

Forgetting Gandhi on International Non-violence day

By [Pablo Ouziel](#)

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

October 2nd will mark the birth anniversary of Human Rights Activist, Mahatma Gandhi and for the first time, the United Nations is officially proclaiming this day to be the International Day of Non-violence. Hopefully, on this day we can all spare a little of our time to reflect on how little we have all understood Mahatma Gandhi's message, after all everyday we seem to plunge into a worse state of affairs and drift away farther from Gandhi's respectable message; "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

I wonder what it means to have an International Non-violence day. Does it mean that American soldiers, UN 'peacekeepers', Nato Forces, the Israeli military and Blackwater USA will put down their weapons for the day and reflect on the horrors that they are committing in the vague name of an international war on 'terror'? Does it mean that they will all continue killing as a few peaceful marchers around the world proclaim in total sanity, that the insanity that prevails is making it hard for peace-loving humans to coexist with this madness? Or those it mean, that the United Nations will clamp down on the killings perpetrated by the permanent members of its own security council?

Whatever happens on that day we can all rest assured that the day will pass and things will continue heading into the same almost unavoidable tragic ending, one which the respectable Professor Noam Chomsky describes in the following way; "The immediate fear is that by accident or design, Washington's war planners or their Israeli surrogate might decide to escalate their Cold War II into a hot one - in this case a real hot war."

Gandhi once said that, "an error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it." However since that now famous speech in 2001 when President Bush declared; "You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror," our lives have changed so much in so little time, that one wonders whether Gandhi's statement makes any difference to the lives of ordinary innocent people.

With so many dead since Bush's statement and so many more suffering, with our way of live being put upside down by secretive prisons, humiliating airport security checks, increased racism towards our Muslim brothers, students being tasered for asking inappropriate questions, and the president of a country being insulted by a University President in the name of freedom of speech, one wonders how long we will have to put up with this reality until the people of the world regain their rights and react against this vile oppression.

We are living in fearful times void of any reason, if one listens to the words of world leaders and reflects on their actions, one will see the incoherence which prevails. The ones

promoting global democracy are embracing imperialism and the ones asking for reason to flourish are being labelled as enemies. Evo Morales the first indigenous president of Bolivia, who was linked to Osama Bin Laden by the American ambassador in that country, last week speaking with Amy Goodman of democracy Now! said; "I think that in this new millennium, we fundamentally should be oriented towards saving lives and not ending lives."

Yet President Bush continues to raise the flag of peace and stability as American defence company stocks continue to rise and people continue to die. According to CNNMoney.com on September 26th; "The AMEX Defense Index, which tracks 14 major defence company stocks, rose 14.25 to a high of 1,686.72 in afternoon trading. Since last year, the index has risen roughly 47 percent, outperforming the broader S&P 500 index, which has climbed nearly 15 percent over the same period."

While Hugo Chavez president of Venezuela, another 'great enemy' of the American people during a UN address at the General Assembly in 2006, recommends to the assembly, the presidents of the world and in particular the American people to read Hegemony of Survival by Noam Chomsky, we learned this week by the hand of an editorial in The Los Angeles Times that, "the biggest beneficiary (of the business of war) has been Blackwater USA, a private security firm with powerful political and personnel ties to an administration that has awarded it more than \$1 billion in contracts since 2002."

So while this real life scenario remains a despicable reality and some blame Bush, while others blame corporations, I am inclined to blame the common people who through a combination of indifference, fear and lack of reason, are allowing their government representatives and a few corporations to accumulate wealth and power, while destroying the planet in which we all live. We must understand that the power is in the hands of the majority as long as we are all willing to accept that responsibility and turn it into action.

If we use International non-violence day to reflect on Gandhi's teachings and his struggle for freedom, we might learn from his own words that, "as human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world - that is the myth of the atomic age - as in being able to remake ourselves." If this reasoning can somehow ingrain itself into our thought process, those Wall Street and industry executives who are trying to assure investors that there will be little disturbance in military spending over the next several years, regardless of who succeeds President Bush in the White House, will be proved wrong. If however the people of the world have forgotten what Gandhi really stood for, there is nothing that can be done.

Pablo Ouziel is an activist and a free lance writer based in Spain. His work has appeared in many progressive media including Znet, Palestine Chronicle, Thomas Paine's Corner and Atlantic Free Press.

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Articles by: **Pablo Ouziel**

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