

Ridding the World of the “Sickness of Pacifism”

By [William Blum](#)

Theme: [History](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Picture the scene: Afghanistan, two hijacked tankers filled with highly inflammable fuel, surrounded by a crowd of Afghans eager to syphon off some for free ... What's the last thing you want to do? Right — drop bombs on the tankers. That's what a German military commander signaled an American drone airplane to do September 4. Kaboom!! At least 100 human beings incinerated. This incident has led to a lot of controversy in Germany, for Article 26 of Germany's post-war *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law/Constitution) states: “Acts tending to and undertaken with intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for a war of aggression, shall be unconstitutional. They shall be made a criminal offense.”

But NATO (aka the United States) can take satisfaction in the fact that the Germans have put their silly pacifism aside and acted like real men, trained military killers; although prior to this incident the Germans had engaged in some aerial and ground combat, there hadn't been such a dramatic and publicized taking of civilian lives. Deutschland now has more than 4,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, the third largest contingent in the country after the US and Britain, and at home they've just finished building a monument to fallen members of the Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces), founded in 1955; 38 members (so far) have surrendered their young lives in Afghanistan.

In January 2007 I wrote in this report about how the US was pushing Germany in this direction; that circumstances at that time indicated that Washington might be losing patience with the pace of Germany's submission to the empire's needs. Germany declined to send troops to Iraq and sent only non-combat forces to Afghanistan, not quite good enough for the Pentagon warriors and their NATO allies. Germany's leading news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, reported the following:

At a meeting in Washington, Bush administration officials, speaking in the context of Afghanistan, berated Karsten Voigt, German government representative for German-American relations: “You concentrate on rebuilding and peacekeeping, but the unpleasant things you leave to us.” ... “The Germans have to learn to kill.”

A German officer at NATO headquarters was told by a British officer: “Every weekend we send home two metal coffins, while you Germans distribute crayons and woollen blankets.” Bruce George, the head of the British Defence Committee, said “some drink tea and beer and others risk their lives.”

A NATO colleague from Canada remarked that it was about time that “the Germans left their sleeping quarters and learned how to kill the Taliban.”

And in Quebec, a Canadian official told a German official: “We have the dead, you drink

beer.” [1]

Ironically, in many other contexts since the end of World War II the Germans have been unable to disassociate themselves from the image of Nazi murderers and monsters.

Will there come the day when the Taliban and Iraqi insurgents will be mocked by “the Free World” for living in peace?

The United States has also engaged in a decades-long effort to wean Japan away from its post-WW2 pacifist constitution and foreign policy and set it back on the righteous path of again being a military power, only this time acting in coordination with US foreign policy needs.

“Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

“In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.” — Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, 1947, words long cherished by a large majority of the Japanese people.

In the triumphalism of the end of the Second World War, the American occupation of Japan, in the person of General Douglas MacArthur, played a major role in the creation of this constitution. But after the communists came to power in China in 1949, the United States opted for a strong Japan safely ensconced in the anti-communist camp. It's been all downhill since then. Step by step ... MacArthur himself ordered the creation of a “national police reserve”, which became the embryo of the future Japanese military ... Visiting Tokyo in 1956, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told Japanese officials: “In the past, Japan had demonstrated her superiority over the Russians and over China. It was time for Japan to think again of being and acting like a Great Power.” [2]... various US-Japanese security and defense cooperation treaties, which, for example, called on Japan to integrate its military technology with that of the US and NATO ... the US supplying new sophisticated military aircraft and destroyers ... all manner of Japanese logistical assistance to the US in its frequent military operations in Asia ... repeated US pressure on Japan to increase its military budget and the size of its armed forces ... more than a hundred US military bases in Japan, protected by Japanese armed forces ... US-Japanese joint military exercises and joint research on a missile defense system ... the US Ambassador to Japan, 2001: “I think the reality of circumstances in the world is going to suggest to the Japanese that they reinterpret or redefine Article 9.” [3] ... under pressure from Washington, Japan sent several naval vessels to the Indian Ocean to refuel US and British warships as part of the Afghanistan campaign in 2002, then sent non-combat forces to Iraq to assist the American war as well as to East Timor, another made-in-America war scenario ... Secretary of State Colin Powell, 2004: “If Japan is going to play a full role on the world stage and become a full active participating member of the Security Council, and have the kind of obligations that it would pick up as a member of the Security Council, Article Nine would have to be examined in that light.” [4]...

One outcome or symptom of all this can perhaps be seen in the 2005 case of Kimiko Nezu, a 54-year-old Japanese teacher, who was punished by being transferred from school to school, by suspensions, salary cuts, and threats of dismissal because of her refusal to stand during

the playing of the national anthem, a World War II song chosen as the anthem in 1999. She opposed the song because it was the same one sung as the Imperial Army set forth from Japan calling for an “eternal reign” of the emperor. At graduation ceremonies in 2004, 198 teachers refused to stand for the song. After a series of fines and disciplinary actions, Nezu and nine other teachers were the only protesters the following year. Nezu was then allowed to teach only when another teacher was present. [5]

Which brings us to Italy, the remaining member of the World War Two Tripartite, or Axis. Article 11 of the 1948 Italian Constitution says in part: “Italy rejects war as a means for settling international controversies and as an instrument of aggression against the freedoms of others peoples.” [6]

But Washington laid claim early to Italy’s post-war soul. In 1948 the United States all but took over the Italian election campaign to insure the Christian Democrats (CD) defeat of the Communist-Socialist candidate. (And the US remained an electoral force in Italy for the next three decades maintaining the CD in power. The Christian Democrats, in turn, were loyal Cold-War partners.) [7] In 1949, the US saw to it that Italy became a founding member of NATO. This was not seen as a threat to Article 11 because NATO has always painted itself as a “defensive” organization, even in 1999 when it carried out a 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia as both Italy and Germany supplied military aircraft and a NATO air base at Aviano, Italy served as the main hub for the daily bombing runs. For decades, Italy has been the home of US military bases and airfields used by Washington in one military adventure after another from Europe to Asia.

There are now some 3,000 Italian soldiers in Afghanistan performing a variety of services which enables the United States and NATO to engage in their bloody warfare. And 15 Italian soldiers have also lost their lives in that woeful land. The pressure on Italy, as on Germany, to become full-fledged combatants in Afghanistan and elsewhere is unrelenting from their NATO comrades. [8]

The Berlin Wall — Another Cold War Myth

Within a few weeks many of the Western media can be expected to turn on their propaganda machines to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, November 9, 1989. All the Cold War clichés about The Free World vs. Communist Tyranny will be trotted out and the simple tale of how the wall came to be will be repeated: In 1961, the East Berlin communists built a wall to keep their oppressed citizens from escaping to West Berlin and freedom. Why? Because commies don’t like people to be free, to learn the “truth”. What other reason could there have been?

First of all, before the wall went up thousands of East Germans had been commuting to the West for jobs each day and then returned to the East in the evening. So they were clearly not being held in the East against their will. The wall was built primarily for two reasons:

1. The West was bedeviling the East with a vigorous campaign of recruiting East German professionals and skilled workers, who had been educated at the expense of the Communist government. This eventually led to a serious labor and production crisis in the East. As one indication of this, the New York Times reported in 1963: “West Berlin suffered economically from the wall by the loss of about 60,000 skilled workmen who had commuted daily from their homes in East Berlin to their places of work in West Berlin.”[9]

2. During the 1950s, American coldwarriors in West Germany instituted a crude campaign of sabotage and subversion against East Germany designed to throw that country's economic and administrative machinery out of gear. The CIA and other US intelligence and military services recruited, equipped, trained and financed German activist groups and individuals, of West and East, to carry out actions which ran the spectrum from terrorism to juvenile delinquency; anything to make life difficult for the East German people and weaken their support of the government; anything to make the commies look bad.

It was a remarkable undertaking. The United States and its agents used explosives, arson, short circuiting, and other methods to damage power stations, shipyards, canals, docks, public buildings, gas stations, public transportation, bridges, etc; they derailed freight trains, seriously injuring workers; burned 12 cars of a freight train and destroyed air pressure hoses of others; used acids to damage vital factory machinery; put sand in the turbine of a factory, bringing it to a standstill; set fire to a tile-producing factory; promoted work slow-downs in factories; killed 7,000 cows of a co-operative dairy through poisoning; added soap to powdered milk destined for East German schools; were in possession, when arrested, of a large quantity of the poison *cantharidin* with which it was planned to produce poisoned cigarettes to kill leading East Germans; set off stink bombs to disrupt political meetings; attempted to disrupt the World Youth Festival in East Berlin by sending out forged invitations, false promises of free bed and board, false notices of cancellations, etc.; carried out attacks on participants with explosives, firebombs, and tire-puncturing equipment; forged and distributed large quantities of food ration cards to cause confusion, shortages and resentment; sent out forged tax notices and other government directives and documents to foster disorganization and inefficiency within industry and unions ... all this and much more. [10]

Throughout the 1950s, the East Germans and the Soviet Union repeatedly lodged complaints with the Soviets' erstwhile allies in the West and with the United Nations about specific sabotage and espionage activities and called for the closure of the offices in West Germany they claimed were responsible, and for which they provided names and addresses. Their complaints fell on deaf ears. Inevitably, the East Germans began to tighten up entry into the country from the West.

Let's not forget that Eastern Europe became communist because Hitler, with the approval of the West, used it as a highway to reach the Soviet Union and wipe out Bolshevism forever. After the war, the Soviets were determined to close down the highway.

In 1999, *USA Today* reported: "When the Berlin Wall crumbled, East Germans imagined a life of freedom where consumer goods were abundant and hardships would fade. Ten years later, a remarkable 51% say they were happier with communism." [11]

About the same time a new Russian proverb was born: "Everything the Communists said about Communism was a lie, but everything they said about capitalism turned out to be the truth."

Health care: ignoring the huge red elephant in the room

In the frenzied search of recent months for a better way of delivering health care to the American people, the American media has often discussed health-care systems in other countries, particularly Europe. Usually, little, if anything, is mentioned about Cuba's system,

where everyone is covered, for everything, where pre-existing conditions do not matter, and no patient pays for anything; i.e., nothing at all. The reason the Cuban system is seldom mentioned in the mass media is probably that it's kind of embarrassing that this otherwise poor country, laboring under the awful yoke of (choke, gasp) socialism, can deliver health care that most Americans can only dream of.

Now we have a new book by T.R. Reid, former correspondent for the *Washington Post* and commentator for National Public Radio. It's called "The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care". Reid does not avoid giving some credit to the Cuban system, but he makes sure that the reader knows that he's not taken in by any commie propaganda. He refers to the Cuban government as "a totalitarian Communist fiefdom", and adds: "In every country (except, perhaps, a police state like Cuba) there is one group of citizens who are not bound by the unified health care system: the rich." [12] Thus, the fact that Cuba has an egalitarian health care system is made to seem like something negative, something one could expect to find only in a police state.

In discussing the World Health Organization's giving Cuba high marks for fairness in its system, Reid points out: "Of course, fairness and equal treatment extend only so far; when Fidel Castro himself fell ill in 2007, medical experts were flown in from Europe to treat him." [13] Aha! I knew it! Americans, and not just the right-wing crazies, would never accept a medical system where everyone got completely free care for all ailments if the president ever got any kind of special treatment. Would they? We could at least ask them.

Speaking of the right-wing crazies, there was a report in the *New York Times* which said: "Tomorrow night, getting right into the thick of the battle," the president will "carry his message to the people in a nationwide television and radio speech" fighting for enactment of his health reform bill, which opponents tagged as "socialized medicine" and "an entering wedge for the takeover of private medicine by the federal government." The president was John F. Kennedy, the program was Medicare, the Times story was published on May 20, 1962. Despite the speech, the effort failed until passage in 1964. [14]

And speaking of the totalitarian communist socialist fascist Cuban police-state dictatorship, Mr. Reid and others might be interested in an [article I wrote](#) which demonstrates that during the period of its revolution, Cuba has enjoyed one of the very best human-rights records in all of Latin America.

But how to get past a lifetime of conditioning and reach the American mind with that message? At the recent convention of the AFL-CIO, the country's leading labor organization, there was a very progressive resolution put forth calling for the right of all Americans to travel to Cuba and for an end to the US embargo against the island nation. But at the end of the resolution the authors reminded us that they're Americans, calling upon Cuba "to release all political prisoners". [15]

To appreciate what's wrong with that resolution one must understand the following: The United States is to the Cuban government like al Qaeda is to Washington, only much more powerful and much closer. Since the Cuban revolution, the United States and anti-Castro Cuban exiles in the US have inflicted upon Cuba greater damage and greater loss of life than what happened in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. Cuban dissidents typically have had very close, indeed intimate, political and financial connections to American government officials, particularly in Havana through the United States Interests Section. Would the US government ignore a group of Americans receiving funds from al

Qaeda and/or engaging in repeated meetings with known leaders of that organization? In the past few years, the American government has arrested a great many people in the US and abroad solely on the basis of alleged ties to al Qaeda, with a lot less evidence to go by than Cuba has had with its dissidents' ties to the United States, evidence gathered by Cuban double agents. Virtually all of Cuba's "political prisoners" are such dissidents.

Notes

1. *Der Spiegel* (Germany), November 20, 2006, p.24 [↵](#)
2. *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1994 [↵](#)
3. *Washington Post*, July 18, 2001 [↵](#)
4. *BBC*, August 14, 2004 [↵](#)
5. *Washington Post*, August 30, 2005 [↵](#)
6. Wikipedia: "[Article 11 of Italian Constitution](#)" [↵](#)
7. William Blum, "Killing Hope", chapters 2 and 18 [↵](#)
8. For further discussion of US opposition to Post-WW2 Axis pacifism, see "[Former Axis Nations Abandon Post-World War II Military Restrictions](#)" [↵](#)
9. *New York Times*, June 27, 1963, p.12 [↵](#)
10. See *Killing Hope*, p.400, note 8, for a list of sources for the details of the sabotage and subversion [↵](#)
11. *USA Today*, October 11, 1999, p.1 [↵](#)
12. p.234 of Reid's book [↵](#)
13. *Ibid.*, p.150-1 [↵](#)
14. *Washington Post*, September 9, 2009 [↵](#)
15. [PDF of resolution](#) [↵](#)

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*

Portions of the books can be read, and signed copies purchased, at www.killinghope.org

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