

Peace Not War

Peace is the Way

Guest post by Rob Mulford, cross-posted from the News-Miner Community Perspective

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Editor's note: Some of us met Rob in Pakistan where we both participated in a peace delegation which took us into Waziristan and gave us an opportunity to talk to people from different segments of society in Pakistan. Rob has been watching the growth of the drone program in Alaska, and his initiative to infiltrate the planning has resulted in an inside perspective on the overweening hubris behind US militarism and the imperialist drive to rule the world.

What our Leaders are Saying

On Nov. 15, the News-Miner quoted Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan as well as former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton regarding the recent "terror" attacks in Paris.

"The truth is... they hate us for who we are, what we stand for. Democracy, religious freedom, tolerance, equality... What we need to do is ... take the fight to them, so they don't show up on our shores." – Senator Dan Sullivan

"The desire of radical Islam to attack our nation remains ever so present. This is not the time to reduce investment in our national security, whether abroad or here in the homeland." – Senator Lisa Murkowski

"This election is not only about electing a president, it's about choosing our next commander in chief. All the other issues we want to deal with depend on us being secure and

strong. We are at war with violent extremism.” – Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

An Inside View of the Military Planners



In December 2011, I attended the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement (IDGA) Special Operations Summit in Tampa, Florida, a yearly event held for the military, private contractors and government agencies involved intelligence and special operations. I did this surreptitiously as a control systems integrator. The conference forbade members of the press from attending, and we were assured that no one was recording the sessions so the attendees were free to

openly discuss their clandestine programs.

One of the presentations, covering the technology end of the summit's focus, Human Geography, included PowerPoint slides depicting automated models of human communities. These models look somewhat like organic molecules. I learned that individual atoms in the models represent actual individual human beings, although dehumanized by reclassification as agents. Clusters of atoms represented actual groups of human beings such as villages, tribes, families, professional associations, businesses and religious groups. Each agent and cluster had associated with it data, both historical and dynamic, of that particular object's cultural, religious, economic, political and military characteristics. The interconnecting lines represented interrelationships between the various objects. Near real-time dynamic data driving these models was supplied by: "human intelligence" like that gathered by Human Terrain Systems field teams; signals intelligence coming from sources like the monitoring of cell phone traffic and drone sensors.

This technology, known as Dynamic Network Analysis, is one of the instruments used to generate drone targets. The people that do this they call “human geographers” and “targeters.” I receive several help-wanted ads every week from companies looking to fill these positions.

During the session’s discussion period, one of the special operators said the term “high value target” is generally misconceived to mean a leader of a terrorist cell or someone responsible for acts of terror. He said, “If we take out a leader, they just replace him in short order.” He explained they found it much more useful to use the models to find inter tribal and inter familial connections, like those made by marriage. He said when we take out one of these connections, it disrupts their network (i.e. inter-tribal and inter-familial relations) and has more tactical value. He explained that they were using this method presently to target the Haqqani (tribal) network in Pakistan.

Meeting the Victims

In the fall of 2012, I had the honor and privilege to be a member of a Code Pink peace delegation, invited to Pakistan by Pakistani human rights attorney Shahzad Akbar, to witness the devastation caused by U.S. drone warfare there.

One of the highlights of our visit was an 11-hour caravan to Waziristan. En route we stopped at many villages where we were greeted by crowds of Pakistanis, most in their youth, returning our peace sign salutes in kind. When we reached Dera Ismail Khan, in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Area it was glowing in the moonlight. Once again crowds of youth lined the street. I placed my hands on the window of the bus. A Pakistani placed his opposite mine. Soon the bus was rocking from others on the bus and in the crowd sharing this loving expression. The next morning we joined thousands of Pakistanis on a farm near the village of Tank chanting, “We want peace”. My tears welled.

If we symptomatically diagnose “their” reaction to “their” pain, how can we in all honesty claim, “They hate us for who we are”, if our actions toward “them” have indeed been guided by, “Democracy, religious freedom, tolerance, equality”? To do so defies logic as well as common decency.

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US “investment” in military solutions from 2001 to the present total more than \$8.7 trillion. The world is no less broken today. If your car were malfunctioning, how long would you go on paying a mechanic to beat it with a sledgehammer, 14 years plus? The world “invested” more than 75 million lives in World War II. That’s the equivalent to 40,000 violent deaths per day for five years. Do we really want to go there again? Are these, in themselves, not examples of violent extremism?

I believe that we can do very well without a commander in chief. After all, the Department of Defense is no older than I am. We cannot, however, even begin to address those issues that we need to deal with, like global climate change, while we remain on this deathly path. Let’s begin forging swords into ploughshares by demilitarizing our local economy. As the ever spiritually mindful A. J. Muste said, “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.”

Rob Mulford is an Interior resident and peace activist.