

the name of **abstract ideals such as freedom/democracy**. One soldier states: “When my life is all over, when in those last 30 seconds that I am fighting for breath in some room, I will make a plea to God. I will say that I did the best I could in the oddities life gave me. I will ask to be forgiven.”

The circle of violence is a death spiral; no one escapes. As Americans revel in their military prowess – the sophistication of military hardware & technology – they lose sight of the fact that just because they have the capacity to wage war that it does not give them the right to wage war. This capacity has doomed empires of the past. “**Modern western civilization may perish,**” the theologian Niebuhr warned, “**because it falsely worshipped technology as a final good.**” War we have come to believe, is a spectator sport. The military & the press have turned war into a vast video arcade game. Its very essence – death – is hidden from public view.

The love affair that the American Christians have with the military is an illicit affair. It is contrary to the tenor of the New Testament. It is an affront to their Saviour. It is a cancer on Christianity. What would never be tolerated from individuals is tolerated when done on a grand scale in the name of the state. Bombing, maiming, “interrogating” through torture, and killing are okay as long as it is done in service for the state. The military and the CIA are held up as great employment opportunities for Christian young people. But as the famous nineteenth-century English preacher Charles Spurgeon once said of the Bible: “**If there be anything which this book denounces & counts the hugest of all crimes, it is the crime of war.** Put up your sword into your sheath, for has not he said, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ and he meant not that it was a sin to kill one but a glory to kill a million, but he meant that bloodshed on the smallest or largest scale was sinful.”

Why is it that when a soldier wears a uniform, travels thousands of miles away from US soil, and kills by government decree that he is lauded as a hero defending our freedoms, instead of denounced as a hireling/murderer in service of the state?

Another soldier’s viewpoint: “Do not risk your life, based upon your limited, flawed, Hollywood understanding of battle & desire to fill the shoes of the “greatest generation” that lived before your own, in order to produce through force of arms the political aims of the powerful elite who control our government. You will not serve patriotism, nor any similar higher ideal. You will serve only the murderous desire of your superiors at your own expense.”

There have been hundred of reports on D.U

and its effects in Iraq. What will it take to steal Iraq? It will take what your gangster, criminal, piece of crap, Bremer said when he asked: “What is the population of Iraq” & someone replied “around 24 million.” To which Bremer said “**Bring it down to 5 million that should be sufficient.**” Evil words ...demoniacal terrorist. It will take what your filthy Madeleine Albright said “half a million Iraqi children dead? – the price was well worth it.” It will take what your CIA agent Charles Duelfer said: “1.5 million Iraqi dead? The Iraqis will get over it.” What those filthy, depraved Americans were saying, is that it will take a continuous genocide...And D.U is just a continuation of your genocide.

Iraq/Afghanistan: Fire from the skies & from the grounds. Bombs, DU, Napalm, Bullets...destroy homes, buildings, schools, universities, hospitals...segregate, ghettos...checkpoints... ransack homes in the middle of the night, strip people naked, steal their belongings, rape their women... detain, blindfold, tie, abduct, kidnap... prisons, camps, detention centers, dungeons...torture till they go blind, paralyzed, amputated... or insane. Rape & sodomize them... steal & destroy the history, the monuments, the art, rip away the genius, smash that contribution to civilization... Steal the treasury, the arts, the antiquities, the universities, the oil, the savings... Burn...burn the culture, the manuscripts, the books, the libraries, burn the fields, the land...burn it...desecrate the sacred, the holy places, the spaces of worship, the holy books...desecrate nature, pollute it, soil it, poison it – uproot them, exile them, cut away their ties, abandon them, let them wander in the wilderness...O God this is too much. **They call it “liberation” but it is really Western/American barbarism. America is a hollow & worthless democracy.** People of the world might have forgotten Vietnam; will forget the millions murdered in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine ...**God does not.**

War is decreed in Islam in self-defense. This indicates that the aim behind war is to ward off aggression not to impose Islam as a religion. “**To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged; and verily God is most powerful for their aid.**” (Al-Hajj:39)

Fighting should be directed only against fighting troops...**not** to non-fighting personnel. This is in compliance with the Quranic verse that reads: “Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight you, **but** begin **not** hostilities.” America, why do you begin hostilities? Is it that you fight in the way of Satan? You should have heeded the advice of one of your immigrants, Khalil Gibran: “**Your thought sees power in armies, battleships, submarines, aeroplanes & poison gas. But mine asserts that power lies in reason, resolution & truth. No matter how long the tyrant endures, he will be the loser at the end.**” The world saw the end of little tyrants in the Middle East...but beware big tyrant...the same holds true for you.

God loves **NOT** aggressors

War is a Force

that gives Americans meaning

By way of **Deception**: Gen. Smedley Butler, said that after 33 years & four months in the Marine

Corps he had come to understand that he had been nothing more **than a gangster for capitalism**, making Mexico safe for American oil interests, making Haiti & Cuba safe for banks & pacifying the Dominican Republic for sugar companies. War, he said, is a racket in which newly dominated countries are exploited by the financial elites & Wall Street while the citizens foot the bill & sacrifice their young men & women on the **battlefield for corporate greed.**

RESISTANCE TO TYRANNY

is OBEDIENCE TO God

Einstein’s Contempt

For Soldiers & War

“He who joyfully marches to music in rank & file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would fully suffice. This disgrace to civilization, **the army**, should be done away with at once.” “Heroism at command, senseless brutality, deplorable love-of-country stance, how violently I hate all this, **how despicable & ignoble war is;** I would rather be torn to shreds than be a part of so **base an action!** It is my conviction that killing under the cloak of war **is nothing but an act of murder.**”

Peace is a Force

THAT GIVES MUSLIMS MEANING

War is a racket & patriotism is nothing but the last refuge of scoundrels. War is a hideous debacle. With shocking candor, McChrystal said (2010), regarding the number of civilians killed by the US military, “**We have shot an amazing number of people, but to my knowledge, none has ever proven to be a threat.**” One of the most powerful speeches given by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr was **not** his “I have a Dream” but the overlooked “Beyond Vietnam.” The address was made on April 4, 1967, exactly one year to the day before King was assassinated. The civil rights leader called the US government “**the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.**” The “free press” Time Mag called the speech: “demagogic slander that sounded like a script for Radio Hanoi.” Stand up for Justice...says God. Chris Hedges has done just that. An American, he has articulated some truths that are bitter pills for his compatriots to swallow. Hedges is a veteran war correspondent & is worth a listen.

Vietnam: No, don't skip this...don't say callous statements like: “I wasn't there,” “That was before my time,” “That's history.” The war unleashed widespread industrial slaughter. It swept through the jungles of Southeast Asia. Villages were put to flame. Water buffaloes were shot for sport. Human beings were machine-gunned from the air. Grenades were tossed down tunnels where women & children huddled in fear. **Brave Americans!** These “brave” soldiers had at their fingertips the heady ability to call in airstrikes & firepower that turned farming villages with thatch-roofed huts into fiery infernos. War brought to these “brave” Americans the *power* to give or deprive human life. It was the same *power* that Pharaoh had, for a time.

The perversion of the war in Vietnam spawned sexual abuse & prostitution, black markets & dope, and a cacophony of lies told to wage war. Human beings became objects. Life was reduced to a vortex of pain or ecstasy. Law was of no consequence. In a firefight, afraid & pumped up with adrenaline & excitement, they became agents of death. “**Where was God in Vietnam?**” many soldiers asked themselves.

It is the question all who have been to war face, for **war is a godless endeavour**. When love, compassion & human kindness are replaced by the vast, grotesque panorama of violence & destruction of war, God is banished. Human beings, who have the

freedom to choose good and evil, cannot find within them the power of the divine when they embrace a world of sin. At that moment they shut out the divine. **War is a state of almost unadulterated sin.** American Christian soldiers violate the commandment “Thou Shalt Not Kill.” Nothing can be gained by intellectualizing this. Many soldiers returned to the US disillusioned. As they continue to do from Afghanistan & Iraq. Many feel guilty.

Packard, a soldier from Vietnam, lives with a guilt. He is now a Bishop. He said he discovered in the war the capacity we all have for evil. He discovered the darkness that allows us, when restraints are cut, to commit acts of brutality against the weak & the defenseless, including children. He discovered the ghoulish delight American soldiers took in killing. He discovered all is not right with the world, as he had been taught. He discovered the lie he had been told, the idolatry of our civic religion, one that grafts the will to power onto the will of God. And in this knowledge he made a painful self-discovery, not only about himself but about the human race. His naive belief in the goodness of the American nation, one that gave him comfort & moral certainty, was obliterated in Vietnam. **He peered into the American soul & what he saw looking back horrified him.** The darkness he confronted became his cross. He carries it every day. He challenges the myth of America as a great & moral nation, a nation ordained by God to carry out a civilizing mission through violence. A MYTH. Many nights he cannot sleep. He thinks about the Vietnamese widows & children without fathers, or the wives & children they should have had. He thinks about the agony of final moments when young Vietnamese men bled to death in front of him. He sees faces before him of the long dead. He wants to reach out to them, but they recede in front of him, insubstantial spirits. He wonders if they can forgive him. He prays for this. He wonders if he can forgive himself.

So when Presidents stand up to speak “foolishness” about war “heroes” remember this soldier & his mental anguish. We make our heroes out of clay. We laud their “gallant” deeds & give them uniforms with coloured ribbons for the acts of violence they have committed. They are our repositories of glory, power, self-righteousness, patriotism, and self-worship, all that we want to believe about ourselves.

Wars come wrapped in patriotic slogans, calls for self-sacrifice & glory. They come wrapped in the claims of divine providence. Religion becomes a tool for those in power. It is what a nation asks of its young. It is what is right & just. War is always waged, we are told, to make the nation/world a better place, to cleanse evil. War is touted as

the ultimate test of manhood, where young men can find out what they are made of. It gives us a chance to play a small bit in the great drama of history. It promises to give us an identity as a warrior, a patriot, as long as we go along with the myth, the one that war-makers use to wage war.

But up close **war is a soulless void**. War quickly descends to raw barbarity, perversion, pain & an unchecked orgy of death. It is a state where human decency & tenderness are crushed. The noise, the stench, the fear, the eviscerated bodies & bloated corpses, the crying wounded spin us into another universe. In this moral void, the hypocrisy of our social conventions are laid bare. We call for **strict adherence** to some commandments & laud the **purposeful violation** of others. **Hypocrisy rules**. What does the commandment “Thou Shalt Not Kill” really mean? What...does...it...mean...?

Of all the commandments that are broken, the Torah says, only those who murder **cannot** be certain of forgiveness. Wars are always tragic, always sinful. And those who speak of war as an instrument of power, those who wage war but do not know its reality, those powerful politicians & statesmen, the Bushes, Kissingers, McNamaras, Rumsfelds, those who treat war as part of the great game of nations, are **amoral**. When the wars are over they have nothing to say to us in their thick memoirs about war, for they know nothing of war.

In theological terms, **war is sin**. This has nothing to do with whether a particular war is justified or whether isolated incidents in a soldier's war were right or wrong. The point is that war as a human enterprise is a matter of sin. It is a form of hatred for one's fellow human beings. It produces alienation from others & nihilism. **War ultimately represents a turning away from God.**

Soldiers are taught that the Will of God is the will of the nation. This belief is shattered in war. Soldiers in combat see the myth used to send them to war implode. They see that war is not clean or neat or noble, but venal, frightening & horrible. They see into war's essence, which is death. **War is always about betrayal**. And in wars such as Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, or the Israeli occupation of the West Bank & Gaza, murder dominates the battlefield.

Soldiers struggle with the evil carried out in

Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight you, **But** begin **not** hostilities

The Quran: 2:190

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