**PART FOUR**

**4.5 Toward omnicide**

As London’s mayor, Ken Livingstone recently stated in reference to U.S. Dictator George W. Bush’s visit to the United Kingdom, “I actually think that Bush is the greatest threat to life on this planet that we've most probably ever seen. The policies he is initiating will doom us to extinction” (“London Mayor,” 2003). While unapologetic disgust of Bush is justifiable, “too stupid to be president” is merely a symptom of the larger cancer of American militarism and corporate/financial greed that is taking the world in the direction of economic, social, political and environmental instability, if not chaos. This is evident in the unending refinement of technologies devoted to killing human beings.

A wild variety of munitions are what it takes to make the U.S. military the greatest spectacle on Earth. During the 1991 Gulf war, “the U.S. deployed 117,634 landmines in Iraq and Kuwait,” (Landsberg, 2003). Despite the terrible effects on non-combatant civilians and the worldwide outcry against their use, the U.S. continues to deploy landmines in battle and refuses to join the 142 signatory nations of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty. Naturally, the people who suffer most from such indiscriminate weaponry are peasant farmers and children playing in fields who often lose their limbs in random blasts.

When bigger fire power is needed to spook the spooks out of their caves, the military calls for aerial bombing with 2,000 pound cluster bombs which have been documented in recent wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq to indiscriminately kill civilians, or as George W. Bush calls them, “illegal noncombatants.” Brightly colored unexploded cluster bombs have been mistaken as toys or food packages resulting in injury or death to unsuspecting civilians.

[The] CBU-75 Sadeye [is] a cluster bomb that contains 1800 one-pound bomblets, each containing 0.7 pounds of TNT with 700 razor-sharp steel shards imbedded in it, lethal up to 40 feet. These are scattered over an area equivalent to 157 football fields; presumably nothing-military, civilian, old, young, male, female- survives within this space. Many of the bomblets fail to go off and become landmines, the perfect random killer. The people who drop these bombs know all this” (Bardacke, Lummis & Lustig, 2003).

Such weapons are not only used to inflict vast physical destruction, but also psychological terror. Bardacke et al. (2003) carried out an informal survey of the general public in North America to see if people thought there was any difference between state sanctioned military operations and terrorism. Most respondents seemed to have a woolly understanding of the issue, unable to see that the government’s mega-bombs which are employed to create a “significant emotional event” are really meant to terrify enemy troops *and* civilians, ie., *terrorism*. For example, the attack on Iraq in 2003 was marketed on American TV as a sort of sports event. The opening quarter trumpeted as “shock and awe” with an exciting array of missiles, bombs and high tech gadgetry being employed to bring democracy to the Iraqi people.

The following list offers an incomplete sampling of the modern killing technology that is being developed or is part of the U.S. arsenal:

1) The AC-130 is a “gigantic cargo plane that has been modified so that it can shoot 20 mm and 7.62 mm Gatling guns and a 105 mm howitzer out the side door. It circles around its target...and rains down fire from all sides.” The Gatling guns which fire “up to 6000 rounds per minute, can fill an area the size of a football field with one round per square foot. In one incident, the AC 130 that attacked the Afghan town of Chowkar-Karez on October 22-23, 2001, killing, it is said, 93 civilians.”

2) The BLU-82B, also known as Big Blue or Daisy Cutter weighs 15000 lb “Its lethal radius is reported to be between 300 and 600 feet (‘five football fields’)... Military sources say that its ‘psychological effect’ (ie. terrifying effect) is at least as useful as the material destruction it wreaks” since people in the vicinity may mistake if for a nuclear weapon due to the gigantic sound and cloud of dust it releases (Bardacke et al).

3) A new fun-filled boy-toy being developed by the military is the MOAB, which some call the “mother of all bombs,” but really stands for “massive ordnance air burst” bomb. MOAB is now the largest non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. apparatus weighing in at 21,000-pounds. It is “pushed out the back of a C-130 transport and guided by satellite.” The “massive explosive punch...is similar to a small nuclear weapon” (McWerthy, 2003).

4) If there is an lingering doubt about the horrific nature of modern warfare, the CBU-72/B will put it to rest. CBU-72/B is “a cluster bomb that contains three BLU- 73/B fuel-air explosives (FAE). Each of these holds 75 lb of ethylene oxide. The first explosion turns this into an aerosol cloud 60 feet in diameter and 9 feet thick; the second explosion ignites this, ‘turns the air into fire’ according to one description. The particular advantage of this is that there is no such thing as ‘taking shelter.’ The cloud follows the victims anywhere; they will even inhale the burning fuel. Even if they are in deep bunkers, the explosion burns up all the oxygen from the air, and creates a vacuum that ruptures the lungs and other internal organs. And if it fails to ignite it is still a killer: the aerosol itself is as lethal as poison gas. The U.S. dropped 254 of these during the Gulf War”...(Bardacke et al.).

5) The “B-61-11 burrowing nuke bomb” is able to smash “through the earth and concrete” and “explodes with the force of an estimated 340,000 tons of TNT.” It contains plutonium and hydrogen elements which release an “H-bomb fireball” upon explosion. The U.S. also “plans for a new generation of ‘mini,’ ‘micro’ and ‘tiny’ nuclear bombs and bunker busters,” (Worthington). Depending on the occasion, the new array of nukes can be fun for the whole family, at barbecues, picnics and 4th of July celebrations--kids, don’t try this without parental supervision.

6) Just as we often hear in sports commentary, it is not only physical size that contributes to a winning player, but speed as well. As Shachtman (2003) reports, “The Tomahawk cruise missile may seem fast and far-reaching. But Pentagon planners want more.” With faster and farther ranging weaponry, the U.S. would be able to extend it’s military and political hegemony over the world by comfortably “delivering” payloads from bases in the continental U.S. The Pentagon is designing a “hypersonic CAV (Common Aero Vehicle) cruise missile” that by 2010 is supposed to be able to deliver a 1,000 lb “bunker-busting bomb into near-space, and then send it crashing into a target more than 3,000 miles away, at four times the speed of sound.” By 2025, the military hopes to develop a drone plane called a Hypersonic Cruise Vehicle which could “travel more than 10,000 miles in less than two hours, and deliver 12,000 pounds worth of CAVs or sensors.” Also on board HCVs could be “Small Diameter Bombs (SDB) or other munitions” (“Bomb anywhere,” 2003). This sort of “delivery” will have a different sort of impact than ordering a pizza.

7) It is not only missiles and bombs that can cause destruction, but also a new geophysical weapon being developed by the U.S. called HAARP (High Active Auroral Research Program). HAARP is supposed to be able to turn the Earth itself into a weapon by manipulating the atmosphere, the ionosphere and the magnetosphere. Solomatin (2003) found U.S. experimentation with HAARP to be so controversial that the Russian government recommended to the United Nations that HAARP experiments be banned.

Many specialists and scientists believe that unexpected natural disasters, some surprising technological catastrophes and the striking social cataclysms that struck Europe and Asia in the summer of the year 2002 might have certain global reasons in common in their origin. Principally the possibility of secret geophysical weapon tests. Tests which were either secret or unauthorized...The operators of such a weapon are able to program floods, tornados storms and even earthquakes in any region of the planet. It is also possible to paralyze civil and military electronic surveillance systems, and even to affect the psyche of entire nations.

8) In the embattled oceans, Cramer (2003) found the U.S. Navy is involved in “Aggressive efforts to exploit ocean resources.” These efforts “threaten to alter, perhaps irrevocably, the finely-tuned chemical balances of the deep sea, with grave peril to animal and plant populations that dwell within it.” In addition to the noise that sea animals must endure from commercial “ship engines and propellers and seismic airguns from oil exploration,” the Navy’s LFAS (low frequency active sonar) emits greater noise and disruption to marine mammals who “depend on sound to survive -- to identify feeding grounds, to communicate and find mates, and to follow migration routes.”

Each [LFAS] system, towed from a ship, deploys an array of 18 loudspeakers, each beaming 215 decibels (dB) of sound at low-frequency throughout the sea. Noise emanating from each speaker is equivalent to standing on a runway next to a jet fighter taking off. Where the sound converges, further away from the source, the noise level rises to 235 dB, one hundred times louder. A hundred miles from the source, the sound may still be as loud as 160 dB, loud enough to cause permanent hearing damage in humans.

There is evidence that LFAS experiments from have caused numerous whales to become stranded or die at sea.

9) Gazing back up toward the skies, Wirbel (2002) directs our attention to a program which became well known in the 1980’s as *Star Wars,* or the missile defense shield. Although the idea of missile defense has been ridiculed by scientists who found flaws in it’s ability to reliably block incoming missiles, the program has offered broad cover for the merging of governmental agencies, private corporations and the U.S. military toward the goal of developing space based weaponry and surveillance systems. The U.S. Space Command’s plans for space were made explicit in the 1996 document, *Vision for 2020.* Of crucial importance*:* domination of space in order “to protect the current global division between economic haves and have- nots”; “satellites and satellite launches”; “The Global Positioning System (GPS)” in order to “provide precision targeting for military missions”; and the Defense Support Program (DSP) which warns of impending missile attacks from abroad.

**5. Epitaph: Holding world opinion in contempt**

Our...military...must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world. -- U.S. President George W. Bush, post 9/11, (Castro, 2003)

That is what we are: dark corners of the world. Never before had anyone offered a better definition; no one had shown such contempt. -- Fidel Castro (2003)

There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all! -- Mario Savio

An eye for an eye will only end up leaving the whole world blind. -- Mahatma Gandhi

The legacy of the past five hundred years of imperialist cultures in conjunction with the innovation of technology and the pace of global environmental degradation is terrifying to ponder. For example, Waugh (2003) reports that “according to a European scientific committee” which researched radiation biology and human epidemiology, studies show that radioactive “pollution from nuclear energy and weapons programmes up to 1989...have caused, or will eventually cause, the death of 65 million people worldwide.”

As shown in this paper, one can never relax the vigilant faculties of the mind regarding the development of ever more powerful and deadly weapons systems and other potentially destructive innovative technology. Proctor found that as of 1991, between 20 percent up to a third of the world’s scientists were involved in military research. The human potential for solving environmental problems is squandered by the militaristic mindset that has largely created the environmental chaos we are now engulfed in.

The logic of capitalism and imperialism is not inherently insane, but is cold and calculating. Though from other micro, macro and moral perspectives, it *is* insane, it *is* pathological, it *is* murderous and it *is* self destructive. When President George W. Bush stated just before the war in Iraq that “the world’s credibility is at stake here,” he was deriding the entire world for its unwillingness to blindly follow the U.S. into another catastrophic war. He was being contemptuous of anyone who dared not serve ruling class interests. Such a depraved statement could only be made by a leader in a society where a lot of people simply don’t know what the hell is going on. As the venerable critic Gore Vidal put it, “Ours is a totally corrupt society” (Cooper, 2003). A slight exaggeration, there are many people who brilliantly devote themselves to moral, spiritual and ecological awakening through their work in a wide array of social movements. Millions of people are doing their best to steer *Spaceship Earth* to a calmer place in the universe. But will it happen before we reach a black hole or fall off the edge of the universe into an abyss, tumbling into oblivion?

Speaking of the fledgling American republic in his speech on Independence Day in 1821, President John Quincy Adams stated that “Her glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of the mind.” Yet, on the eve of the decision to make war on Iraq for the second time, a decision to inflict more pain on a devastated country and determine the fate of hundreds of thousands of innocent and suffering children, Floyd (2003) lamented, “That glory, long dying, is now gone, given the final blow by George W. Bush--the gravedigger of the American Republic.” May she rest in peace and a better world grow out of the ashes.

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