

# Human Rights Day: Sobering Truths About America's Imperialist Crimes Against Humanity

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity, US NATO War Agenda](#)

Today, December 10, 2016 is Human Rights Day. We bring to the attention of our readers the powerful message of the late Harold Pinter regarding US Imperial Crimes against Humanity, with an introduction by Gary Kohls. First published in December 2014.

*"We have brought torture, cluster bombs, depleted uranium, innumerable acts of random murder, misery, degradation and death to the Iraqi people and call it 'bringing freedom and democracy to the Middle East'. - Harold Pinter*

*British playwright Harold Pinter won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. His powerful acceptance speech exposed the United States for its fascist, imperialist policies since World War II. His speech (delivered three years before he died in 2008) was an important glimpse into - and a reasonable summary of - the innumerable documentable US imperialistic crimes that have been secretly facilitated by our multinational corporations, our national security apparatus, our military leaders, our wealthy elites and the craven politicians who are beholden to those four realities that have shaped American foreign policy over the past 60 years.*

*True American patriots, if they really love the United States, must be honest about the dishonorable, dark side of their nation's history, a history that the rest of the world, especially Pinter, sees so clearly. Understanding that history will clear up any mystery about why the rest of the world fears and hates us.*

*Real patriots are courageous enough to hear painful truths.*

*Therefore I present below an extended excerpt from Harold Pinter's acceptance speech. It was videotaped and posted at: <http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=620>. For the sake of the future of our children and the planet, please listen to it in its entirety, and then wonder out loud why none of our so-called leaders will ever bring themselves to utter such truths:*

*"As every single person here knows, the justification for the invasion of Iraq was that Saddam Hussein possessed a highly dangerous body of weapons of mass destruction, some of which could be fired in 45 minutes, bringing about appalling devastation. We were assured that was true.*

*"It was not true. We were told that Iraq had a relationship with Al Qaeda and shared responsibility for the atrocity in New York of September 11th 2001. We were assured that this was true.*

*"It was not true. We were told that Iraq threatened the security of the world. We were assured it was true, and it was not true.*

“The truth is something entirely different. The truth has to do with how the United States understands its role in the world and how it chooses to embody it.

“I would like to look at the recent past, by which I mean United States foreign policy since the end of the Second World War. I believe it is obligatory for us to subject this period to at least some kind of even limited scrutiny, which is all that time will allow here.

“Everyone knows what happened in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe during the post-war period: the systematic brutality, the widespread atrocities, the ruthless suppression of independent thought. All this has been fully documented and verified.

“My contention here is that the US crimes in the same period have only been superficially recorded, let alone documented, let alone acknowledged, let alone recognised as crimes at all. I believe this must be addressed and that the truth has considerable bearing on where the world stands now. Although constrained, to a certain extent, by the existence of the Soviet Union, the United States’ actions throughout the world made it clear that it had concluded that it had carte blanche to do what it liked.”

#### “Low Intensity Conflict” in Central America

“Direct invasion of a sovereign state has never in fact been America’s favoured method. In the main, it has preferred what it has described as ‘low intensity conflict’. Low intensity conflict means that thousands of people die but slower than if you dropped a bomb on them in one fell swoop. It means that you infect the heart of the country, that you establish a malignant growth and watch the gangrene bloom. When the populace has been subdued or beaten to death ... the military and the great corporations sit comfortably in power, and they go before the camera and say that democracy has prevailed.

“The tragedy of Nicaragua was a highly significant case. I choose to offer it here as a potent example of America’s view of its role in the world, both then and now.

“I was present at a meeting at the US embassy in London in the late 1980s.

“The United States Congress was about to decide whether to give more money to the Contras in their campaign against the state of Nicaragua. I was a member of a delegation speaking on behalf of Nicaragua but the most important member of this delegation was a Father John Metcalf. The leader of the US body was Raymond Seitz (then number two to the ambassador, later ambassador himself). Father Metcalf said: ‘Sir, I am in charge of a parish in the north of Nicaragua. My parishioners built a school, a health centre, a cultural centre. We have lived in peace. A few months ago a Contra force attacked the parish. They destroyed everything: the school, the health centre, the cultural centre. They raped nurses and teachers, slaughtered doctors, in the most brutal manner. They behaved like savages. Please demand that the US government withdraw its support from this shocking terrorist activity.’

#### In War, the Innocent People are the Ones Who Suffer the Most

“Ambassador Seitz had a very good reputation as a rational, responsible and highly sophisticated man. He was greatly respected in diplomatic circles. He listened, paused and then spoke with some gravity. ‘Father,’ he said, ‘let me

tell you something. In war, innocent people always suffer.' There was a frozen silence. We stared at him. He did not flinch.

"Innocent people, indeed, always suffer.

"Finally somebody said: 'But in this case "innocent people" were the victims of a gruesome atrocity subsidised by your government, one among many. If Congress allows the Contras more money further atrocities of this kind will take place. Is this not the case? Is your government not therefore guilty of supporting acts of murder and destruction upon the citizens of a sovereign state?'

"Seitz was imperturbable. 'I don't agree that the facts as presented support your assertions,' he said.

"As we were leaving the embassy a US aide told me that he enjoyed my plays. I did not reply.

"I should remind you that at the time President Reagan made the following statement: 'The Contras are the moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers.'

"The United States supported the brutal Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua for over 40 years. The Nicaraguan people, led by the Sandinistas, overthrew this regime in 1979, a breathtaking popular revolution.

"The death penalty was abolished by the Sandinistas. Hundreds of thousands of poverty-stricken peasants were brought back from the dead. Over 100,000 families were given title to land. Two thousand schools were built. A quite remarkable literacy campaign reduced illiteracy in the country to less than one seventh. Free education was established and a free health service. Infant mortality was reduced by a third. Polio was eradicated.

"The United States denounced these achievements as Marxist/Leninist subversion. In the view of the US government, a dangerous example was being set. If Nicaragua was allowed to establish basic norms of social and economic justice, if it was allowed to raise the standards of health care and education and achieve social unity and national self-respect, neighbouring countries would ask the same questions and do the same things. There was of course at the time fierce resistance to the status quo in El Salvador."

### Reagan's Tapestry of lies Covered up Gruesome Atrocities

"I spoke earlier about 'a tapestry of lies' which surrounds us. President Reagan commonly described Nicaragua as a 'totalitarian dungeon'. But there was no record of death squads under the Sandinista government. There was no record of torture. There was no record of systematic or official military brutality. No priests were ever murdered in Nicaragua. There were in fact three priests in the government, two Jesuits and a Maryknoll missionary. The 'totalitarian dungeons' were actually next door, in El Salvador and Guatemala. The United States had brought down the democratically elected government of Guatemala in 1954 and it is estimated that over 200,000 people had been victims of successive military dictatorships.

"Six of the most distinguished Jesuits in the world were viciously murdered at the Central American University in San Salvador in 1989 by a battalion of the Alcatl regiment trained at Fort Benning, Georgia, USA. That extremely brave man Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated while saying mass. It is estimated that 75,000 people died.

“Why were they killed? They were killed because they believed a better life was possible and should be achieved. That belief immediately qualified them as communists. They died because they dared to question the status quo, the endless plateau of poverty, disease, degradation and oppression, which had been their birthright.

“The United States finally brought down the Sandinista government. It took some years and considerable resistance but relentless economic persecution and 30,000 dead finally undermined the spirit of the Nicaraguan people. They were exhausted and poverty stricken once again. The casinos moved back into the country. Free health and free education were over. Big business returned with a vengeance. ‘Democracy’ had prevailed.

“But this ‘policy’ was by no means restricted to Central America. It was conducted throughout the world. It was never-ending. And it is as if it never happened.

#### Perennial US Support for Right-wing, Anti-democratic, Military Dictatorships

“The United States supported – and in many cases engendered – every right wing military dictatorship in the world after the end of the Second World War. I refer to Indonesia, Greece, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Haiti, Turkey, the Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador, and, of course, Chile. The horror the United States inflicted upon Chile in 1973 can never be purged and can never be forgiven.

“Hundreds of thousands of deaths took place throughout these countries. Did they take place? And are they in all cases attributable to US foreign policy? The answer is yes they did take place and they are attributable to American foreign policy. But you wouldn’t know it because ‘it never happened.’

“Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn’t happening. It didn’t matter. It was of no interest. The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It’s a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis.

“The United States no longer bothers about low intensity conflict. It no longer sees any point in being reticent or even devious. It puts its cards on the table without fear or favour. It quite simply doesn’t give a damn about the United Nations, international law or critical dissent, which it regards as impotent and irrelevant. It also has its own bleating little lamb tagging behind it on a leash, the pathetic and supine Great Britain.”

#### The Invasion of Iraq was an act of Blatant State Terrorism

“The invasion of Iraq was a bandit act, an act of blatant state terrorism, demonstrating absolute contempt for the concept of international law. The invasion was an arbitrary military action inspired by a series of lies upon lies and gross manipulation of the media and therefore of the public; an act intended to consolidate American military and economic control of the Middle East masquerading – all other justifications having failed to justify themselves – as liberation. A formidable assertion of military force responsible for the death and mutilation of thousands and thousands of innocent people.

“We have brought torture, cluster bombs, depleted uranium, innumerable acts

of random murder, misery, degradation and death to the Iraqi people and call it 'bringing freedom and democracy to the Middle East'.

"How many people do you have to kill before you qualify as a mass murderer and a war criminal? One hundred thousand? More than enough, I would have thought. Therefore it is right and just that Bush and Blair be arraigned before the International Criminal Court of Justice. But Bush has been clever. He has not ratified the International Criminal Court of Justice. Therefore if any American soldier finds himself in the dock, Bush has warned that he will send in the marines. But Tony Blair has ratified the Court and is therefore available for prosecution. We can let the Court have his address if they're interested. It is Number 10, Downing Street, London.

"Death in this context is irrelevant. Both Bush and Blair place death well away on the back burner. At least 100,000 Iraqis were killed by American bombs and missiles before the Iraq insurgency began. These people are of no moment. Their deaths don't exist. They are blank. They are not even recorded as being dead. 'We don't do body counts,' said the American general Tommy Franks.

### Full Spectrum Domination is the New American Foreign Policy

"I have said earlier that the United States is now totally frank about putting its cards on the table. That is the case. Its official declared policy is now defined as 'full spectrum dominance'. That is not my term, it is theirs. 'Full spectrum dominance' means control of land, sea, air and space and all attendant resources.

"The United States now occupies 702 military installations throughout the world in 132 countries, with the honourable exception of Sweden, of course. We don't quite know how they got there but they are there all right.

"The United States possesses 8,000 active and operational nuclear warheads. Two thousand are on hair trigger alert, ready to be launched with 15 minutes warning. It is developing new systems of nuclear force, known as bunker busters. The British, ever cooperative, are intending to replace their own nuclear missile, Trident. Who, I wonder, are they aiming at? Who knows? What we do know is that this infantile insanity - the possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons - is at the heart of present American political philosophy. We must remind ourselves that the United States is on a permanent military footing and shows no sign of relaxing it.

"Many thousands, if not millions, of people in the United States itself are demonstrably sickened, ashamed and angered by their government's actions, but as things stand they are not a coherent political force - yet. But the anxiety, uncertainty and fear which we can see growing daily in the United States is unlikely to diminish."

*Dr Kohls is a retired physician who is involved in peace, nonviolence and justice issues and therefore resists - and writes about - fascism, corporatism, militarism, racism and all other violent anti-democratic movements.*

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