

America's Sniper Fetish

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

"Military men are just dumb, stupid animals to be used as pawns in foreign policy." Henry Kissinger

When the story broke about the Feb. 2 shooting death of former Navy SEAL and American Sniper author, Chris Kyle, we immediately learned that the 39-year-old wrote the Naval Special Warfare Sniper Doctrine, the first Navy SEAL sniper manual, and he "served four tours in Iraq and was awarded two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation."

We were also regaled with the "fact" that from 1999 to 2009, "Kyle recorded more than 150 sniper kills, the most in U.S. military history."

"We have lost more than we can replace," said Kyle's American Sniper co-author, Scott McEwen. "Chris was a patriot, a great father, and a true supporter of this country and its ideals. This is a tragedy for all of us."

Real tragedy for all of us: The reality that Kyle's book was a New York Times best seller along with the widespread public celebration of 150 "kills" (surely a number conjured up for maximum propaganda impact) is business-as-usual in the home of the brave.

"A different breed of warrior"

The entire Chris Kyle episode brought me back to something I wrote nine years ago after reading a Jan. 2, 2004, New York Times article by Eric Schmitt, entitled "In Iraq's Murky Battle, Snipers Offer U.S. a Precision Weapon."

Consider Schmitt's opening lines: "The intimate horror of the guerrilla war here in Iraq seems most vivid when seen through the sights of a sniper's rifle. In an age of satellite-guided bombs dropped at featureless targets from 30,000 feet, Army snipers can see the expression on a man's face when the bullet hits."

Schmitt went on to quote an American sniper boasting: "I shot one guy in the head, and his head exploded. Usually, though, you just see a dust cloud pop up off their clothes, and see a little blood splatter come out the front."

The newspaper of record also crowed about a sniper's ability "to fell guerrilla gunmen and their leaders with a single shot from as far as half a mile away" all in the name of protecting "infantry patrols sweeping through urban streets and alleyways."

"Soldiering is a violent business, and emotions in combat run high. But commanders say snipers are a different breed of warrior — quiet, unflappable marksmen who bring a

dispassionate intensity to their deadly task,” Schmitt dutifully explained.

Let’s pause for a minute here to re-cap. The alleged liberal media ignored any mention of an illegal invasion and occupation while turning U.S. snipers into rifle-toting gods: “calm, methodical, and disciplined” men, we’re told, who undergo psychological screening “to make sure they’re not training a nut.”

Define “nut.”

“I’d shoot him, otherwise he’d shoot me”

Specialist Wilson told Schmitt that he tries not to see his Iraqi victims “as men with families and children” and a Sergeant Davis had this to say about the eight confirmed kills to his credit: “As soon as they picked up a weapon and tried to engage U.S. soldiers, they forfeited all their rights to life, is how I look at it.”

These men, I guess, are no more “nuts” than those who firebombed Dresden and Tokyo or those who piloted the Enola Gay or blew up Korean dams or napalmed Southeast Asia or used sand plows to cover Iraqi soldiers or fired depleted uranium shells in Yugoslavia or launch predator drones today.

The Times reassure us that “our” snipers are well-trained and have “honed the art of killing to a fine edge.” They always hit the right target, Schmitt promises us, soothingly.

“We don’t have civilian casualties,” a sniper explained when asked how he avoided hitting the Iraqi schoolchildren. “Everything you hit, you know exactly what it is. You know where every round is going.”

We can all sleep better tonight...

After fetishizing their weapons of choice and informing us that U.S. snipers often wrap condoms on the gun muzzle “to keep the sand out,” Schmitt offers some helpful context: “Most snipers are familiar with firearms even before joining the armed forces. Sergeant Davis and Specialist Wilson grew up on farms, and both owned their first rifles before they were 10. They fondly remember hunting deer as youngsters.”

You gotta love his use of the word fondly to soften the image of frightened animals being stalked and murdered by human children.

In the classic liberal media tradition of asking the tough questions, Schmitt concludes with this one: “Would they ever shoot a child who aimed at them?”

Specialist Wilson, a father of five, hesitated before replying. “I couldn’t imagine that,” he said. Davis saw things differently: “I’d shoot him, otherwise he’d shoot me.”

However, before you lose any sleep over any potential “nuts” running around spending our tax dollars exploding the heads of brown-skinned children, Davis did offer this caveat (which Schmitt’s editor tellingly chose as the article’s closing line): “But I wouldn’t feel good about it.”

This neatly transitions us back to the violent death of Chris Kyle who, since leaving the

service, had been running an organization ostensibly designed to help ex-enlistees with post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD).

Counter-recruitment is the best “support”

According to a 2008 RAND study, up to 20 percent of U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from PTSD.

Eddie Ray Routh, the 25-year-old accused killer, is “a former Marine said to suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome.” He is a veteran, we’re told, “who served in Iraq and Haiti and who police say may have been suffering from some type of mental illness from being in the military.”

Apparently Kyle and his friend Chad Littlefield had taken Routh to a shooting range “to aid his recovery.”

WTF?

I’d suggest our (sic) troops don’t need day trips to the shooting range; they need more information about what “serving their country” really means.

Sniper worship, yellow ribbons, flag-waving, repressive laws, peer pressure, and loud chants of “USA” don’t qualify as support but do qualify as self-policed obedience orchestrated by a corporate-dominated state. Ultimately, however, it’s not an issue of “support” but rather, learning to resist the relentless conditioning.

We grow up watching war movies and playing with guns. We’re surrounded by war memorials and war monuments, and are taught to obey and fear those in uniform. We witness the demonizing of those who oppose war.

Our (sic) media is overrun with militaristic fervor. Our (sic) tax dollars finance war and pro-war propaganda. Our (sic) government passes laws designed to thwart dissent.

As I’ve said before: The U.S. Department of Defense (sic) is the most violent institution on the planet and that includes its status as the planet’s worst polluter. Paid volunteers are nothing more than willing accomplices to the continuing carnage.

If we want a culture without sniper scorecards and without manipulated soldiers sent home with PTSD (and worse), we must rediscover the subversive pleasure of critical thought... and help others to do the same.

We must create and cultivate alternative visions. We must get busy with counter-recruitment. Now.

NYC Event Note: Mickey Z. will be part of a Feb. 9 panel called: “Game Over For the Environment: Keystone XL, Spectra and Direct Action.”

Mickey Z. is the author of 11 books, most recently the novel Darker Shade of Green. Until the laws are changed or the power runs out, he can be found on an obscure website called Facebook.

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