



**South Tyneside  
Stop The War Coalition**



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**The Costs of War!**

**The South Tyneside Forum  
Puts the Warmongers  
in the Dock**

***Silence is  
Shame!***

***Number 6, 2006***

**C/O Trinity House Social Centre,  
134 Laygate, South Shields, NE33 4JD  
E-Mail: [STSWC@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:STSWC@blueyonder.co.uk)**



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# Preface

This edition of *Silence of Shame* is based on the South Shields Forum *The Costs of War* of February 15th, 2006 that took place on the 3rd anniversary of the 2 million strong demonstration in London to oppose the invasion of Iraq.

In advertising the forum the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition gave out hundreds of leaflets stating that the illegal invasion of Iraq was itself a gross act of state terrorism bringing death to thousands of innocent Iraqi men, women and children and the needless loss of British soldiers; that the British people were lied to and misled by our Government, a Government that supported the real reason that America invaded Iraq – that is to establish military and economic control of the Middle East - but it did not end there.

The costs of this and other wars were incalculable and have profound and the most serious consequences for the world and to what makes us human. The forum exposed not only the huge cost in human life, the most terrible injuries which have occurred but the consequences that are throwing the world back into a medieval anarchy.

This was a world in which a minority of big power governments and the transnational corporation they represent were destroying human rights, destroying conflict resolving international institutions and tearing up International Law and replacing it with the law of force, imprisonment without trial and the torture chamber of medieval times. This was a world where the big powers manipulate the UN and other bodies fabricating any excuse to exert

control and make war against which ever country they wish to annex. In this way the US is threatening Iran, Syria, DPRK, Venezuela and many other countries, whilst Britain also had its eyes fixed on Africa.

The forum put these powers in the dock for flouting international law and all its terrible consequences, a cost of war that will lead to world war.

The forum took up many of the aspects of the costs of war and enabled people to join in discussion on the topics and we publish those contributions that have been made available to us. The call of the times is to facilitate our discussions to think and act like human beings and to take the high road of civilisation, to uphold the interests of all people for new societies in which they decide and a new world where wars are a relic of the past.

**Another World Is Possible! We Will Create It!**

# The Costs of War Introduction

*by Phil Talbot*

The costs of the war in Iraq are mostly hidden costs, because it is mostly a 'secret war', with many of its realities covered up and denied. One aim of this forum is to try to bring out into the open some of those 'hidden costs' - not only of the war in Iraq but also of the wider so called 'war on terror'. Obviously we will be able to do little more than scratch the surface of those costs in the brief time available.

These are some of the costs of war we might discuss:

**COSTS IN LIVES LOST** - The number of lost human lives is not actually known to any degree of certainty - because [to cover up the scale of their own violent acts] the American and British governments 'don't do body counts' - but it is at least 100,000 people, most of them unarmed civilians killed by the invading and occupying powers.

**COSTS IN INJURIES AND OTHER TRAUMAS** - Again there are no precise figures available, but they must be in the hundreds of thousands, even perhaps millions.

**EMOTIONAL COSTS** - Including people traumatized and brutalized by the violence and including the grief of victims' families.

**MORAL COSTS** - Including a general brutalization and blunting of moral sensibility - in a world in which murder, violence, arbitrary arrest, and torture are being done on a huge scale in the travestied name of 'protecting freedom and democracy'

**COSTS IN TERMS OF REDUCED CIVIL LIBERTY** - The 'war on terror' is increasing rather than reducing the 'terror problem', and the big government responses - essentially: increasing state power and reducing civil liberties - further 'terrorises' many sections of the population.

**COSTS OF THE 'SLOW POISONING' OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE** - By, for example, the demonization of entire ethnic, religious and political groups - and the type-casting 'them' as 'the enemy' who 'threaten our way of life'.

**COSTS IN TERMS OF PUBLIC TRUST** - We were lied to about the reasons for war. We have been lied to about the details of the war. More and more people just don't believe a word they are told about anything anymore - and while 'scepticism' might be healthy, the present extreme levels of 'cynicism' seem unhealthy.

**COSTS IN TERMS OF WORSENING 'GLOBAL INSECURITY'** - The war in Iraq and the wider 'war on terror' have worsened the 'terror problem' and opened up a violent 'can of worms'. It is a fact of life that 'those to whom violence is done tend to do violence in return'.

**COSTS OF THE WRECKING OF INTERNATIONAL LAW** - America and Britain have set terrible examples to the rest of the world. Via the Iraq war, America - aided and abetted by Britain - has torn up established conventions of modern international law ... and returned the world to a dark age of rule by force, imprisonment without trial, and torture chambers ... and all in the travestied names of 'freedom' and 'democracy'.

**ECONOMIC COSTS** - These are huge, but almost incalculable. A

few people have clearly benefited - most obviously those personally gaining from profits made by oil, military, security corporations - but for most people the war has been a loss-making affair. In so far as estimates of monetary costs have been made, it is generally in terms of the direct cost to U.S. and U.K. tax-payers. Such estimates produce big numbers ... billions ... tens of billions ... even trillions ... of dollars ... numbers so big as to be more or less incomprehensible to most people. But these big number tax costs are in fact small proportions of the wider economic costs - which include: the effects of disruptions to trade due to global instability; the effects of fuel price volatility; the effects of diversion of investment resources; etc. Meanwhile, far from being 'reconstructed', the Iraqi economy has effectively been destroyed.

**COSTS IN TERMS OF LOST OPPORTUNITIES** - War should be a relic of the past, as should violent imperialism. But with the attacks on Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, we have lost the opportunity to start a new century with fresh, more civilized, modes of international behaviour. The best way to reduce the 'terror problem' is not to behave in a terrorist manner ourselves.

Phil Talbot - February 15, 2006



# Who Pays the Price?

*by Alan Newham*

It was the Greek dramatist Aeschylus who first stated: 'In war, truth is the first casualty.'

It is now 3 years since the beginning of the war in Iraq, and the accumulation of evidence surrounding the lies and deception employed by the US and UK governments to justify the illegal invasion of Iraq continues to this day.

But if Aeschylus was right about the first casualty, then the second casualty must be the innocent men, women and children who pay the ultimate price with their lives, and the survivors suffering various physical and psychological damage. Of course there was a time when wars fought between armies on the battlefield away from centres of population. Now it is reversed - it is the innocent who suffer most, and in increasing numbers.

Modern warfare means that most of those who are killed never see their attackers. The pilots who drop bombs from 5 miles above the ground will never hear the screams of the innocent any more than the naval technicians who launch the missiles out at sea; all

are free from the visual devastation of their actions.

Estimates of civilian casualties in Iraq range between some 25,000 to 100,000, while US and UK military casualties stand at under 2,500 deaths. It is the innocent who pay the most.

The following story comes from someone who saw through the fog of war and the pressures upon ordinary people who are expected to support war:

In 1990 when the USA was preparing for what became known as 'Desert Shield', a bunch of 5th formers from a school in Pennsylvania wrote letters to US troops. Only one pupil, called Lisa, received a reply. It was from a Puerto Rican called Alex, an enlisted soldier who came from the Bronx in New York, and she read it out to the class. It was heard by a fellow pupil called Will Ulrich who recalled it 11 years later and wrote to the student newspaper *The Daily Pennsylvanian* with his recollection in 2001.

Ulrich said that when the letter was read out he got the impression that the soldier didn't have too much experience of correspondence. It was not the image he had of GI Joe as superhuman specialist and it was unnerving to hear the soldier express feelings of loneliness and homesickness.

It made Ulrich think that it was largely just a group of 'Alexes' fighting the war against Saddam Hussein. Ulrich said that the letter drove home a lesson that he never lost sight of: 'Here was a poor scared Puerto Rican boy from the Bronx who probably joined the army for a paycheck, not for a Purple Heart.' He goes on: '... the childhood incident continues to convince me that a sort of paradox lies at the heart of modern warfare ... while contemporary world battles are rife with cartoon villains and bombastic rhetoric, most of what resides at the core of these conflicts is the pain of average citizens. ... While the present showdown between the Taliban and the USA may be fuelled by strategic concerns and masterminded by some of the most powerful men in the world, those who have suffered the real deleterious consequences are just plain folks ... It seems as if our government want us to believe that we only wage war against demonic personalities these days: bin Laden, Hussein,

Milosovic. What we must never forget is that warfare, especially the sort we see in our post-Cold-War world, hurts average citizens most of all. Whether across the globe or at the local 7-11 it is they who pay the steepest price.' This letter is encouraging, given that young Americans are brought up with the view that America has a duty to bring 'freedom' and 'democracy' to all, usually by force.

In London on 6th February 2006, General Mark Kimmitt - a key strategist in the US central command covering the Middle East - spelled out the American Military's 'reposturing' of its forces in an area stretching from Egypt in the west to Pakistan in the east, and from Kazakhstan in the north to Uganda in the south, to 'protect US interests' there. He said the US would 'retain sufficient military capability' to strike Iran. This is the US reorganisation of its 'war on terror' into the so called 'Long War', which has been spelled out in the Pentagon Defence Review stating that a 'large-scale, potentially long duration, irregular warfare campaign including counter-insurgency and security, stability, transition and reconstruction operations' - which it says are 'necessary and unavoidable'. So the innocent live in fear around the world.

Yet we must look at why, in the lead up to the war in Iraq, opinion was divided between support for and opposition to the war - and why, when the war started, there was a clear majority that appeared to say in opinion polls that, since our forces were now engaged, we should therefore support them. Can it necessarily be a contradiction that people could continue to be against the war yet feel obliged to support our armed forces? Do we suspend individual conscience for 'the cause'? Is the contagion of war, the expectation to rally and support, so strong that it can't be resisted?

There was clear evidence before the start of the war that showed the unlikelihood of Iraq possessing WMD. There were also questions of the legality without UN support. Yet the support continued from ordinary people - people who are very distanced from exercising any real power over world events and may well simply need and want to believe what they are told by the powers that be, particularly here in the West where we are constantly being reminded that it is our idea of 'democracy' and our 'values' that the world should adhere to.

The numbers ever grow of ordinary people in the US, the UK, and around the world who, after 3 years of accumulated evidence now believe that it was wrong to go to war with Iraq. But that is after the event.

We must hope that Iraq will be the catalyst that will change how people react when wars are threatened, and end the kind of gullibility that helped us into the Iraq war.

The message is that it is ordinary people the world over who pay the ultimate price during war and conflicts. The young army recruits in Iraq are no different to the young recruits here in the UK. They all pay the price. That message must be fundamental and repeated time and time again in our anti-war campaigns.

Alan Newham - February 15th, 2006

# The Cost of War

*by Nader Naderi*

The available scientific data point to the extent of 98% similarities that exist between the human DNA and that of the primates' DNA. The similarities between the apes, and human beings evidently do not end there. Hence it would be safe to assume that, just because some human being facsimiles have lost their fur coat that somehow does not make these human. In fact the closest description of these can be denoting them as hairless apes. Human beings evolved and moved out of caves by learning from their mistakes but apes remain in caves because as yet they do not exhibit any introspective analysis in an aid to prevent the repetition of their errors.

Hence, to err is human, but to insist dogmatically on erring is the trait of apes, the not so distant cousin of the hairless apes. Avoidance and prevention of errors from occurring have remained paramount for human beings, due to their recognition of the high costs of errors. Those are apparent, as well as the hidden costs associated with failures and errors, which have been fundamental to human progress, while apes blissfully go onto erring in a serial fashion, hence the divergence of the humanity form these apes.

One of the major failures in any human society is recourse

to violence. In fact human beings have come to recognise violence as the ultimate expression of helplessness and the ultimate state of failure, while apes carry-on resorting to violence as a matter of course, and find violence to be the only method of arbitration in the arising disputes between the troop.

The current wars across the globe, which can only be seen as the ultimate estate of error, and failure, are associated with costs that as yet have not been fully calculated. The most obvious of these costs are the 2.68 trillion dollars that is 2.68 million, million dollars which has been, and will be spent on killing Iraqis, of course all spent in aid of teaching them democracy, or such contention is maintained by the chief hairless apes.

These apes' ears are deaf to the wailing cries of the mother clutching on to the shredded remains of her children, these apes' eyes are blind to the wreathing of the injured souls, the same wretched souls who will find no anaesthesia while their broken limbs are being amputated by the doctors working in primitive conditions in the dilapidated, bombed out hospitals with little or no medicine, and these apes' souls are numb to the carnage that is being wreaked upon Iraq, and perceive the carnage as in fact spreading the gospel of how to live democratically. While the anxious mother burying her offspring who fought in distant lands under orders, is paying the cost of democratising the heart broken mother in Iraq.

But how can anyone explain Halliburton coining in \$1800 for a sack of laundry that is washed by Filipino workers who are paid 600 dollars a month. How can \$1400 be explained away for a plate of fruit that is ordered by a Halliburton executive in a hotel in Kuwait and tabbed to the American taxpayer?

So apparently we pay 5 thousand million pounds, Americans pay 2.68 million, million dollars for democracy in Iraq. But Halliburton gets 2000% rise in profits, the same ailing company that was nearly bankrupt in 2002. Evidently the state of violence destroys lives in Iraq while destroying lives in our country too, only to foster greater profits for a select few.

Everyday we wake up to a new supposed threat emanating

from the Officially Designated Enemy of the day. This threat then has to be dealt with through military action. The Officially Designated Enemy on a given day could be North Korea the next day, Syria the day after Iran then there is Venezuela, Bolivia not forgetting Cuba, China and Russia. We are told all the options are on the table, which in ape speak means nuclear weapons as a first strike choice, while the talking heads allude this to be a reference to military action, and these same pusillanimous ape groupies in the main stream media get on with effervescence to promulgate the ape behaviour as the only standard to aspire to. That is, in addition to bird flue, terrorists and all manner of hobgoblinery that any grey functionary can think of. All this being in aid of frightening the dickens out of the human beings in order to getting our consent for the impending apelike actions to follow.

The bellicose warmongers have torn international conventions and international laws all in favour of operation "Shock and Awe". All the while talking about carrot and stick (need it be any more clarified?). I can assure the hairless apes that we human beings are really shocked, and so far as the awe remains we are truly in woe.

Considering that our young are being taught to settle any dispute through violence, considering that our healthiest and fittest are being sent to their destruction in Iraq, and elsewhere, considering that our quality of life, which has steadily declined, considering that our liberties that have been steadily eroded, considering that 500,000 souls whom are incarcerated in concentration camps around the globe, as per the Washington Post, considering the inflationary prices (tax on poor), considering the lack of hope in the future and considering the miserable times thrust upon us we human beings are indeed shocked.

Shocking too is the sad story of Little Ali the Iraqi poster child. Who ironically is shown to be grateful to us for giving him prosthetics, having had his limbs blown apart and his family destroyed by us. While Little Ali, goes and joins the long queue of the forgotten, and the maimed, outgrowing his prosthetics. Who will replace his old artificial appendages that he will have soon outgrown? While the oil flows, tills ring, and shareholders' never

ending appetites are somewhat satiated, these are some of the costs no ape cares to mention, for these lack the cognisance, and or the ability of introspection.

We are told that exhaust fumes from our cars are destroying the environment, what of the exploding bombs, shells, depleted uranium shells, phosphorus munitions and super charged military jets screaming across the skies delivering their deadly loads on any unsuspecting Officially Designated Enemy of the moment? The hypocrisies of it all are astounding, no human being can ever be proud of killing another.

Finally, after all that has been said about the financial and environmental costs, there is one very significant point that ought to be paramount, which is never mentioned that is the cost to humanity; the child left with no father, the wife left with no husband, the mother and father left with no child, the brothers and sisters left with no sibling, our physically injured and our traumatised military persons left with no support, all while the hairless apes rule OK.

Nader Naderi - February 15th, 2006

# **The Need For Anti-War Government**

*by Roger Nettleship*

I think it is very significant that we are holding this Forum on the *Costs of War* on the third anniversary of the massive demonstration prior to Bush and Blair's attack on Iraq.

In my view the history of the world's people will show that February 15, 2003 was a defining moment. It was a day when the world said "No to War", when millions of people demonstrated around the world against the impending invasion of Iraq.

Not only did the people say "No to War" and that this was "Not in Our Name", but it raised the whole issue of the necessity for change and to bring about anti-war government.

The possibility of anti-war government was also opened up after the Second World War and with the United Nations charter which demanded an end to resolving international conflicts through military means. As you know what we got instead, in spite of the high hopes of the people, was pro-war government. The US and Britain used the excuse of "containing communism" for pro-war government. Today that excuse is gone for the time being, so they have created another excuse for pro-war government the excuse of a "war on terrorism."

The consequences of this is that the US and Britain, far from using the UN to maintain international peace and security, are attempting to use it to justify the crime of war. Far from renouncing the use of force and the threat of war as the bedrock to international relations, they are declaring that the “credible threat of force” must prevail, that no other solutions are to be permitted.

Far from respecting the territorial integrity and political independence of states, they are demanding the adoption of the Anglo-American model by everyone and intervening and committing aggression in the name of their own interests of globalisation and “universal values”. They claim the right to send their armies anywhere in the world and to any country. This is the nature of pro-war government at the head of the most powerful states.

The need for anti-war government is what the anti-war movement has placed on the agenda:

Just to mention 5 features of anti-war government.

1. Outlaw any and all British involvement in wars of aggression and renounce the use of force in settling international affairs; The Ministry of Defence would be truly the Ministry of Defence and not what it really is a Ministry for War. This would also mean the removal of British troops from foreign soil. As Germany did after the Second World War it would be necessary that this be enshrined in a modern constitution;
2. Recognise the sovereignty and equality of all nations even if they have differing social systems; It would respect the right of peoples to have the system of their choice. Accept the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries;
3. Adopt a foreign policy independent of the United States;
4. Stop producing weapons of mass destruction, Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and comply with the NPT

a treaty which Britain hypocritically tries to impose on other countries but has never complied with itself;

5. Pay reparations for all the crimes of war, occupation and the colonial conquests of the past

So those are five features of a modern foreign policy for anti-war government. But what does the need for anti-war government mean right now? What can we do to bring it about?

For the anti-war movement, for all of the people involved in this broad movement it means to strengthen their unity and keep the initiative in their own hands. Literally it is embodied in the demand to bring the troops home now.

It also means to organise our selves to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the people against the propaganda with which they are trying to poison the minds of the people and particularly the youth.

It is important to look at the evil and cunning nature of those big business interests behind Blair and Brown and the media barons that they represent. They didn't join in directly in anti-Muslim propaganda around the Danish cartoons but they made sure that it was conveyed in every detail to have exactly the same effect.

They make no comment on the fact that thousands of Muslims and the Muslim Association of Britain takes part in the anti-war movement and are demanding the same as us - a peaceful world without wars. But they publicise a tiny protest in London, made up of people who could have very well been compromised by the British state, to launch the most vicious attack on those of Muslim faith and dehumanise them.

Let us make no mistake this dehumanisation of Muslims is the prerequisite to genocide. This is what they are doing in the Middle East, with Iraq and Afghanistan and what they plan to do possibly with Iran and Syria and maybe even they are attempting to prepare us for nuclear strikes. It is also to try and derail the anti-war movement because this is a significant block to their plans.

How does it attempt to derail us? We are saying that the issue is bring the troops home, peaceful resolution of conflicts to stop their wars, the upholding of the rights of nations to sovereignty and the need to affirm the rights of all humanity. They want us to believe that it is a clash of civilisations between Muslims and Christians and that there is only the military solution and the implementation of a policy of degradation of human rights and criminalisation of human beings in Britain and elsewhere.

The people of all walks of life, from military families, workers, students, doctors, nurses and so on are part of the anti-war movement. The movement itself has entered the political arena to further its work. The *Respect Coalition* stood on that basis in the last election and ourselves stood our own anti-war candidate in South Shields in Nader Naderi. Reg Keys from the Military Families Against the War stood against Blair in Sedgfield. This was a significant step in the direction of anti-war government and one which we need to continue to discuss, and organise for.

I would like to conclude by saying that the need for anti-war government is expressed by keeping the initiative in our own hands in deciding what is to be done to bring the troops home and end the wars and occupations.

It is also, to continue to elaborate and develop the anti-war alternative foreign policy as the only foreign policy for a modern world and to directly intervene in the political process which we are doing and should continue to develop.

Roger Nettleship - February 15th, 2006

# **The Cost - The Painful Bloody Cost of this War**

*by Alan Trotter*

In the name of Humanity for how much longer will the British people turn their backs and close their eyes to what is happening to the children of Iraq?

It is painful to see anyone injured or killed, soldier or civilian, but when it happens to children the pain and the hurt and the sorrow is so more acute. The highest price of this war has been paid by children. The Red Cross reported in the first month of the war that over 100 children had to have limbs amputated due to injuries from guns and the devastating cluster bombs. Childhood is supposed to be the most innocent and happiest time of a person's life, have we become so divorced from reality that we no longer care?

We all have families, and those of us that have small children or young grandchildren could we ever think the unthinkable: that we could lose our children in such a way as parents have lost their children in Iraq? The very thought is too horrendous to contemplate, and yet kids are killed almost daily in Iraq and our backs are still turned, our eyes still shut and our hands over our ears. We must all share the shame and disgrace.

Who will speak out on the human rights abuses against these children and their lost childhood?

What of the ones not killed ... the wounded, the traumatized and the psychological damage done to these children who have witnessed destruction, beatings and mutilated bodies. These innocents suffer because of decisions made by adults. How can we ever repair the damage that has been done to these children?

In May 2000 Nelson Mandela said: 'We cannot waste the lives of precious children, not another one, not another day. It is long past time for us to act on their behalf.'

It was in 2002 when the UN General Assembly passed a resolution 'A World Fit For Children', which pledged to protect children from the horrors of armed conflict.

Meanwhile the slaughter goes on. What has got to happen before we as a nation stand up and yell in the name of Humanity 'No more killing of children'? The saddest thing is that it is not just Iraq where this is happening. It's in Afghanistan, Palestine, Africa, Bosnia and many other countries.

During the writing of this small piece seven children (all from the same family) were killed by American war planes during a bombing in Bayji, seven other relatives were injured when their home was attacked.

Alan Trotter - February 15th, 2006

# The USA Threat and the Need for Reform of the UN

*by Mick Lemon*

*Mick Lemon is a member of the Tyneside Stop the War Coalition. The Coalition can be contacted at [nestopwar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nestopwar@yahoo.co.uk). Below is his contribution based on the issues he raised at the forum*

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At the South Shields STWC Forum on the Costs of War, Roger Nettleship included a reference to the role of the United Nations in combating war. I would like to expand upon his suggestions. Apologies for including information you are probably aware of, and some of which may be out-of-date, but the overall context is important.

In Oct. 1945 51 nations signed up to the UN Charter which was drawn up to help 'banish the scourge and terror of war'. Since the acceleration of the process of decolonisation in the 1960's, membership is now approaching 200 (ie. nearly all the world's countries). The Charter and its numerous associated documents (eg. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) announce high ideals of peace, security, tolerance, and social, economic, and political progress of member nations.

All members belong to the General Assembly, which can via a majority vote pass resolutions. However, it has no power to enforce them. This power belongs to the Security Council, which consists of 15 members, of which 5 are Permanent Members.

The other 10 serve non- consecutive 2 year terms, 5 being elected annually by the General Assembly. The Security Council needs nine votes to pass and act upon a resolution, but any Permanent Member can veto substantive issues.

This feature (the veto) was introduced at the UN's beginning in recognition of the notion that peace could only be maintained by the major powers cooperating as the world's 'policemen' (Roosevelt). The major powers (ie. the Permanent Members) in 1945 were the victorious allies of WW2 - USA, USSR, (now Russia), UK, France (and Nationalist China - ie. Formosa, was included, to be replaced in 1971 by) the People's Republic of China, (This composition remains unchanged today). In other words, it was recognised that 'in the real world' you cannot expect major powers to accede to demands made upon them either by an amorphous collection of weak states in the General Assembly, nor by each other.

On the other hand, it is surely right to assume that all of the Permanent Members fully subscribe to, and are obliged as any other UN member country, by the provisions of the Charter!

The Charter generated numerous sub-texts, documents, and Declarations elaborating upon its principles. A particularly relevant Declaration was unanimously adopted and elevated into a Resolution in 1970, entitled '*Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States In Accordance With The Charter Of The United Nations*'.

I reproduce just some of its principles:

*'...the strict observance by States of the obligation not to intervene in the affairs of any other State is an essential condition to ensure that nations live in peace with one another, since the practice of any form of intervention not only violates the spirit and letter of the Charter, but also leads to the creation of situations which threaten international peace and security'*. (I should comment that in recent times this principle has been challenged to allow intervention on humanitarian grounds - but on those grounds only).

*'...[it is] essential that all States shall refrain in their international relations from military, political, economic or any other form of coercion aimed against the political independence or territorial integrity of any State'.*

*'A war of aggression constitutes a crime against the peace, for which there is responsibility under international law'.*

*'...no State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another State, or interfere in civil strife in another State'. (Comment - USA has just allocated \$75million to finance 'democratic' opposition groups and forces in Iran. What is sauce for the goose is surely also sauce for the gander !).*

*'Every State has an inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems, without interference in any form by another State'. (Comment - this puts the USA neo-con project of 'globalising' 'democracy' and capitalism in a curious light).*

*'All States enjoy sovereign equality. They have equal rights and duties and are equal members of the international community, notwithstanding differences of an economic, social, political, or other nature'. (Comment - ie. religion ?)*

Finally, I should like to quote (entire) *Article 20 of the International Covenant On Civil And Political Rights (UN 1966)*:

- 1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.*
- 2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law'.*

The above selection of resolutions and declarations are not meant to be mere aspirations, but to have the force of international law. In the absence of a world-government, it is the United Nations which has the ultimate responsibility of realising these high ideals

by enforcing international law. Yet we have seen that the actual power of enforcement belongs to the Security Council, and that within that Security Council there are five Permanent Members (USA, Russia, UK, France, China) which each have the power of veto. This has been used repeatedly - doubtless sometimes for good given the realities of major power confrontations, but also sometimes for ill in terms of the selfish interests of this or that member.

The point I invite you to explore is the need for reform of this decision-making structure. It could be argued that whilst eg. the USA (and its nuclear dependent puppy-dog UK) has a veto on any Resolution, it retains the legal power to attempt to fashion the world as it wishes (ie. after its own neo-con illusory image). Having renamed its ambiguous 'War on Terror' the even more amorphous 'The Long War', how can people in the world look to the UN to preserve peace and prevent a new imperialism ?

Should the status of Permanent Member (each with a veto) be abolished altogether (or be retained, but left without a veto)? That is, should the Security Council as a whole do things via majority voting ? Wouldn't this better reflect world opinion and world *reality*, despite the theory that 'the real world requires recognition of the status of major powers'. Which countries should serve on the Security Council? Or should it be scrapped, and a more 'democratic' way be found of reflecting the concerns of the other 180+ countries in the General Assembly? Not only might these revolve around being dominated by the USA, but they are also concerns about the planet's environment, where it could be argued that it is precisely *not* the rich and powerful countries who should 'realistically' have the final say.

At the Forum I expressed some gloom for the prospects of international relations, particularly the prospect of restraining an increasingly rampant military/bureaucratic/capitalist regime which has long dominated USA foreign policy. In the absence of a military/economic power able to co-equal and thereby restrain the USA (as in the Cold War), it seems the only place we have to go for hope is to the United Nations (or wait for China to become the USA's equal, thereby engendering another Cold War?!) But I

hope I have shown that the brilliant and high ideals of the UN in international relations simply cannot withstand what are surely now the corrupting influence of its own structures, especially regarding the Permanent Members and their individual vetoes.

Given that the Stop the War Coalition originated as a campaign against the manifold aspects of 'the war on terror' (now 'the Long War') and not solely about Afghanistan or (now) Iraq, I therefore think that an important part of its platform is to urge for reform of the UN so that its decision-making procedures better reflect and enforce world concerns about USA domination and the safety of Earth's environment. This would not be a panacea, but is surely the direction in which to travel.

Mick Lemon - February 15th, 2006



# The Cost of Empire

*by Nathan Allonby*

*Nathan Allonby is a member of the Tyneside Stop the War Coalition. The Coalition can be contacted at [nestopwar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nestopwar@yahoo.co.uk). Below is his contribution based on the issues he raised at the forum*

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There is a myth that the British Empire was created to give something to the world, to bring advantages and civilisation as a “gift”. The US now claims that it fought and invaded Iraq to give democracy.

The reality is quite the reverse. Iraq was invaded not to “give” it anything, but on the basis of what we could gain from it.

There is an underlying economic reality to all empires, whether we consider the Roman empire, the British Empire or today, the US “virtual” empire: - empires have to make a profit, or they are unsustainable. The action of invading a nation and then holding it captive, under control, has to make a profit, or the invading nation will go bankrupt. The incentive is profit, to gain access to that country’s resources.

The US government claims it has put great financial resources into deposing Saddam and rebuilding Iraq. This is not true. The Iraqis have paid for the invasion. The US has been allowed to plunder the vast money account of the Iraq “Oil for Food”

programme - earnings from selling Iraqi oil, during the period of sanctions against Saddam.

This money was supposed to be available to pay for food, so that ordinary Iraqi people did not suffer under the sanctions, but the US and her allies would not allow the money to be released. Instead the income accumulated in UN bank accounts. The money that should have fed Iraqi people was denied to them, letting them starve. It is estimated that 500,000 Iraqi children died unnecessarily during the period of sanctions, either due to simple malnutrition, or due to curable diseases, for which there was no medicine, because Iraq was not allowed to buy it. Since the population of Iraq is roughly half that of Britain, this is equivalent to 1 million British children dying of starvation and preventable disease. This money is “blood money”, accumulated at the cost of great human suffering.

After the invasion the US twisted arms at the Security Council to allow it to be used for “rebuilding” - actually to be used unaccountably, for whatever purpose the US saw fit.

What did this money buy? There is not much to show for the reconstruction effort. Electricity and water supplies are actually worse than just after the invasion. By contrast, after the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq almost completely repaired its infrastructure within 2 years, using the fairly meagre resources available within the country, and without access to imported parts, for foreign-made machinery and equipment.

How has that money been spent? It has been squandered. It has been dispersed to various US corporations with close links to the government. For example, billions have flowed to Halliburton, of which Dick Cheney, the US Vice President, used to be CEO, its construction division, Kellogg, Brown and Root, and to Blackwater, Donald Rumsfeld’s company.

The spending in Iraq has been totally unaccountable - that is spent often with no accounts whatsoever, totally untraceable. For example, shortly before the hand-over to the Transitional Government, while accounts were completely under the control of

the US administration, the US printed \$2,2 billion in new bank notes, flew it over Baghdad in a C130, and then dished it out from the back of a container lorry, throwing it out to waiting contractors, in shrink-wrapped bundles - "cash bricks" of \$10 million.

The huge cost of US "reconstruction" is increasingly difficult to hide as anything other than naked embezzlement. In this context, it does not seem like coincidence that the US took the preliminary step of legally indemnifying these corporations that none of their actions in Iraq may be considered crimes, under US law at least, and that no-one could sue for their money back.

A corporate feeding frenzy. Ordinary people have suffered, to help the rich grow richer. This has been visible not just in Iraq but in Britain and the USA also.

This brings us to a second point - the transfer of money that takes place because of war and empire is not merely from one nation to another, but also takes place inside nations, from the poor to the rich.

In Britain and USA, money is being taken to pay for the war, and taken from ordinary people. That money is effectively being transferred from the poor to the rich. In USA, the money has been taken mainly by cuts in services, such as Medicare and Welfare programmes. In Britain, taxes are going up to pay for our contribution. Sometimes, these are disguised tax cuts, such as Council Tax rises, due to cuts in government support grants. It is never announced that this money is going to the war, but it is.

Several US newspapers have commented on the geographical and racial distribution of the US dead - that they are mainly coloured, or rural poor. Many people have commented that the US forces exploit poverty and disadvantage in recruitment. For many, the armed forces represent the only chance of a college education (otherwise prohibitively expensive in USA) or the only way out of poverty or unemployment. Poverty and unemployment are great recruiters for the army, poverty to which the war itself is adding. The same is true in Britain as in the US - the army has always relied on the poor for recruitment, and recruitment is easier

when times are hard. (In passing perhaps we should notice that 90% of the US troops who took part in the first Gulf War have since become registered disabled, due to Gulf War Syndrome. This is probably an indication of how many British troops have suffered similarly, but the UK government has tried to pretend the condition does not exist, and has denied our troops compensation or support.)

Is it coincidence that the USA, the richest nation in the world, also has some of the world's most intense poverty? Is it coincidence that Britain, the most willing member of the "Coalition of the Willing" has the greatest division between rich and poor in Europe, with twice the rate of child poverty of France, and five times the rate of Sweden? Is it a coincidence that the European nations with less poverty and a less abrupt division between rich and poor were more reluctant to enter this war? Is there a connection between readiness to enter the war and the social paradigm the nation has adopted?

An obvious loser has been democracy, and an obvious winner has been corporate power. Perhaps these two are not unrelated. Mussolini said that "Fascism should more properly be called corporatism". We forget that Mussolini led a programme of privatisation, including privatisation of railways and the post office. Today, we mistakenly think that fascism was a form of crypto-communism, whereas it was actually the blending of state power and corporate influence.

Perhaps we should examine our relationship with the USA more closely, and this coalition we have entered.

Generally, nations fight wars to maintain their freedom and independence. By fighting in this war, we have actually weakened ourselves as a nation, made ourselves less free, and more dependent upon USA. Nations do not often fight wars to take away their own freedom and to make themselves dependent on others yet, somehow, this is what we have accomplished.

The US has recently demanded its allies supply troops to fight in Afghanistan. The Netherlands have tried to refuse, and were warned by Paul Bremmer, former US proconsul in Iraq, that they would suffer "consequences" if they refused.

Now that the “Oil for Food” money is running out, the US is talking about a) reducing the number of its troops stationed in Iraq and b) demanding its allies pay for the cost of “unfinished reconstruction”.

This is very similar to the position of allies of the ancient Roman Empire, who were obliged to pay tribute to the Empire in terms of money, goods and troops. The Romans obliged their allies to go to war for them, just as USA now does today.

The secret relationship between Britain and the US was exposed by Clive Ponting in his book “Breach of Promise”, which considered the Labour government of 1964-70, led by Harold Wilson. Documents released under the US Freedom of Information Act reveal that the US President, Lyndon Johnson, dictated a series of policies to Wilson, that benefited USA but were detrimental to Britain. Wilson adopted these policies, and did not declare to his cabinet that they had been proposed by the US, or what their true purpose was. The only people who knew were James Callaghan (who had also attended some of the meetings with the US) and George Brown (to whom some details had been disclosed).

Amongst the policies the US required were a foreign exchange policy, where the value of the Pound would be maintained artificially high, to form a “first line of defence” for the value of the Dollar. Basically, money speculators would attack the Pound, because it was being held at an unstable value, rather than the Dollar. The US realised that this would be difficult to maintain, so they also stipulated a domestic austerity package, including wages and prices control. This later became the white paper “In Place of Strife”, leading to 14 years of wages and prices control, 1965 - 1979, continuing under both Labour and Conservatives. Barbara Castle, the minister who introduced and implemented this policy had no idea of its true origin or purpose.

As a result of this programme, throughout the 60s and 70s, Britain experienced successive currency crises, which cost £ billions in currency and gold reserves, lost trying to support the Pound. It also led to “stop-go” economic policies, damaging Britain’s economic growth and employment - every time the economy began

to grow, it led to a balance of payments crisis and then a currency crisis, which then forced the government to implement deflationary policies. This hurt the prosperity of the majority of ordinary people.

This was only one aspect of the numerous policies dictated to Wilson by the US. We can see that Blair misleading Parliament over Iraq was not some aberration or one-off. Britain has not been acting like a sovereign nation for many decades. The US dictates policies to the British Prime Minister, and the PM is able to push these through Parliament. Parliament has acted as a "rubber stamp", applying no meaningful scrutiny, never noticing that these policies are against our national interest. Political parties have applied no control over their MPs, and the governments they have supported to power. In fact, political parties have served to suppress debate rather than encourage participation and public scrutiny - policies have become issues of party loyalty rather than national interest or objective debate. Our nation has become subject to policies that are inhuman and against the interests of the majority of the population. Our government serves corporate power and influence rather than the needs of the people.

The war in Iraq has become a landmark in the decline of democracy in Britain. We let it happen - can we learn how to stop it happening again?

Nathan Allonby - February 15th, 2006

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# **The Costs of War**

*by Doreen Henderson*

When we talk of 'The Cost of The War' everyone knows the war we are talking about is the Iraq War. However the 'dodgy dossiers', etc, about Iran are already being drip-fed to us and it is only time, I fear, before 'This War' won't just be the Iraq War but also the Iranian War.

The cost of this war in civilian deaths is the first obvious scandal. The cost of war in civilian deaths alone is sufficient evidence that it is the war-mongers, the politicians and the military who suffer the least casualties. This, I might add, is the biggest most heart-breaking injustice in the whole sordid illegal war.

The financial cost is perhaps the second obvious scandal. When half the world's population is starving, we have spent, and go on spending, millions on this mass-murdering 'religious crusade'.

The greatest fear I have coming out of this disaster concerns the total lack of moral fibre and the belief in their own total 'omnipotence' displayed by the 2 B's [Bush and Blair]. They went to war because they felt they had the right to - with no real justification given or needed [discount the lies]. They succeeded in getting away with this, and having succeeded once they have been given the way to attack again elsewhere - and on even flimsier

jumped up evidence. To me this is the greatest danger to come out of this bloody war.

I cannot condone wars under any circumstances. They achieve nothing but sorrow and suffering. They leave scars between nations, which might never heal. But we never learn. I remember my Granny talking of the Boer War, my Mother of the 'Great War' [but what was 'great' about that war?], I talk of the '39-'45 War, my Grandchildren of the Iraq War, and so it goes on ...

But I still say in true Geordie style: KEEP HAAD - there must be a brighter day to come. Perhaps it will be when people like Bush start to talk WITH God as opposed TO God [and that comes from an atheist! - desperation, eh?!]

Peace and more peace be with you.

Doreeen Henderson - February 15th, 2006

# Lives Lost - The Greatest Cost of War

*by Phil Talbot*

Of all the costs of war, the costs in terms of the lost human lives are the greatest.

All the other costs might be recovered by changes in policy and political direction - but the lost lives can never be recovered.

The terrible truth is that no one knows for sure what the cost in human lives in Iraq has been - largely because the American and the British governments [clearly wanting to hide the scale of their own violent acts] 'don't do body counts'.

The two most reliable casualty estimates are from the Lancet medical journal and the independent Iraq Body Count organization.

Both show casualty levels way in excess of anything admitted officially, and both are probably conservative under-estimates of the real figures.

The Lancet estimate, published in 2004, was based on a complicated statistical analysis of changing population levels. Its casualty estimates concentrate on the 2003 invasion phase of the war and the immediate aftermath. The British and American governments have attempted to rubbish the Lancet report, but it has stood up to the attacks, and its estimate of at least 100,000

deaths up to the time of its publication has been widely accepted as 'credible'.

The Lancet report states: 'Violent deaths were widespread ... and were mainly attributed to coalition forces. Most individuals reportedly killed by coalition forces were women and children. The risk of death from violence in the period after the invasion was 58 times higher ... than in the period before the war. [...] Making conservative assumptions, we think that about 100,000 excess deaths or more have happened since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Violence accounted for most of the excess deaths and air strikes from coalition forces accounted for most violent deaths. We have shown that collection of public-health information is possible even during periods of extreme violence. Our results need further verification and should lead to changes to reduce non-combatant deaths from air strikes.'

The ongoing Iraq Body Count estimate is based on the slow piecing together of fragmentary casualty details published in diverse news reports. It estimates upwards of 30,000 deaths.

It is important to stress that the sort of news reports used by Iraq Body Count generally under-report the deaths of unarmed civilians killed by occupying forces - because they occur in areas where journalists are not able to work. This produces a misleading over-emphasis on the deaths caused by the non-state forces variously described as 'terrorists', 'insurgents' or 'resistance fighters'.

It is simply a fact - but rarely pointed out in the mainstream media - that the American military is the single most violent force in Iraq at present. Its 'shock and awe' attack policy is clearly a 'terrorist' doctrine - and it is only word-play to suggest otherwise.

It is a denial of reality if we only recognize 'terrorism' as something done by someone else - 'them' against 'us'.

It is true that more than 2,000 American troops have been killed in Iraq over the past 3 years, and something like 20,000 injured - and these casualties, like all war casualties, are to be deeply regretted.

But the Americans have not been soaking up casualties without inflicting them themselves.

For much of the last three years American forces have been actively on the offensive in many parts of Iraq - launching mostly unreported, and sometimes very indiscriminate, attacks on areas with large civilian populations - and have killed tens of thousands of people, mostly unarmed civilians.

These are facts:

- \* 'terrorists' killed more than 3,000 people in America in September 2001, and more than 50 people in London in July 2005

- \* 'terrorists' have killed tens of thousands of people in Iraq since March 2003

It is also a fact that the American forces have killed more people in Iraq than any other force operating there - and most of the victims were unarmed civilians rather than armed combatants.

These are reports of a sort you might not have heard on the BBC and other mainstream media outlets:

- \* 15,000 residents of an Iraqi town on the Euphrates were forced to flee during an attack by the US army.

- \* Residents of another Iraqi town described American bombs as falling on them 'like heavy rain' and witnesses reported marines shooting many unarmed inhabitants.

- \* Various American airstrikes on an Iraq town killed more than 40 unarmed civilians.

- \* Witnesses said US warplanes attacked rescuers attempting to free survivors from the rubble of a previous airstrike.

\* 1,000 US troops cut off power and water supplies to a village near the Syrian border. The Americans then stormed the village killing dozens of civilians.

\* 2,500 US troops backed by warplanes and helicopters launched a circling attack that sealed off three towns, causing untold numbers of casualties and damaging most buildings in the sealed off area.

And so it goes on ...

Such mostly indiscriminate attacks - which have included the deliberate use of chemical weapons, carpet bombing and cluster bombing - continue ... in mostly unreported incidents ...

And the cost in human lives continues ...

Britain has so far lost more than 100 military people killed in Iraq.

No figures for British military injured have been issued - and the British government has even refused to disclose such details under its own Freedom Of Information Act - but they must be at least in the hundreds.

Many of the other details of these British casualties remain mysterious. Families of many of the victims are still demanding explanations of the circumstances of their deaths.

There are also, in addition to the official forces, many somewhat mysterious forces now operating in Iraq.

There are, for example, known to be thousands of armed people, from America, Britain, and elsewhere, employed privately by security corporations in Iraq. No official numbers or casualty figures for these people have ever been issued.

It is also known that large contingents of so-called 'green card mercenaries' - generally poor people, from Latin America and elsewhere, offered U.S. citizenship in return for military service -

are working with and within the American forces in Iraq. Many of these people have more or less untraceable backgrounds - and so are, effectively, 'disposable' soldiers, who can die or otherwise 'disappear' without having to be officially counted.

It is also known that within and alongside the British forces, there are unknown - but probably considerable - numbers of Commonwealth 'volunteers' - particularly from the West Indies and the Pacific islands. Official data gives little indication of their numbers, nor of what casualties they might have suffered.

It is also important to point out that war casualty figures obscure many other 'hidden' casualties - including the many - at least 'dozens' of - other British citizens - including contractors, aid workers, peace activists, journalists and others - who have been killed, injured, kidnapped, or otherwise traumatized in Iraq.

Nor do they include the thousands of deaths and injuries from 'common' criminal activity - which has soared in the many parts of Iraq that are now effectively lawless.

And nor do they include the civilian casualties in terrorist bombings elsewhere, such as those in Madrid, Bali, Istanbul, and London - which no one - including Tony Blair - can seriously believe were not linked to the continuing war in Iraq.

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### **COSTS OF WAR: AN HISTORICAL NOTE**

In 1692/3, while at war with France, the British government introduced a new method of paying for wars that enabled it to raise huge sums of money without having to resort to additional taxation: The National Debt.

The National Debt was initially intended as an emergency measure at a time when existing arrangements for obtaining credit were on the verge of collapse ... but it proved strangely enduring

...

In the initial 1692/3 National Debt scheme, corporations and individuals were invited to loan money to the government in return

for stock that paid an annual dividend - thus investors were guaranteed a regular source of income, while the government found the wherewithal to pay for armies, navies and other forces as they were needed for each new overseas war.

During the following century, each successive war added to The National Debt: in 1757, for example, it stood at £57 million; by 1797 it had risen to £240 million [and in that year interest payments cost the British Treasury £9.4 million - a considerable sum for a nation which at that time had an annual income from taxes and other duties of only about £13 million]; by the end of the 'Napoleonic' wars, in 1815, The National Debt stood at £834 million.

Needless to say, the burden of servicing such an ever-expanding National Debt required an ever-expanding military-political-economic British overseas empire ...

Nevertheless, the burden of servicing the ever-rising National Debt was offset by certain advantages it offered to the British ruling classes: in particular it freed them from serious anxieties about the effects of their actions on public opinion - which might, for example, have reacted adversely to emergency taxation to pay for overseas wars in times of crisis.

Phil Talbot - February 15th, 2006

## **Address at the Monument on the Occurrence of the 100th British Soldier Killed in Iraq**

*The following remarks were made by Roger Nettleship on behalf of South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition to those gathered at the Monument, Newcastle on Saturday, February 4th.*

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To have your son, brother, husband, father killed in any war is a burden that must be hard to bear.

However, when so many of the military families know as we do that the wars the British government is waging to annex and occupy counties like Afghanistan and Iraq, are unjust, when the war and occupation of Iraq is illegal how much more painful must that be.

On this occasion it is right for us to come together to join with the military families in sharing their grief and their condemnation of the illegal war against Iraq - and its occupation.

To mark as well not only the dead, but the hundreds of British soldiers that have been maimed or injured, figures which the MOD seems to keep as a closely guarded secret.

Neither, can we stand here and condemn the death and injury of British soldiers without also condemning the deaths of 100,000s of Iraqis that have been killed - the whole scale demolition of their country and their homeland by this illegal war and occupation.

Our message to ourselves and to every one is - let us step up our work to bring the troops home. Thousands of British troops are being redeployed to Afghanistan. Let us organise to stop all these wars of occupation of other lands once and for all.

As we speak, the propaganda continues to demonise Iran and other countries as they did Iraq. Let us be clear also about this. The propaganda to dehumanise Muslims with cartoons. It is a prerequisite for genocide. Just as Hitler started by demonising the jews with cartoons. How many thousands more will be killed in this state terror that has been justified in the name of fighting individual terror

Let us build on our most precious asset - our unity and our humanity, our self reliance on our own work to stop the wars and end the occupations and defend the rights of all the people.

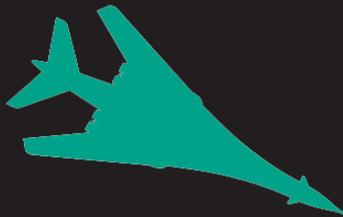
Roger Nettleship - February 4th, 2006



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*To Contact South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition,*

*E-mail : [STSWC@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:STSWC@blueyonder.co.uk)*

*Website: <http://philiptalbot.members.beeb.net/ststwc.html>*

**Silence is Shame!**

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**Also Tyneside Stop the War Coalition can be contacted  
by e-mail: [nestopwar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nestopwar@yahoo.co.uk)**