

Killing Your Own People

By [John Kozy](#)

Global Research, May 02, 2017

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

The American government often claims that its incursions into countries in the Middle East and elsewhere are carried out in order to protect the lives of Americans. Apparently people believe it; I have not heard anyone attempt to confute it.

But consider this scenario: A person in a public place in Erie, Pa. starts shooting at people randomly. A police officer kills him before anyone else is injured. That officer can be said to have protected the lives of the other people in the area, but he cannot be said to have protected the lives of people in San Francisco. Likewise, a soldier in Iraq who kills an enemy combatant can be said to have protected the lives of his comrades but cannot be said to have protected the lives of Americans living thousands of miles away. It's simply not possible.

But the claim that the soldier is protecting the lives of Americans in general can be made. People in general are not real however. Making sense of that claim is difficult. But suppose that this claim makes sense and consider some of the groups of Americans whose lives would be protected by those incursions.

Consider the undernourished children who go to bed hungry every night. Consider the elderly who can't afford both food and medicine. Consider the homeless, those who lack access to medical care, the unemployed whose benefits have expired. These are America's neglected. They die prematurely. So if their lives are being protected by the soldier in Iraq, he's protecting those the government is neglecting. The government, by not providing their basic needs, is slowly killing them, and they are the American government's own people. The claim that America's incursions in other countries protects Americans amounts to claiming that the lives of those being killed by neglect are being protected by the killing of enemy combatants in far off nations. That claim is patently absurd.

But killing people by neglect is not the same as killing people with sarin gas. Well perhaps, but the difference is not great.

USA Today recently [reported](#) that London's toxic air pollution is killing thousands every year. Is Great Britain gassing its own people to death? Isn't polluted air a poisonous gas? Isn't it just like sarin? And isn't Great Britain, by neglecting to provide its people with clean air, deliberately killing them? Isn't governmental neglect a deliberate act?

Numerous ways of killing people exist. Are some more acceptable than others? Imagine asking a person killed by a bullet rather than gas if he is grateful to his killer for having done that. Do you suppose that he would thank his killer for having been humane? Would he say, "Thanks for killing me with a gun rather than with gas?" Get serious people! To the dead, no

way of killing is more abhorrent than another.

I doubt that any society has ever existed that didn't kill its own people in some way or other. None will ever exist as long as people are viewed as means to some non human end. War has never been fought to protect anyone's life. When considered as fodder-factory, farm, or cannon-people's lives will continue to be "harvester" for God, country, profit, or even pleasure. Such is the nature of mankind as we have known it.

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