemen.

Felton Davis and Ed Kinane held a banner and blocked the entrance to the U.S. Mission to the UN. They were later released without charge.

The procession continued past the Saudi Mission to the UN and over to the Saudi Consulate on Second Avenue. Members of our group swiftly set up a presence in front of three entrances to the building, urging people not to enter because it is too
dangerous: criminal activities have been going on and all who have cause to be in the building should be aware of the crucial importance of ending the murderous, tortuous activities carried out by the Saudi government. Brian Terrell points out that, just as you would be concerned if office workers in your building were involved in human trafficking or drug smuggling, people should be alarmed over the Saudi government’s murderous practices as it makes war on Yemen. As Buddy Bell intoned the names of children killed on August 9 and raised a lament for Yemeni families, our response was “We Remember You.”

We sang and chanted for over two hours. At least two dozen police carrying plastic cuffs arrived, along with a NYPD Detective named Bogucki, who told us he recalled arresting some of us during the late ’90s and in the years leading up to the Shock and Awe bombing in Iraq. From 1996 to 2003, we had protested the sacrifice and slaughter of Iraqi children. Detective Bogucki said we are preaching to the choir when we tell him about crimes happening inside the consulate, and other offices that prolong war in Yemen. Recognizing our complicity, we believe “the choir” must unite by resisting child sacrifice, child slaughter.

Word arrived from one of the blockade groups that the New York Police Department had decided not to arrest anyone in our group. We eventually formed a circle, confirmed our collective determination to continue outreach, witness and resistance, expressed many thank yous, and dispersed.

Our hearts remain with Yemeni families agonizing over the dire plight of loved ones in Yemen. We thank Yemenis who have stood up, in more precarious settings, to call for an end to the fighting. And we look forward to supporting their calls for
peace in every way we can, until this dreadful war is over.

Kathy Kelly interviewed outside the Saudi Arabian Consulate:

November 8th 2018 – protest gathered outside of Saudi Arabian Consulate in Midtown Manhattan, East 47th street and 2nd Ave. Protest spoke of Yemen bombing, deaths, Jamal Khashoggi, Trump and other issues. Large police response with various specialized units, carrying multiple zip ties and hand cuffs for the arrests. **Click image to watch video.** Full video and photos available oliya(at)scootercaster.com, www.scootercaster.com

Kathy Kelly is an American peace activist, pacifist and author, one of the founding members of *Voices in the Wilderness*, and currently a co-coordinator of *Voices for*
Creative Nonviolence. She has traveled to Iraq twenty-six times, notably remaining in combat zones during the early days of both US–Iraq wars. Her recent travel has focused on Afghanistan and Gaza, along with domestic protests against US drone policy. She has been arrested more than sixty times at home and abroad, and written of her experiences among targets of US military bombardment and inmates of US prisons.

Game of Drones

Friends, this is a great film on the damage done by drone warfare and the increasing potential for state terrorism presented by drones. The video is from 2016 but I have never seen it before so I’m glad it turned up in my email today.

The film has interviews with whistleblower Sean Westmoreland, and many of the antidrone activists and drone victims from Waziristan whom we met there as well. And, interviews with our good friends Nick Mottern of Knowdrones.com and Ann Wright, who needs no introduction in the antiwar universe.

**The film is on YouTube on the RT Documentary channel, and also on the RT website. Header image is a cropped screenshot from the film.**

Documenting the Poor People’s
Campaign, Albany 2018

Image: Taken from the Fort Orange Club Action, 31 Arrested. Why are you here? Ann Tiffany, “Because I’m committed to making a change”

Videos by John Amidon of Upstate Drone Action participants and others at the Poor People’s Campaign events in Albany, May and June of 2019.

John Amidon is an active member of the Upstate Drone Action Coalition and of Veterans for Peace.

Thousands of Hearts and Minds

by Ed Kinane

To work against militarism and for social justice is to struggle for hearts and minds. We “educate, agitate, and organize.” We reach out to the public to mobilize its conscience. But the public is large and we are few. Most ways to reach the public are costly. Or shaped by other agendas. So mostly we operate small scale. We could however make much greater use of a familiar and broad public forum: letters to the editor.

LTEs are a valuable tool. In writing them, we can transform ourselves, deepening our analysis and vision, making more public our witness, making steadfast our commitment. We’re standing up and out for what we stand for.
LTEs play varied roles:

- publicizing your upcoming events
- defining and clarifying issues
- expanding the bounds of discussion
- expressing community and planetary needs
- correcting misinformation and exposing disinformation
- speaking truth to power: describing the 'emperor's new clothes'
- expressing solidarity; advocating for the voiceless

(Back in the eighties, after I had spent some weeks in apartheid South Africa, I returned to Syracuse, my hometown. Over the following months I showered our local paper, the Post-Standard with LTEs about the ins and outs and the injustices of apartheid. This flurry of letters intrigued a certain woman – Ann. We eventually met and we’ve been partners ever since. Which might point to yet another role for LTEs: matchmaking.)

LTEs jar, prod, scold. They recall, they inspire, they appeal to conscience. Each letter to the editor can reach many thousands of readers. Very cheaply. It only takes a computer (or paper and pen), and, if you don’t submit on-line, a postage stamp. And some engaging work. The Post-Standard, prints nearly a page of LTEs daily. It has a circulation of 70,000 (120,000 on Sunday) – with an estimated twice as many readers. Plus, lots get their news fix from their daily paper on-line, which includes LTEs.

LTEs are one of the most popular newspaper features. Let’s say one in three readers – either in the print edition or on-line – reads LTEs. Those tens of thousands are more likely than average to vote and act politically. That’s the audience we want to reach.

Often LTEs are a one-shot response to an issue or event. But for more impact one might write successive LTEs instructive to
reader and editor alike. Each LTE would develop an aspect of a theme you might be particularly knowledgeable and passionate about. Such continuity and persistence is vital, especially for issues otherwise neglected or misrepresented in the media. Or by government officials. The one-shot letter is good; a series of letters on an issue is better. If you can’t support a particular cause financially, consider pledging to write (say) one LTE a month on its behalf.

If you write a letter to a local, state or federal politico, copy your newspaper. Don’t settle for it being read only by the politician’s staff. That staff is much more likely to call your letter to their boss’s attention if it also appears in print. They know thousands of voters are also reading it.

Many LTEs are written to a single periodical only. Yet a letter, without much effort, often can be adapted to others. The more widely a letter is published, the wider its influence. After some time and it hasn’t appeared, you might contact the letter editor, re-sending the original. Ask if your letter has been misplaced. With that prod, it may soon be published.

If it is framed as a response to a specific article recently appearing in the periodical, your letter’s publication is more likely. Some – not all – editors won’t print letters from outside their circulation area or more than one letter a month from the same author.

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Three other factors affect whether a letter is published: space, ideology, and quality.

Space. In most periodicals, reader input is minimal. But many provide at least token space for LTEs. Typically, editors prefer short letters and may abridge or ignore longer ones. I work to keep LTEs to a single page.
Prestigious periodicals receive far more letters than they print. *The New York Times* receives oodles of LTEs. So your chances there are slim. But if the *Times* does print your letter, it will reach a particularly broad and influential readership.

“Op-eds” are long letters or short essays appearing opposite the editorial page. Where LTEs may be 200 words, an op-ed may be 600 or 800. To get that much space, you usually need expertise or distinctive background. Having spent time in some global hot spot like Central America or the Middle East can be a sufficient credential for an informed op-ed regarding that region.

**Ideology.** In the US we do have “freedom of the press”...up to a point. While mainstream media promote the public airing of (some) issues, they also set real – though elastic – limits on debate. After all, most media are big business with particular class and economic interests. Letters critical of such interests have rather less chance of being published. (Though to appear “balanced,” editors may occasionally run opposing or unorthodox views.) In the US, as in any country, the print media are more open to some authors and some topics than to others.

LTE writers may assume that the more bland and “balanced” they sound, the more chance they have of being heard. Maybe yes, maybe no. But this self-censorship, besides promoting boredom, redundancy and irrelevance, can be a cop-out. True, a forthright (or “radical”) letter may turn off some editors or readers. But forthright perspectives may well hearten allies and raise the consciousness of the receptive. Also, such letters legitimate worthy, less pointed letters. Without the contrast, other’s tame letters may occupy the outer fringes of discourse.

Letter writers are like court jesters. We have license to speak more boldly than journalists and columnists. LTEs are
do-it-ourselves journalism. Our letters can cite facts (e.g. about corporate corruption or US foreign policy) that many in the industry seem to avoid even thinking about. These pros have families to support, bosses to please, careers to make. Often they’ve so internalized the constraints that they are no longer aware of their self-censorship. Because the population at large are likewise afflicted, our letters are all the more essential.

LTEs are an opportunity. If we don’t exercise that opportunity, we’ve lost it. So we must not gag ourselves at the outset. We need to probe the limits of expression, mindfully. In doing so we may even expand those limits: “If you don’t push, it won’t budge.” Most papers print few challenging letters, not because they consciously censor, but perhaps because we are too tame (or too busy) to submit them.

Quality. The more concise and carefully written a letter, the more likely it will be printed...and have impact. Spare the editor the chore of condensing or cleaning up your letter. Otherwise, even if your LTE gets published, the editorial scalpel may hamstring your continuity and coherence. To shorten a longish letter, an editor may remove parts she doesn’t fancy. Careful, concise writing can keep your message intact.

To make the editor’s job easier, type and double-space your letter. LTEs should be neat, timely, accurate, grammatical, non-rhetorical and free of unintended ambiguity. Your letter should cite up front a recent article or relate to a theme recently broached in the paper. For readability, favor short, familiar, concrete words, short sentences and short paragraphs. To provide context, include who/what/where/when facts. And to provide more impact, don’t neglect the “why” factor.

Be careful to get your facts right; when citing facts an editor might doubt, supply a source footnote. The note won't
be printed, but it aids fact-checking and boosts credibility. Also, if you have a relevant credential that gives your views heft, note it – either in your text or as a writer’s ID at the beginning or end.

An effective letter takes sweat. You may be working to express ideas you’ve never before put to paper. I sometimes don’t know quite what I think until I wrestle those thoughts onto the page. You may learn you have ideas you didn’t know you had. Your LTE will need not only proofreading, but revising, probably repeated revising. To prevent gaffes, seek a second opinion. Especially when writing out of anger, have someone else check the tone. Sleep on it: I often see need for further revisions the next morning.

Sometimes an LTE can be dashed off quickly. But I can take several hours to craft an LTE. Five or six hours to reach tens of thousands of readers is well worth it. That’s thousands of hearts and minds for every hour of work. What better way to educate, agitate and organize?

In 2003 Ed spent five months in Iraq with Voices in the Wilderness.

Billboards Opposing Drone Wars Are Going Up All Over Syracuse, NY

by David Swanson, originally published on World Beyond War, Feb 21. 2018
World Beyond War has been raising funds for and renting billboards in opposition to war. We’ve run into censorship from numerous billboard companies but persevered, and more billboards are on their way.

First we put this message up here in Charlottesville, Va., and then in Baltimore, Md. (see explanation of the 3% calculation here):

Now we’re putting these two images up on billboards in Syracuse, NY, where drone pilots participate in U.S. wars from Hancock Air Base:

For 8 hours a day for 16 days in March, these two images will be on either side of a billboard truck driving around downtown Syracuse and the University of Syracuse. Then, from April 2 to May 27 each image will be on two of the four stationary billboards located at 115 South Street, 700 East Washington Street, 1430 Erie Boulevard East, and 1201-1208 South Salina at Raynor Street. Then, from May 28 to July 22, one image will be on two and the other on one of three billboards at 700 East Washington Street, 909 East Genesee Street, and 1758 Erie Boulevard East.

Why Syracuse?

The Syracuse area hosts Hancock Air National Guard base where the Guard’s 174th Attack Wing conducts drone assassination and target identification missions using MQ-9 Reaper drones in Afghanistan and probably elsewhere. It has been announced that the numbers of drone operators being trained at Hancock will be doubled.

The billboard ads are being undertaken in the context of what amounts to a whiteout of information on drone and other air operations in Afghanistan. Pentagon reports on drone and other air attacks in other nations are inadequate at best, and these
reports when they come have been inaccurate and have grossly under-reported casualties. The U.S. government has made no reports and taken no responsibility for the emotional devastation of drone attacks on children as well as adults, as documented by the Al Karama Foundation’s “Traumatising Skies.”

Syracuse is home to a creative and courageous group of activists who have done a great deal of public education already and who are continuing those efforts.

Overcoming Censorship

Some companies have refused to rent space for billboards opposing drone wars. No company has questioned the facts of the messages, apart from one company asking us to say that drone wars “may” make us less safe, adding the word “may.”

It is hardly disputable that drones make orphans, or that they kill innocent children. That drone wars make us less safe ought to be obvious after what the “successful” drone war has done to Yemen, following the April 23, 2013, testimony of Farea al-Muslimi before the U.S. Congress that drone strikes were building support for terrorists. But don’t take it from him or me, when a leaked CIA document admits that the drone program is “counterproductive,” and numerous recently retired top U.S. officials agree.

For the most part companies have given no explanation for refusals to display these graphics. In some cases, they have said the graphics made them “uncomfortable,” or they’ve asked that we stick to “positive-oriented messaging.” Those companies that have written policies that I’ve seen for what they accept have in no case had a policy that explained their refusal, other than their declaration of their right to refuse for any reason whatsoever.

While some companies in Syracuse said no, and others yes, every company in Forth Smith, Arkansas has, thus far, said no, without any explanation. These include:
Feel free to ask them to explain. Remember that politeness is most effective. RAM Outdoor Advertising did say: “Thanks for sharing your potential creative. I’ve shared it with the owners and they have decided that your creative will violate our lease agreements. We will have to decline your ads.” I requested to see the “lease agreements” and received no reply.

Fort Smith is the home of the 188th Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard at Ebbing Air National Guard base, which controls Reaper drones for assassination and target identification. It appears drone operations will expand there also.

Freedom of Speech

World Beyond War billboards are funded entirely by contributions made by supporters of ending war who want to help put up more billboards. We will continue to solicit such contributions and to work to overcome censorship.

One of the more common, if ludicrous, defenses of war making is that it somehow defends one’s rights. Yet, freedom of speech and of press is routinely restricted in the name of protecting the war making.

Following the recent school shooting in Florida, we pointed out that the shooter had been trained by the U.S. military in a JROTC program funded by the NRA, and that this information was publicly available and not disputed. Major media outlets chose to avoid that story in order to focus, instead, on the undocumented (and, as it happens, false) claim that the shooter had worked with right-wing groups.

Google, Facebook, and other big forces on the internet are working hard to steer ever more traffic toward big corporate
outlets and away from voices of dissent. Congress has eliminated net neutrality.

Whistleblowers are now up against the risk of prison time.

Protesters at inauguration parades face felony charges.

In my town in Virginia, Charlottesville, we are still forbidden to take down any war monuments, and still have no public peace monuments, but the local government has just made it a crime to hold a public demonstration without a permit obtained 30 days ahead.

In some airports and perhaps other locations, this story that you are reading will be blocked by internet services on the grounds that it constitutes “advocacy.”

Is this the “freedom” for which the wars endanger and impoverish and indebt us?

**What you can do**

1. Politely phone the companies above and ask them to explain their censorship.

2. Send us ideas for good locations for billboards.

3. Send us [donations](#) with which to put up more billboards.

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**David Swanson** is an author, activist, journalist, and radio host. He is director of [WorldBeyondWar.org](http://WorldBeyondWar.org) and campaign coordinator for [RootsAction.org](http://RootsAction.org). Swanson’s books include *War Is A Lie* and *When the World Outlawed War*. He blogs at [DavidSwanson.org](http://DavidSwanson.org) and [WarIsACrime.org](http://WarIsACrime.org). He hosts [Talk Nation Radio](http://TalkNationRadio.org). He is a 2015, 2016, 2017 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee.
GETTING BEYOND WAR AND MILITARISM: the “To-Do” List

Violence begets violence. War profits only the few, the rich, the powerful — the 1%. As moral beings and tax paying citizens we must vigorously oppose war. Especially those wars of aggression perpetrated by the United States and its allies and proxies. These mostly occur in or near the Islamic oil lands (Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen).

We must oppose resource war and wars of weapon demonstration (drones over Gaza). We must oppose war for corporate profit. War industry lobbying (Lockheed Martin) and election buying corrupts our Congress, our Executive Branch and any legitimate defense force. War dehumanizes the “other.” It dehumanizes and disempowers ourselves.

War diverts vast, unimaginable federal tax funds from their most worthy function: meeting human needs – feeding, housing, schooling, healthcare, infrastructure. And disaster relief – these days so criminally paltry (Puerto Rico).

War solves no legitimate problem; war spawns problems. War impoverishes, erodes democracy, undermines law. War targets civilians, creates refugees and triggers ethnic cleansing. War uses rape, maims bodies and minds (PTSD), cheapens life. War spurs ecological devastation (Viet Nam) and climate disaster. Nuclear war risks nuclear winter, i.e. the extinction of the human species.

Not only must we oppose war, we must oppose militarism: the incessant search for enemies, the incessant preparation for war, the saturation of our economy and culture with martial values and vested interests in war.
WHAT MUST BE DONE (personally and nationally)

1. replace toxic with renewable energy.
2. avoid dependence on the war economy; divest from the corporate war profiteers.
3. expose the mainstream media’s unholy alliance with militarism. The corporate-owned MSM reflexively align with military policy. The MSM generate fear, normalize violence, villainize rival powers, gloss over war crime.
4. “take a knee” against nationalism/exceptionalism – major enablers of war.
5. stamp out racism – also a major enabler of war (end the “new Jim Crow,” de-militarize the police, abolish the prison/industrial complex).
6. resist the Islamophobia enabling invasions and genocide (Yemen).
7. end U.S. military aid and exports to any invading nation or entity (Saudi Arabia/Yemen, Israel/Palestine).
8. abolish nuclear weapons.
9. abolish weaponized drones.
10. stop deploying mercenaries.
11. negotiate in good faith with adversaries.
12. expose the phony “war on terrorism” – that war of terrorism (a.k.a. state terrorism) – cynically keeping the pot boiling. “Terrorism,” though rarely defined, is the use – or threat – of violence against civilians for political or economic reasons.
13. withdraw U.S. and NATO forces from Iraq, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe.
14. withdraw clandestine U.S. special forces – 70,000 in about 80 countries – from the continents they infest (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America).
15. dismantle U.S. military bases menacing rival economic systems (Venezuela, Russia, China, Iran, North Korea).
dismantle the myriad, redundant domestic military bases not necessary for defending our borders.

finance the reconstruction of those nations that U.S. bombs destroyed; compensate the victims (1950s North Korea, Viet Nam north and south, Laos, Iraq, Libya).

avoid lifestyle pitfalls (addictions, distractions, consumerism, co-optation, debt). These impede our capacity to speak out and further risk resistance.

build solidarity with kindred – and sometimes not so kindred – spirits. Get beyond our bubbles, our turfs, our siloes.

overcome obliviousness and compartmentalization. The compartmentalized mind is a colonized mind. People of goodwill here often bemoan the lack of federal funding for domestic needs. Yet many refuse to acknowledge – much less oppose – the elephantine impact U.S. military spending has at home. Such needs, if addressed, would provide more employment and security than high tech war industries do.

slash the Pentagon budget. Doing so will boost most of the foregoing initiatives. Doing so will impede the mounting decay and insolvency of this nation.

become a war tax resister.

Our ultimate mission: “achieving a global just peace by abolishing war and militarism.” Okay, we’re unlikely to achieve that utopian goal. But work on these “can-do” campaigns has a huge payoff: reducing human suffering, plus empowering ourselves and others. We can’t do everything, but we can do something. Each of us needs to do what we can, with what we have, where we are.

Is there a more authentic way to spend our lives than that?
Standing Up to the National Anthem

by James Ricks of Upstate Drone Action, previously published on United National Antiwar Coalition Blog and Ithaca Gazette

This Nation’s anthem was composed by Francis Scott Key, a racist, white supremacist, anti-abolitionist lawyer. He felt that black people, free or slave, were genetically inferior to white people. That perception was the foundation of his legal pursuits. When he was the District Attorney for the City of Washington, he defended slavery and prosecuted those in the abolitionist movement. He argued in court that the institution of slavery should be continued, continued ad infinitum, I suppose, as there is no known cure for “genetic inferiority” that I am aware of. Actually, I never heard anyone but my white brothers use that particular terminology.

But back to Francis, this anthem that he wrote, and this very demeaning obsession this nation has, that I, a black man, should stand respectfully and honor his musical creation. I suggest that anyone who takes umbrage at my statement, read the lyrics of the song, the whole song. Then dare ask a black person to stand for this anthem.

“No refuge could save the hireling and slave/ From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave/ And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave/ O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

Would Jewish people be expected to stand reverently for an anthem written by Heinrich Himmler or Joseph Goebbels or the rest in that Nazi crew? Should anyone be expected to endure the humiliation of honoring an anthem, authored by someone who felt they were less than human? Not in any just environment. Which also begs the question, exactly where are we?
Ridicule, anger, suspicion, and confrontation are what people face, should they choose not to demonstrate visible deference to this disingenuous (at best) piece of sheet music. To expect black people to stand and honor this anthem is troubling on so many levels that it boggles the mind. It’s a shameful thing to stand for an anthem, which represents, in my opinion, a tacit acceptance of a clear insult or the pure ignorance – willful or otherwise – of its author, its history and tone.

Colin Kaepernick ‘takes a knee’ during the pre-game national anthem

I don’t want to get into the psychological ramifications of showing respect to a personal insult, hurtful but at least a contained experience. Truthfully, I look at white people who stand for the national anthem at a sporting event and wonder what’s on their minds. Are they following the crowd’s inertia, thinking only to finally get on with the game? Are they thinking military thoughts, nationalistic thoughts? I don’t know.

But to see black people standing and honoring this anthem sadly brings back familiar feelings, feelings I had while reading “The Invisible Man,” a book written by Ralph Ellison. He wrote about the dynamics between the slave and the enslaver, in a fairly self-explanatory phenomenon called the “Plantation Mentality.” Egregious or otherwise, the slave did what was pleasing to the master. If you need elaboration, read the book. It makes me sad and disappointed to see that this repugnant form of oppression is alive, slightly camouflaged and insidiously thriving.