

God Bless America. And its Bombs

By [William Blum](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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When they bombed Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, El Salvador and Nicaragua I said nothing because I wasn't a communist.

When they bombed China, Guatemala, Indonesia, Cuba, and the Congo I said nothing because I didn't know about it.

When they bombed Lebanon and Grenada I said nothing because I didn't understand it.

When they bombed Panama I said nothing because I wasn't a drug dealer.

When they bombed Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen I said nothing because I wasn't a terrorist.

When they bombed Yugoslavia and Libya for "humanitarian" reasons I said nothing because it sounded so honorable.

Then they bombed my house and there was no one left to speak out for me. But it didn't really matter. I was dead. [1](#)

The Targets

It's become a commonplace to accuse the United States of choosing as its bombing targets only people of color, those of the Third World, or Muslims. But it must be remembered that one of the most sustained and ferocious American bombing campaigns of modern times — 78 consecutive days — was carried out against the people of the former Yugoslavia: white, European, Christians. The United States is an equal-opportunity bomber. The only qualifications for a country to become a target are: (A) It poses an obstacle — could be anything — to the desires of the American Empire; (B) It does not possess nuclear weapons; (C) It is virtually defenseless against aerial attack.

The survivors

"We never see the smoke and the fire, we never smell the blood, we never see the terror in the eyes of the children, whose nightmares will now feature screaming missiles from unseen terrorists, known only as Americans." [2](#)

NASA has announced an audacious new mission, launching a spaceship that will travel for four years to land on an asteroid, where it will collect dust from the surface and deliver the precious cargo to Earth, where scientists will then examine the material for clues to how life began. Truly the stuff of science fiction. However, I personally would regard it as a much

greater accomplishment of humankind if we could put an end to America's bombings and all its wars, and teach some humility to The Holy Triumvirate — The United States, the European Union and NATO — who recognize no higher power and believe they literally can do whatever they want in the world, to whomever they want, for as long as they want, and call it whatever they want, like "humanitarian."

The fall of the American Empire would offer a new beginning for the long-suffering American people and the long-suffering world.

Why is the United States waging perpetual war against the Cuban people's health system?

In January the government of the United States of America saw fit to seize \$4.207 million in funds allocated to Cuba by the United Nations Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the first quarter of 2011, Cuba has charged. The UN Fund is a \$22 billion a year program that works to combat the three deadly pandemics in 150 countries. [3](#)

"This mean-spirited policy," the Cuban government said, "aims to undermine the quality of service provided to the Cuban population and to obstruct the provision of medical assistance in over 100 countries by 40,000 Cuban health workers." Most of the funds are used to import expensive AIDS medication to Cuba, where antiretroviral treatment is provided free of charge to some 5,000 HIV patients. [4](#)

The United States sees the Cuban health system and Havana's sharing of such as a means of Cuba winning friends and allies in the Third World, particularly Latin America; a situation sharply in conflict with long-standing US policy to isolate Cuba. The United States in recent years has attempted to counter the Cuban international success by dispatching the US Naval Ship "Comfort" to the region. With 12 operating rooms and a 1,000-bed hospital, the converted oil tanker has performed hundreds of thousands of free surgeries in places such as Belize, Guatemala, Panama, El Salvador, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua and Haiti.

However, the Comfort's port calls likely will not substantially enhance America's influence in the hemisphere. "It's hard for the U.S. to compete with Cuba and Venezuela in this way," said Peter Hakim, president of the Inter-American Dialogue, a pro-US policy-research group in Washington. "It makes us look like we're trying to imitate them. Cuba's doctors aren't docked at port for a couple days, but are in the country for years." [5](#)

The recent disclosure by Wikileaks of US State Department documents included this little item: A cable was sent by Michael Parmly from the US Interests Section in Havana in July 2006, during the runup to the Non-Aligned Movement conference. He notes that he is actively looking for "human interest stories and other news that shatters the myth of Cuban medical prowess".

Michael Moore refers to another Wikileaks State Department cable: "On January 31, 2008, a State Department official stationed in Havana took a made-up story and sent it back to his headquarters in Washington. Here's what they came up with: [The official] stated that Cuban authorities have banned Michael Moore's documentary, 'Sicko,' as being subversive. Although the film's intent is to discredit the U.S. healthcare system by highlighting the excellence of the Cuban system, the official said the regime knows the film is a myth and does not want to risk a popular backlash by showing to Cubans facilities that are clearly not available to the vast majority of them." Moore points out an Associated Press story of June

16, 2007 (seven months prior to the cable) with the headline: “Cuban health minister says Moore’s ‘Sicko’ shows ‘human values’ of communist system.”

Moore adds that the people of Cuba were shown the film on national television on April 25, 2008. “The Cubans embraced the film so much it became one of those rare American movies that received a theatrical distribution in Cuba. I personally ensured that a 35mm print got to the Film Institute in Havana. Screenings of *Sicko* were set up in towns all across the country.” [6](#)

The United States also bans the sale to Cuba of vital medical drugs and devices, such as the inhalant agent Sevoflurane which has become the pharmaceutical of excellence for applying general anesthesia to children; and the pharmaceutical Dexmetomidine, of particular usefulness in elderly patients who often must be subjected to extended surgical procedures. Both of these are produced by the US firm Abbot Laboratories.

Cuban children suffering from lymphoblastic leukemia cannot use Erwinia L-asparaginasa, a medicine commercially known as Elspar, since the US pharmaceutical company Merck and Co. refuses to sell this product to Cuba. Washington has also prohibited the US-based Pastors for Peace Caravan from donating three Ford ambulances to Cuba.

Cubans are moreover upset by the denial of visas requested to attend conferences in the field of Anesthesiology and Reanimation that take place in the United States. This creates further barriers for Cuba’s anesthesiologists to update themselves on state of the art anesthesiology, the care of severely ill patients, and the advances achieved in the treatment of pain.

Some of the foregoing are but a small sample of American warfare against the Cuban medical system presented in a Cuban report to the United Nations General Assembly on October 28, 2009.

Finally, we have the Cuban Medical Professional Parole (CMPP) immigration program, which encourages Cuban doctors who are serving their government overseas to defect and enter the US immediately as refugees. The *Wall Street Journal* reported in January of this year that through Dec. 16, 2010, CMPP visas had been issued by US consulates in 65 countries to 1,574 Cuban doctors whose education had been paid for by the financially-struggling Cuban government. [7](#) This program, oddly enough, was initiated by the US Department of Homeland Security. Another victory over terrorism? Or socialism? Or same thing?

Wait until the American conservatives hear that Cuba is the only country in Latin America offering abortion on demand, and free.

Items of interest from a journal I’ve kept for 40 years, part IV

- “Remember the scene in *Battle of Algiers* in which, after the French have ‘killed off’ the revolution, mist fills the screen and then, gradually, coming out of the mist, the Algerians appear waving their fists, ululating with that sound both thrilling and frightening? That’s how I see 9/11 for those of us who grew up believing that the US stood for something grand, despite eras such as slavery, indigenous genocide, Jim Crow, etc. Many people say ‘Everything changed on 9/11.’ I think it’s more that ‘Everything became clear, finally, on 9/11.’ The mist cleared away.” — *Catherine Podojil*

- From a reader in Slovakia: I used the word “democracy” and not “capitalism”, because we were told [after the dissolution of the Soviet Union] that democracy was introduced in Slovakia, not capitalism. Everything was done in the name of democracy and not in the name of capitalism.
- “If someone other than Stalin had gained ascendancy in the Soviet Union, it is likely that millions of lives would have been spared — but millions of others still would have been caught up in the maw of the state machine, because the system itself was based on violence, repression and lawlessness — all in the name of ‘preserving the Revolution,’ a phrase which served the same function for the Kremlin as ‘national security’ does for the American elite, or the ‘higher law’ of God does for religious extremists of every stripe.” — *Chris Floyd*
- Bill Richardson, as US ambassador to the UN, re the newly-formed International Criminal Court in 1998: The United States should be exempt [from the court’s prosecution] because it has “special global responsibilities”.
- Russia might be a target of an American invasion some day because it’s the most powerful geopolitical opponent of the United States, with the power to extinguish the US in 30 minutes. The US might want to control the Russian oil and have complete control of Central Asia. That’s what’s behind the many missile sites the US has been building in Europe, not the stated fear of Iran.
- Bolivia has South America’s largest hydrocarbon deposits after Venezuela.
- “The notion that we ought to now go to Baghdad and somehow take control of the country strikes me as an extremely serious one, in terms of what we’d have to do when we got there. You’d probably have to put some new government in place. It’s not clear what kind of government that would be, how long you’d have to stay. For the U.S. to get involved militarily in determining the outcome of the struggle over who’s going to govern in Iraq strikes me as the classic definition of a quagmire.” — *Dick Cheney, when he was Secretary of Defense in 1991.*
- When the plans for a new office building for the U.S. military were brought before the Senate on Aug. 14, 1941, Sen. Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan was puzzled. “Unless the war is to be permanent, why must we have permanent accommodations for war facilities of such size?” he asked. “Or is the war to be permanent?” (Steve Vogel, “The Pentagon: A History” (2007) p.84)
- The combination of free trade and heavy US subsidies to American businesses has crippled the Mexican agricultural sector, causing impoverished former subsistence farmers to immigrate to the US by any means necessary. Conservative policies of supporting free trade while restricting immigration are inherently incompatible.
- The head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the first US occupation administration of Iraq in 2003, Paul Bremer, made free enterprise a guiding rule, shutting down 192 state-owned businesses where the World Bank estimated 500,000 people were working. (UPI, July 25, 2007)
- If an individual were behaving as Israel does as a country, that person would be removed to an institution for the criminally insane and subjected to intense drug therapy and a lobotomy. The person might find the guy next door to be named America.
- The United States threatens other states sufficient to cause those states to engage in defensive responses in order to exploit these to justify increasing “defense” expenditures.
- Bush, Obama and Western Europe have used criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s authoritarianism as a way of showing their publics how they

allegedly stand up for democracy.

- US right-wingers have a desire to replace our constitutional form of government with an authoritarian theocracy, and to (militarily) spread that theocratic construct around the world. (Ironically, the exact same objective fundamentalist Muslims have!) — *Kerry Thomasi, Online Journal*
- “Behind the ‘unexamined nostalgia for the “Golden Days” of American intelligence’ lay a much more devastating truth: the same people who read Dante and went to Yale and were educated in civic virtue recruited Nazis, manipulated the outcome of democratic elections, gave LSD to unwitting subjects, opened the mail of thousands of American citizens, overthrew governments, supported dictatorships, plotted assassinations, and engineered the Bay of Pigs disaster. ‘In the name of what?’ asked one critic. ‘Not civic virtue, but empire’.” — *Frances Stonor Saunders, The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters (1999)*
- ... a more just world, a deeper democracy and a liveable planet ...
- “Colin Powell’s presentation at the UN, February 5, 2003 seems like something out of Monty Python, with one key British report cited by Powell being nothing more than a student’s thesis, downloaded from the Web — with the student later threatening to charge U.S. officials with plagiarism.” — *Bill Moyers*
- “Venezuela’s well-off complain endlessly that their economic power has been diminished; it hasn’t; economic growth has never been higher, business has never been better. What the rich no longer own is the government.” — *John Pilger*

Notes

1. [Full list of US bombings since World War 2](#) ↵
2. Martin Kelly, publisher of a nonviolence website ↵
3. *Prensa Latina* (Cuba), March 12, 2011 ↵
4. *The Militant* (US, Socialist Workers Party), April 4, 2011 ↵
5. Bloomberg news agency, September 19, 2007 ↵
6. *Huffington Post*, December 18, 2010 ↵
7. *Wall Street Journal*, “[Cuban Doctors Come In From the Cold](#)” (video), January 14 2011 ↵

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William Blum is the author of:

- *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2*
- *Rogue State: A Guide to the World’s Only Superpower*
- *West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir*
- *Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire*

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