

Thank A Trained Killer Week, December 19 – 25, 2005

By Wayne Northey

The week before Christmas south of the border has been designated “Thank a Soldier Week”. It may be dubbed as accurately “Thank a Trained Killer Week”.¹ Retired Lt. Col. David Grossman indicates that no institution in America pays more attention to brutalization and desensitization of its recruits than the modern U.S. military: “This brutalization is designed to break down your existing mores and norms and to accept a new set of values that embrace destruction, violence, and death as a way of life. In the end, you are desensitized to violence and accept it as a normal and essential survival skill in your brutal new world (Grossman, no date)”².

Townhall.com (http://www.thanksoldierweek.com/tell_a_friend.html) is promoting the national recognition of soldiers. Majority world opinion believes that American soldiers are murdering for *Empire*, which like all empires, is utterly self-serving and brutal towards its “enemies”, defined as any who oppose American Empire hegemony (like for instance the majority of Canadians). Political scientist Chalmers Johnson argues in *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004) that America, in step with all previous, is irreversibly collapsing under the weight of Empire. He writes: “I think four sorrows inevitably accompany our current path. First is endless war... As it stands right now, since 9/11, Articles 4 and 6 of the Bill of Rights are dead letters. They are over... Second, imperial overstretch... The third thing is a tremendous rise in lying and deceit... The difficulty to believe anything that the government says any longer because they are now systematically lying to us on almost every issue. The fourth is bankruptcy. Attempting to dominate the world militarily is a very expensive proposition... The United States, for the last 15 years, has had trade deficits running at 5 percent every year. We are on the edge... I do not find it easy at all that any successor to George Bush would make any difference... That leads me to the conclusion that we are probably going to reap what we have sown. That is blowback (quoted in Nimmo, 2004).” Many publications from *within* America treat of this phenomenon.³

Last year I published an Op. Ed. piece in *The Calgary Herald* entitled, “We Are Mansfield Park”⁴ that speaks to American/Western culpability. At the end I wrote: “In the movie adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, the central character, Fanny Price at age 10 goes to live at her relatives’ fairy-tale estate, Mansfield Park. Her new life is idyllic and genteel in every way. But eventually into her adulthood the awful truth emerges, adumbrated throughout the movie: the ‘civilized’ opulence is underwritten by the putrid horror of New World slavery that her uncle, Sir Thomas, oversees business interests in, and (implied) also participates in rape with impunity of chattel black women, and worse.

“Our cherished avowal of democracy and freedom, our protestations of inviolable international human rights, stand knee-deep in the blood of millions of civilian victims the world over⁵. This unmitigated horror is the (officially) unacknowledged legacy of World War II, of all war.

“We are Mansfield Park.”

So it is with the War on Terror. The best honour Americans can confer on their soldiers this Christmas is to tell the President to bring them home. To hug an American trained killer is to *embrace* American Empire *and* its inevitable implosion.

References

Grossman, Lt. Col. David (no date). “Trained to Kill”, <http://www.skirmisher.com/to-kill4.htm>.

Hedges, Chris (2003). *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, New York: Anchor Books.

Johnson, Chalmers (2004). *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*, New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company

Nimmo, Kurt (2004). “Bush's Endgame: A Review of ‘The Sorrows of Empire’ ”, <http://www.counterpunch.org/nimmo02172004.html>.”

¹ American soldiers are not “evil”. All kinds of social, economic, and political pressures, not least ethically dubious recruitment methods, propel thousands to sign up. They become killers not because they started that way, but because they are so shaped by the military. See below.

² See also his website on “killology”, <http://www.killology.com>.

³ A small sampling, mostly from “The American Empire Project”

(<http://www.americanempireproject.com/booklist.asp>): Bacevich, Andrew J. (2002). *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of American Empire*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Bello, Walden F., (2004). *Dilemmas of Domination: The Unmaking of the American Empire*, New York: Metropolitan Books; Chomsky, Noam, (2004). *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*, New York: Henry Holt; Chomsky, Noam, (2005). *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World*, interviews by David Barsamian, New York: Metropolitan Books; Irons, Peter H. (2005). *War Powers: How the Imperial Presidency Hijacked the Constitution*, New York: Metropolitan Books; Klare, Michael T., (2004) *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Petroleum Dependency*, New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Co.; Norton, Anne, (2004). *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁴ Quoted in full in my posted article to the Clarion website (www.clarion-journal.ca), “Two Conundrums and the Kingdom of God”.

⁵ Chris Hedges claims in *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (2003) that there were 62 million civilians killed through warfare in the 20th century. Canada’s current population is about 32,000,000. Vancouver’s population is about 2,000,000. This means that twice in the last century, war eradicated every living soul now in Canada, except the second time, it spared Vancouver.