

**INFORMATION REGARDING CALLS PRESENTED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY
2013 RAINBOW ROUND TABLE**

I TO ACCESS THE THREE WEEKLY CALLS via the Internet

A BBS RADIO Go To www.bbsradio.com; click on Talk Radio Station #2; click on "64K Listen"

Thursday: 9 pm – 12:00 pm EST **Stargate Round Table** **Host: Marietta Robert**

Friday: 9 pm – 2 am EST **Friday Night Hard News** **Hosts: T & R**

Saturday: 4:30 pm – 2 am EST **History of our Galactic World & NESARA** **Hosts: T & R**

Friday, Saturday: From **10 – 11 pm EST**, for one hour, the call moves to the Conference Call Line [PIN below] and then returns to BBS Radio.

- During the radio show, use the following phone numbers to ask questions or make comments
530 – 227-7602 [line 1]
530 – 413-4522 [line 2]
530 – 530-413-5011 [line 3 & 4]

- **BBS Toll Free # in Canada, US** 1 – 888-429-5471 This number picks up whichever line is available.

B Conference Call: 1-860-970-0300

Thursday PIN #	87 87 87#
Friday PIN #	23 23 23 #
Saturday PIN #	13 72 9#

C Skype: **BBSradio2**

D Archives for the 3 Programs listed above:

- To access the **FREE BBS archives** for any of these programs:
- Go to [BBSRadio.com/ Station 2](http://BBSRadio.com/Station2); scroll down; click on **Live Talk Radio Shows**
- Scroll down to **Hard News on Friday with Tara and Rama**, and click on **"Library Archives"**
- When that screen comes up, click on ARCHIVES; when that screen comes up, check on the date you want. It opens in a new tab: you'll see the "free to listen box"; click the bars to play; use the tab to stop and start the tape.
- Right hand click on "direct MP3 Link" and then you can download the program to your own computer, or click on "Listen" without downloading the archived program.

- The **2013 website also has an archive section:**

<http://2013rainbowroundtable.ning.com/> look under the "Archives" tab for written notes.

II TO ACCESS OTHER CALLS SUPPORTED BY 2013 Rainbow Roundtable

A Sunday, Mondays: 9 – 10:30 EST **Cheryl Croci's Activation Calls**
By telephone only: 1 – 605-475-5950; PIN 9467441#

**B Tuesdays, 2nd & 4th of each month:
9: 00 – 11:00 pm EST** **Ashtar on the Road**
Hosts: Fran; Susan Leland channels Ashtar, Mother Sekhmet
www.Ashtarontheroad.com

- Phone Number: 1 – 605-562-3140; PIN 980339 #
- Call is free [except for long distance charges]
- Can also listen to the call via Skype

C Wednesdays: 7:00 – 9:00 EST **The Friends of The Aboriginal Moabite Nation Call**
By telephone only: 1– 712-432-0900 PIN 666238#
Replay # [good for 1 week] 1-712- 432-0990 PIN 666238#

Opening Meditation: Rainbird

Housekeeping: Rainbird Thank you!

- BBS:**
- A listener-supported radio program; we know the White Knights listen but they cannot contribute anything; part of our job is to pay for them too
 - **We need \$ 300 for this week!!!** This is good news!!! Thanks to all who pay it forward. Thanks to new donors, too – makes it easier for all.
 - What we hear and learn feeds our minds and our souls! And, as LM Nada said, it is also part of our contribution to the work being done by Tara & Rama and to the changes going on. **Every little bit helps!**
 - Go to BBS.com/Radio 2; find the listing for Friday Night Hard News; find the **Paypal** button
 - **NO COST TO ACCESS THE ARCHIVES** for any of the T & R PROGRAMS, or the one for Thursday night: Stargate Round Table, hosted by MariettaRobert
 - Re: archives of the other programs on BBS: the money we pay to listen to someone else's archives is put towards our BBS bill!
 - The mailing address for those who do not like paying electronically:
**BBS Network, Inc. [Attention: Don]
5167 Toyon Lane
Paradise, CA 95969**
 - BBS appreciates getting checks through the mail – no fees taken off by Paypal

AN OPTION ON HOME PAGE: A BUTTON TO SET UP A MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION

- T & R:**
- Can donate via the Paypal button on the website: 2013RainbowRoundTable.ning.com
 - need \$200 for the rent and some for bills

FROM ASHTAR ON THE ROAD: donate to the Santa Fe Coop so T&R can access organic, fresh food

Your donation here sets up an account for Tara & Rama with Beneficial Farms Community Supported Agriculture in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This will make available a weekly supply of fresh produce raised with organic and sustainable methods.

These funds will be exclusively used to maintain this weekly account for a steady supply of produce to Tara and Rama. They and we are very grateful for your assistance.

It's in the A-O-T-R store & is designated for the food. People can do multiples if they want:

<http://www.ashtarontheroad.com/catalog/item/2497194/10263880.htm>

Fran will put the link on their page as well.

http://www.ashtarontheroad.com/tara_rama_A_A_news_reports.html

- **Please notify them if you're sending something:** koran999@comcast.net
- Rama's mailing address for cheques, Money orders:
Ram D Berkowitz
1704-B Llano St, # 249
Santa Fe, NM 87505
- **Phone contact** is via MariettaRobert: 317-773-0061
or by e-mail: stargatemarietta@gmail.com
- **Remember you can book a session with Mother, as well!**

MR:

- Please remember to support MariettaRobert's show also.

Introductory Notes:

- the Gofundme for Rama's operation is doing well: <https://www.gofundme.com/RamaSurgery>
 - **please keep the donations coming & send them to his paypal a/c with a memo**
 - **\$10, 258 is the amount to date; they can now access the a/c**
- **CONFERENCE CALL: 9 – 10 PM, EST: 1 – 641-715-3650 PIN#: 353 863#**
- **716-748-0044 - use this number to hear the call very clearly: Link is courtesy BBS!**

- Link for the entire program: <http://bbsradio.com/podcast/hard-news-friday-august-19-2016>

HARD NEWS

Randi Rhodes: R talked to RR today; she hooked R up with Lady Di, Dodi and the kids – they are somewhere in the Bhutan Mtns somewhere bordering China, watching ships land and people interact with the beings in the ships!

- the folks showing up are working with the ancient sisterhoods, brotherhoods who have come forward to assist the Ancient Wisdom Keepers coming out of their cryogenic chambers around the planet – this story is getting bigger every week.
- All we hear about is the fake news that does not deal with the real happenings – we have some alternative news sites: bless them as they are walking a fine line between 2 worlds
- The ones he got to talk to are not whistling Dixie and standing in the corner, waiting to be saved:
 - democracy is not a spectator sport and tag! We are it. It's a messy business and people are losing their lives:
 - one of Julian Assange's lawyers was killed by a commuter train – John Jones, 48, and one of Britain's top lawyers – death being called a suicide **[SEE BELOW]**
- R:** we are not waiting for any dates: the ships are showing up, people on the ships are interacting with those on the ground
 - RR hooked him up, via encrypted phone, with those 4 and then left them to talk: she is one of the inside team with E. Warren, Oprah Winfrey, Bernie, Michelle Obama
- The Collective said last night that the **whistleblowers need to be surrounded with huge amounts of violet fire** – they are in uncharted waters and dangerous territory.

Reading: 2016-08-18 Attacking Wikileaks' Assange for Doing What Journalists are Supposed to Do **[SEE BELOW]**

Reading: 2016-08-17 Audit finds chaotic financial management at Tennessee's Achievement School District **[SEE BELOW]**

Reading: 2016-08 –15 When the Levy breaks **[SEE BELOW]**

Reading: the fire in southern California is 20% contained

Reading: The Birth of Agro - Resistance in Palestine **[SEE BELOW]**

Reading: 2016-08-18 Best of TomDispatch: Andrew Bacevich, Pentagon, Inc. **[SEE BELOW]**

Caller: Sept 2-8 Obama is travelling to China – what is the agenda?

R: probably to talk to Pres Xi about 911 and other things

T: Aung Sung Su Chi met with Pres Xi today

- there will be no TPP, only exposure; yet remember that things are happening as they do because lots of people have to wake up – no one will pass over 9/11 this time!

Caller: heard that Putin is getting ready for a big announcement in Russia next time

R: has heard that too – could be about Mantefort who officially resigned from the Trump campaign; he is no friend of Mr Putin and this has riled up the old-style oligarchs in Russia

T: also points out as per Rana Mu yesterday: Mr Trump is not so long for this planet –

- they killed Assange's lawyer: the 4 in the mtns said the 13 families are apoplectic about the fact that their 13,000 year empire since the fall of Atlantis and their idea of the takeover has gone into ruin.
- It's a larger story that 26, 826 years of Annunaki rule – has to come out about the cloning, genetic engineering, genome projects of the ancient Sumarians who were better at gene splicing than we are at this point

- this goes into the realms of Star Trek and beyond and how advanced the technologies really are and when we get to see how huge the story it we'll see it brings in the hyper dimensional folks who are here

Caller: a movie called **Arrivals** that is coming out in September

R: about the galactics showing up, yet is more fear-based than telling the truth about them coming to help us: still playing with the fake apocalypse and so on & be led into the promised land

- These folks want to play out the ancient book of Numbers and the old testament about how a saviour shows up – it is not the Mahdi! There is one Mahdi, one Maitraya and he is here now, along with the brotherhoods and sisterhoods and other ascended folks to help bring about the transitions
- We have 40 hours of education to unlearn what we been fed for the last 100 years, and the wisdom masters just waking up have much to share, too; it is a good time and an awesome time to be alive.

Caller: Dr Keshe getting ready to make another announcement on Sept 1 about free energy – gas would go from \$3 to \$1

T: that was the word last year but they never quite made it to \$1

- the renewables are becoming massively cheaper so the only way to keep gas and oil going is to make it cheaper – this is another good way to take them all down.
- We the people have spread and fanned our wings on every topic: we are formidable foes for these ones.

Caller: has heard talk about 800 numbers and going to the bank -

R: 800 numbers are connected with banks and figures that don't figure – DON'T GO THERE!

- GET A CREDIT UNION AND STAY OUT BANKS ALTOGETHER
- these ones keep trying to lure us to keep wanting more money – and the money is soaked in oceans and oceans of blood!

Caller: for those listening, please be aware of the misinformation, disinformation – some of what is put out is NOT TRUE – **WE WILL NOT BE BILLIONAIRES WITH THESE CURRENCIES [dinars, dong, zimbabwe]**

T: there are paid-for schills in the seats of power, and they are killing people

- in Zimbabwe, people are starving;
 - the US stole 800 tonnes of gold from Libya, created ISIS AND ISIL
 - over ½ million are dead in Syria and over ½ million are dying in the prisons in Syria – the people don't get enough oxygen due to lack of power to the buildings –
 - if we follow their path, there is only death for all of us.
- This needs to be an education about NESARA – there is nothing else going on!!!

T: what are Di and Dodi saying?

R: all the folks are showing up here; this is the time and place; it's about raising the frequencies to higher levels – this particular full moon eclipse is working with that energy. Goddess comes now

T: There is something in London called the Robin Hood Coop – the troubles there are 4x what they are in US

- Russell Brand has a new show coming up
- The cities in US and over there are being gentrified: ordinary people are without a roof over their heads – we are asked to meet this with love which means a serious move in the right direction.
- IN THE MEANTIME, THE GALACTICS ARE HERE AND THE ENERGY CONTINUES TO RISE!!!

CONFERENCE CALL

Reading: top republicans apparently committing felonies in pursuit of Hillary Clinton

[SEE BELOW]

T: talks of the lies implicit in the above article

- and how Putin has a better handle on affairs than most leaders

Read: 2016-08-20 **Donald Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort resigns** [SEE BELOW]

R: Manafort helped set up a nazi gov't in Ukraine

T: About Banning the burka – notes from watching a DW [German] tv program

- the conservative interior minister wants to show progress; they take the position that the full burka and the veil covering the face are not acceptable in an open society. Want to ban these garments in universities, at passport controls, when driving – also, no dual citizenships and the banning of child marriages
- None of these conditions can be imposed without the agreement of the coalition Merkel had to form to get into power. She is up for re-election in 2017
- There is hardly a woman anywhere with her face entirely covered in Germany! This from the reporter.

Article: Florida doing heavy spraying to kill mosquitoes due to zika virus

Article: an upturn in violence in eastern Syria

Article: an empowering solution to the fake left-right paradigm – the waking times [SEE BELOW]

- the people in Trump's campaign know he is losing and that something has to happen – yet they are still lost themselves
- the US dollar getting weaker, weaker, weaker over last 2 months – this helps the exports from the US
- There are articles appearing about higher beings among us
- hieroglyphics on Egyptian pyramids in Egypt that tell **how to clone – this is not new.**

Caller: CALL IS TOO FULL OF STATIC TO BE HEARD CLEARLY

- The Amon priesthood is another name for the dark priests in Atlantis who caused the great crystals to be shattered.
- War in heavens had been going on for 5,000 linear years even before Atlantis got going - understand that they had 12th dimensional abilities with all the powers of a god & used that energy for negative purposes

Caller:

T: a photo of an Atlantean crystal ball that they got from a friend – the pyramid is inside the ball, and Mother Sekhmet's face is in the pyramid

- we are flooded by higher vibrations relentlessly, without fail – the opposition forces are doubling down, and we need the help
- the 1968 election was the most violent election – there was a love-in in the park

Lyn: ourrevolution.com – to start preparing legislation to bring gov't back to better focus

- we can download the manuals for the different legislation so can bring in "The New Congress"
- Bernie – giving a presentation on Aug 24th
- The manuals are in every electoral office – Bernie is moving to automatic voter registration
- there is another website to check out: popular resistance – just google it – more involved with legislation and the political movement

Question: How big are the manuals?

TOO MUCH STATIC TO FOLLOW THE CONVERSATIONS

T: news that the earth and the universe is expanding AND speeding up!

BBS RADIO

MOTHER SEKHMET / ALCYONE [M/A]

Lord Ganesh, Lord Shiva, removers of obstacles!

We are in a time; with so much love pouring in, and their children can't stand it one little bit

- they are stomping their feet because they cannot get their way in this sector of the galaxy.
- It is quite a feat we all have accomplished: the tide has turned – they only have fear; they have love, and they have chosen not to take love so therefore we know the outcome of the story. Send more love to all situations.
- This is inevitable: Lord Shiva, Pele come and dance with us in this grand cycle of transfiguration. Gotta let this old ego die and this is in its death throes as we speak
- everywhere we look, we see the old falling away; new energies, new life coming in. Everybody expanding and demanding that we get to dance with the angels and the fairies at this time.
- This is the new order of business – it is about more ecstasy and joy, not everlasting sadness. The moments we are in are so auspicious to behold
- They can't hold the light that is pouring in right now; this is causing their thoughts, their bodies, their whole way of being is to go by the wayside. It is very much in our midst that we have become the changes that we want to see in the world.
 - In the same breath, as we don't get caught in the fray, it would be in our best advantage as – yes, it is about getting in the midst of this with love, not with anger or hate or revenge of the sith; there are so many good things coming to pass already in this time we are in.
- What they can speak of in this eclipse, full moon, red moon, this time of this harvesting – let's say she'll cut to the chase: the harvesting of what is transpiring here is earth and all her people are rising to the occasion of this shining example of a star bursting forth in this sector of the galaxy [which] is a big deal!
 - This cannot be stopped: the things that are transpiring that distract us for the moment are about our own reflections of taking the clock of our own being and bringing it into the realm we are being given - the wisdom of how to transfigure these garments, these temples of the living goddess – a garment of sorts: it is like a coat we can take on and off.
 - At this time, everything that is unlike love is being shed, and it is causing all this dross to be brought to the surface to be healed.
 - As we work with Dr Keshe, the plasma frequencies even bringing it into our realm of the thought form energy – these energies that uplift the temple, the body mind and spirit - it is taking place in spite of our best efforts of wanting to hit the showers with the towel & just say enough!
 - there are so many that are watching this and are not sure how much more they can take of the insanity of this fake war – and it is a fake war on we the people 'cos we never lost our power: we always had it, and they don't want us to remember that and keep us busy with so much maya, confusion, obstacles in the path to distract us with lies about where we are at in our evolutionary development
- she will say it as it is: they [M/A] are most honoured, humbled to be among gods, goddesses at this time – we have the power, people; use it wisely at this time.
 - It is about us in this moment, using what we know are our gifts and abilities that, every

second of every day, as we expand into that second and allow it to flow, we can watch an actual second transfigure into timelessness as we wait for the drop to drop from the faucet – we've already become the drop; we are in the ocean of bliss.

- In this moment, as we are already experiencing the ripples from this lunar eclipse, full moon, the ripples of the pond, ocean, going out now. As the pebble, the drop of soma dropped into the pond, the ripples go out as we move farther and farther from the moment this eclipse occurred – the waves get bigger and bigger.

- We'd best be on our business of ascension. All that is transpiring is affecting all living matter. At this point of our story of ascension, now the energies will rapidly, dramatically increase and it is about these times of what the message is saying about the return of the goddess, the return of all the ancient wisdom where we are not just slaves – the time of returning back to our power is in this moment.

- Everything that is coming about in the moment, is about this return to our own gifts and abilities, and it is happening, folks, no matter what is being said out there: it is happening!

- The technologies of spirit, science of spirit – this is a quantum science; it is science of love, law of vibrational energy. As we understand, inner stand, these higher principles – how to work with the quantum field as the energies pour in – all the centres of living love, living light, power centres, our 9 stars and all our chakras: all is in place. Use our power wisely; the time for us to do this is NOW.
 - Their wayward children know our moment of ascension is in this time – cannot give dates!

T: and Mother is here; this full moon is in her space, with us!

M/A: yes, and it is about not just about dinner: it is about the higher perspective that we all asked to be part of, this magical story that is so fantastic

T: isn't there anything we can do? It just seems like the whistle blowers get killed

M/A: she must say in spite of the fact that this is going on . . . rest assured . . .

T: they are doing this because they're scared!

M/A: And, let's say, because we are in this time of transfiguration, as we learn about the quantum field and the science of these bodies, these temples, we learn that there is not really death as we know it; it is about taking off one coat and putting on another coat – and yes . . .

T: There is a dichotomy here about we are supposed to grow old – and who said?

M/A: Who said? **They** didn't say it! What words came from there?

T: the ones who are defying such belief systems are few and far between at the moment – at least in the visible spectrum; she knows there are lots of kids and people who don't get sick any more

M/A: the ones that preach these philosophies; how are they in their evolutionary cycles? How has hope and change helped them?

T: the ones who say we have to grow old? Yes, says M; **T:** there is a dignity about wisdom. . .

M/A: when we are at the place of – for instance: Babaji – here since the beginning when she was “young”, to use a fanciful phrase: she is as old as we can imagine & then some! No words, no numbers – it is about the one hand clapping when we get beyond the realm of time/ space, space/time, there is nothing: it is just . . .

T: when you are hanging around in a monastery in the Bhutan Mts with a bunch of folks called monks, you . . .

M/A: It looks like you might be living in the 14th century – yet when the MIG jets pass over, you know you are in this present time – and, of course, the MIG gets are watching everyone with their technology. It is a blending of worlds at this time – it is about the fact that a fantastical magical story is being unravelled before our eyes at this time.

- It is about our own DNA calling us to active duty and saying will you join me on this magical journey; let go of your fears, your trepidation, your thoughts that you are not

worthy; **you are more than worthy** or you would not be here!

- The whistle blowers who are leaving via accidents which are not accidents – it is about the fact that we are all immortal beings; these ones will be back to tell their story about why. Whatever happened to that particular temple, body that may have met with a situation that meets up with a force of energy that - let us say that it is inevitable that the force energy will do a cosmic dance & to make a long story shorter, as Gerry said this story is about you and me and Pinky Lee – He didn't say that, she is saying that!
- She is saying it is about the beautiful, magnificent time we are in that is only about love, and the ones we call her wayward children, the 13 families, know that in spite of all the actions they take, the virtuousness of something about these high ideals that have to do with . . .
 - we must comprehend, inner stand, to use the words that she uses to help us grok, to understand how they think, their lofty ideas of helping out the useless eaters – in a certain context, they believe they are benefitting the planet in the long run and they think that they are helping to create benevolent ways of interacting with them [galactics] as they show up now – all the living masters, goddesses and gods of the Most High –
- the illusion is they [galactics] cannot be brought with any amount of precious metals or what we call the treasures of Solomon or whatever may be on this planet; they are part of the technology of this planet, the mechanism, the gears, its nuts and bolts, that make her do her thing, which is to move throughout the Universe of Nebadon as she freely gives her gemstones of every kind, the gold dust – it is in the atmosphere already, don't need to extract it from anything, anyone – it is already in our blood
- St Germain talks about in the magic presence [via] the green books: as we raise the frequencies of these temples of the living goddess, our blood changes from hemoglobin to the gold dust, to monatomic gold; therefore we are immortal: if we want to eat arsenic, hamburgers, dahl with chapati, we can eat it; it matters not - as we follow the scientific principles Dr Keshe is giving us about how to change this hemoglobin, plasma – think about it: plasma, hemoglobin; plasma, blood –
 - how can we get around it? the sun is the same as us: we have within us the heart centre – we think with our heart; as we work with that of the heart centre, the plasma energy throughout all 7 chakras, the 9 stars above our heads: as we ignite the frequencies in these temples, the plasma, the hemoglobin - whatever we want to call this stuff called life force, prana, chi - it transforms, transfigures the gold dust.
- Our overseers who want to enslave us for eternity don't want us to remember we are immortal, that we have the gold dust just like the black goddess, like the people of the black land where we all came from
 - the absorption of all the colours of the rainbow is black; white is the absence of all the colours of the rainbow: yet we are all the composition of all the colours of the rainbow.
 - This brings in the wisdom about the bit frost, the road to Asgard. As we travel up the rainbow bridge, it interacts with our melanin, our gold dust: able to travel through dimensions, space time; able to walk through the star gates with 12 strands, without getting caught in the maya of fear. They want us to forget this and to work 3 jobs and forget our ascension training.
- This is what Dodi and Di's children are learning now: these masters in these temples, the ways of the Jedi, the ways of the force - we are all learning this in our own ways now– Dr Keshe learning how to take the water, the plasma and put all the vitamins and minerals and 22 amino acids in the water; drink the water so we will have all we need – don't need a T-bone steak or filet mignon; they are not barbarians, cave men, trying to eke out an existence in Mordor, trying to hide from nuclear radiation – yet that is going on!
 - She can say with all certainty, that what we did, the empire, did to Aleppo, Tcrete, Anbar Prov – so many names of cities: we have no idea of these people – the ancient Shia,

ancient Sunni – all part of the stories of who we are as children of the Shining Ones who showed up with ships that shone like the sun: in the sunshine - the gold, the melanin – this gold dust story is so huge, goes way beyond “The Golden Compass” [a movie] which is just a small story about the wars and the ice bears and how these wayward children want to separate us from our councils of teachers, elders, masters and forget our ascension training and go into despair.

- Going to make America great again: she laughs– only great thing will be when this life form goes back into the pit of fire – which already Kali Yurga, Pele have done the work - it is already coming about – doesn't have to do anything – the Maha mantra sound frequencies transforms anything that is of a negative nature and blasts it into sub-atomic particles: shatters and consumes back into anti matter so she can create new universes. This is what is transpiring right now.
 - Mr Hair is taking himself out with every single breath he takes, every move he makes each day – nothing can stop or prevent that from happening - he has made his choice: he goes back to anti-matter without the form he is in – and that is a choice some souls will make; let them love their way on their way back to anti matter
 - It is part of the process – Henry Kissinger [who was Henry 8th in a past life], gonna go with him, along with the dragon lady [HRC]; not going to have an annunaki queen for a president
- this is about the goddess: she is black, she is beautiful, she returns with the wisdom of the ancient ones
 - the story of the black land, Kennet, is now; as we really grok how deep this story is, it brings in everlasting joy and we have to kinda giggle as we look at these ones who are so waywardly lost on the path to Mordor and they can't - no matter what we do to try and wake them up: love them; let them be on their way as they choose that path: it is up to them – she is not gonna get in the way of another soul going home whether it is in subatomic particles or in ascension frequency – that is the adventure here, folks! It is the greatest adventure we have asked to be part of -

T: Ever!

M/A: Ever! This brings in the story about physical immortality as a living principle of who and what we are: that is why we are getting this planet for all eternity as we become shining stars along with her; the idea of death becomes a moot point and there is . . .

T: How does this work? There are life times and lifetimes of hate and bitterness and revenge that are combusting these bodies

M/A: what it is about, as she comprehends, groks, inner stands - the fact that thought forms are physical matter, just like the table is physical matter. When we have thoughts that are anything other than perfection, it creates scalar waves; we can create scalar waves with our thoughts – they affect living matter, space/ time. This is part of the principles of how we get into the realm of becoming merkaba vehicles!

T: like for instance, the Russians hacked into the DNC and to add insult to injury, as of last night they [Hillary & co] are reporting that what happened, didn't happen, and they said they are going to hack into some high flautin' Russian stuff. And the former deputy CIA chair on the Charlie Rose show said that as the Iranians took out some of our American soldiers in the Iraq war, so let's go take out covertly some Russians and some Iranians – what do we do with these stuff, this nonsense?

M/A: We praise, respect, thank, love the feelings – because the thought form of the mind of a being preaching such hate – must understand how much suffering is going on within that matrix - cannot live with whatever he may have done with his own family; whatever is going on is not our business; and yet it is, because it affects living matter, space/time - those thought forms affect us all

M/A: This is why in the ancient traditions of the masters of the east and the wisdom that comes from **The Book of the West, Lau Tze and Quan Yin** – as we take our thought forms which are anything less than perfection and go into the heart space, that quiet, still space, the void and look at what's coming up with the thoughts, what's bringing about in the thoughts as so painful to Self; what was in the consciousness that is so awful: we all participated in so many stories that go away beyond what we can comprehend – she gives us a little slice [to help us understand]

- when we are immortals and have the ability to render a sun into physical sub-atomic particles with thought, imagine what we can do life forms, to planets, systems. She is speaking of her wayward children who have these abilities & still do, to some degree; and we do too, like Q - yet now what is happening because of the shift that happened after 2012 [is that] we moved into the state of grace
- Now they [galactics] get to come in with the sphere alliance, along with the bird people, the horse people, the blue avians, and the legions and legions of heaven, & interact with us in space time, and as we grok how powerful we are, and take our power back in this nano second, folks like Mr Trump cannot hold a candle to us; he and others only preach fear

- as we get how powerful love is & we are, physical bullets cannot touch us; nukes cannot touch us as in the story of the Little Buddha when a nuclear bomb goes off and doesn't touch him
 - How the pedal meets the metal is the magic serendipity of the gold dust coming in and she is adding a few spices to the mix: the advantage we all have is that we are already in the time of The Great Awakening, and many folks still think we are lost down the road. It is about realizing that we are not in the old Gregorian calendar - not the 12 60 cycle, but in the 13 20 cycle. This brings in the quantum field, when we are not bound by what we have understood rules the old timelines – yes, we still play with the old calendar yet
 - **We are in 2018 now** and moving closer to 2020 and it's that quick: just a breath away. We have been told by Barbara Hand Clow and José Arquelles: as you get past 2012, we watch how fast the seconds move: now you see how fast it is moving? It is moving so fast with the frequencies – we may have only 6 hours in a 24 hour cycle: can you imagine how fast that day went, and we wonder where the days go – when we fill our days with activities as Jacques Fresco talks of in The Venus Project - slaving for The Man in a factory as in China or at Wall Mart or at a supermarket with slave labour wages
 - when we have time to walk with the fairies, the angels, the devas, we make our reality happen; we make those things happen. Dr Keshe is giving us the keys to do it, right now - how we bring these things into manifestation so we don't have to give our power, our love away to the pimp down the street – the tax man.

T: brings up the rate of tax to be applied under NESARA

M/A: She understands - as we even it out and the playing field moves into the realm of universal economics – and as they [the galactics] are already here, will show us how to manipulate space/ time, matter; we instantly manifest, precipitate what we need – Dr Keshe has already given us some of the keys to do that; next step is they will take us for a walk off the cliff with the little white dog, and we're gonna fly – gotta believe in the magic – she is not telling us a fairy tale!

- Look at all the stories around us, the legends, the magical periodicals / “comic books” – the ancient words that talk about the legends and the stories of all the kingdoms, of all the magical beings are here now. When we hear the story of ET Corey talking to a 14' triangular faced being who only wants to talk about peace and love, and healing the universe – let's get on with it!

T: What do we do with the ones who might get turned into pumpkins too

M/A: pumpkin soup with curry!!!

- What about playing Democracy Now and the private prison thing?

M/A: It's a big deal – as we break up the old systems and people didn't do much – it is time to end the incarceration of the mind in Mordor:

- the real crime going on here is that these ones have gotten in the way of our going home, so she and her friends get to step in and say "It's over".

T: They've been doing it for so long - what's going on with Julian Assange – he's lost not just a lawyer but someone who's been helping all of us?

M/A: It is about the exposure and the coming to a conclusion now

It has moved into the realm of: the answer my friend is blowing in the wind – because it is about the 5th element, love. As we bring love in, it changes everything: I Love You!

- Greetings in the Light of the Most Radiant One! Kadoish, kadoish, kadoish; Adonai Sabaoth - remember – NESARA! – freedom – you have the power; the people have the power – power to the people – Namaste!

R: has been to a place called Half Dome in Yosemite National Park – part of a mtn chain there called Half Dome; there are beings at the top who are calling in the frequencies right now to bring in healing, cooling rain to the fires in that area of California – San Bernadino

- Half Dome has a face that goes straight up and down; people climb it via ropes and sleep over night in hanging tents!
- He has never seen these people before: they remind him of gold scarabs in the ancient hieroglyphics – they are dancing to bring in the rain

T: ancient ceremonies that are relevant again.

Audio: Democracy Now

[TRANSCRIPTS BELOW]

2016-08-19 In Historic Shift, U.S. Government to End Use of Deadly, Costly, Negligent Private Prisons

2016-08-19 Private Prisons May Be Phased Out, But Industry Leaves Trail of Bodies from Medical Neglect & Abuses

2016-08-19 As Feds Close Prisons Run by Private Companies, Will They Do Same for Immigrant Detention Centers?

2016-08-19 Former Iran Hostage Shane Bauer: Claim That \$400M U.S. Paid to Iran was Ransom Deal is "Absurd"

2016-08-19 Dave Zirin: Brazilians are Fed Up with U.S. Olympian Ryan Lochte and Privileged First-World Tourists

Audio: Keiser Report

[\[KR955\] Keiser Report: To Frack or Not To Frack?](#)

<https://youtu.be/7ow8Rf63UCA>

We ask why only 1/3 of the British population supports fracking despite big cash payments allegedly on offer from the government. In the second half, we talk to fracking advocate, [Nick Grealy of London Local Energy](#) about his belief that natural gas, even of the fracked variety, is a more environmentally friendly source of energy than most others – despite the arguments (he says are false) that fracking pollutes groundwater and causes earthquakes.

Audio: Larry Willmore

Final episode: August 18, 2016

<http://www.cc.com/full-episodes/0u2yfj/the-nightly-show-with-larry-wilmore-august-18--2016---jon-stewart-season-2-ep-02147>

Audio: More from Joan Baez' 75th birthday

Reading: When God was a Woman – pp 72 – 75 with commentary from Rama, further explanation of some of the things being read.

Closing: Rainbird

T: interesting that Jon Stewart is joining us in different ways – he's like a symbol of us showing up!

Music: Rumi Song #2 May it be so

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMFYZ9W3GMk>

Uploaded on 6 Nov 2011

I am so glad and thankful and I feel honored that so many of you out there seem to like what we created. "Is there more?" some of you asked. Yes, there is. Actually, here it is. I hope you all enjoy this one, too.

Take a couple of minutes to stop and meditate. Let it flow. Let yourself flow. Let's all take a minute and pray. To not talk, not hurry, not worry, not hustle. Not quarry, not argument, not grumble. Let's think of peace.

Let's wish for peace. Let's pray for peace. Let's stand for peace. Let's stand up for peace. Let's understand that without peace life is not much worth living. Nowhere. Let's understand that there can be no peace without love. Let's understand that there will be no peace without love. Let's love. Whenever, whatever happens, whoever happens to be around.

Let's let it be. Like Van Morrison sang: "It ain't why, why, why - it just is."

May it be as it is.

May it be ... so.

A song about Woodstock

INFORMATION RELATED TO THE NOTES

2016-08-19 **Julian Assange's Lawyer Found Dead After Being Struck by Train**

<https://youtu.be/PNJcfXOqiDY>

MLordandGod

Forbidden Knowledge TV | Aug 19, 2016 | Alexandra Bruce

<http://forbiddenknowledgetv.net/julian-assange-s-lawyer-found-dead-after-being-struck-by-train-27812>

Here's more news you don't get in the US' mainstream media: John Jones 48, one of Britain's top human rights lawyers, who represented Julian Assange was killed last Monday, when he was run over by a commuter train. The death is being called a suicide.

British Transport Police were called to the West Hampstead train station in North London at 7:07 AM on Monday, after a man was struck by a train. He was reportedly pronounced dead at the scene and his death is not being treated as suspicious.

Jones worked on the same team as actor George Clooney's wife Amal. He specialized in extradition, war crimes and counter-terrorism; taking cases from the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Lebanon and Cambodia.

Jones lived in an expensive home in North London, with wife Misa Zgonec-Rozej, 40, a director of an international law consultancy, and his two children.

The news is particularly disturbing, as [Democratic Strategist and CNN host, Bob Beckel](#) appeared in a FOX TV interview and called for the assassination of Julian Assange (or more accurately, "Just kill the sonofabitch!")

Assange is believed to be planning a strategic "October Surprise" leak of a Hillary Clinton email, just prior the US Presidential Election. It purportedly contains information that will definitively put her behind bars.

2016-08-18 Attacking Wikileaks' Assange for Doing What Journalists are Supposed to Do

New York Times soils itself

By: Dave Lindorff

While I periodically have written commentaries dissecting and pillorying news articles in the *New York Times* to expose their bias, hypocrisy half-truths and lies, I generally ignore their editorials since these are overtly opinions of the management, and one expects them to display the elitist and neo-liberal perspective of the paper's publisher and senior editors.

That said, the August 17 editorial about Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, who has spent four harrowing years trapped in the apartment-sized Ecuadoran embassy thanks to a trumped-up and thoroughly discredited political rape "investigation" by a politically driven Swedish prosecutor and a complicit right-wing British government, moves far beyond even the routine rampant bias and distortion of a *Times* editorial into misrepresentation and character assassination. As such, it cries out for criticism.

Headlined "A Break in the Assange Saga," the editorial starts off with the flat-out lie that "Ecuador and Sweden finally agreed last week that Swedish prosecutors could question Julian Assange at the Ecuadorean Embassy in London where he has been holed up since 2012."

The casual reader fed only corporate media stories about this case might logically assume from that lead that such an interview has been held up by a disagreement of some kind between Ecuador and Sweden. In fact, Ecuador and Assange and his attorneys have stated their willingness to allow Swedish prosecutors to come to London and interview Assange in the safety of their embassy for several years now. The prosecutor in Sweden, Marianne Nye, who has been pursuing Assange all that time like Ahab after his whale, has not only never taken up that offer, but by her refusal to go to London in all this time, demanding instead Assange's enforced presence in Stockholm, has allowed any possible rape charges, if any were even appropriate, to pass the statute of limitations. The paper doesn't mention this. Nor does the editorial mention that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Working Group on Arbitrary Detention last February found that Assange is effectively being held in arbitrary detention by the UK and Swedish governments, and called for his release, and for the lifting of British government threats to arrest him and extradite him if he leaves the safety of the embassy.



Julian Assange remains holed up in the Ecuador embassy in London fearing extradition to the US on an espionage charge

The paper fails to mention the important point that *there are no rape charges pending against Assange, and never were*. Swedish prosecutor Nye, at one point, was trying to build a case that Assange committed a rape in 2010 by proceeding to have sex with a woman (she had invited him to stay in her house for the night and to sleep with her), after his condom had allegedly broken during consensual intercourse -- a circumstance that in most countries would not qualify for a rape charge. (The woman by her own account later went out to buy breakfast for Assange, and subsequently tweeted boasts about having bedded him, but later took those down.) A second woman, who also had consensual sex with Assange the same week has said her complaint was only made in order to make Assange take an AIDS test, which he subsequently did, and she subsequently dropped her complaint. Although no formal legal charge of rape was ever filed against Assange, Sweden succeeded years ago in getting an overly enthusiastic Interpol to issue an unusual "red alert" warrant for him, which led to his arrest in Britain and to his seeking asylum in the Ecuadoran embassy. None of this important history got mentioned in the *Times* editorial.

The *Times* claims Assange's real reason for not wanting to go to Sweden to undergo questioning is that he "presumed: that extradition there would also lead to his extradition from Sweden to the United States to face charges over the Chelsea Manning leaks" about US war crimes in Iraq.

This sentence leaves the same casual reader to assume that Assange is just being paranoid. Unmentioned is the fact that throughout Assange's whole ordeal, the US Justice Department has possessed a sealed and active indictment charging Assange with espionage -- a charge which, if ever brought to trial, could result in his being sentenced to life in prison in some US maximum-security hellhole, or worse. That is not paranoia. It is what the US does to perceived enemies of the state, who are generally prevented by the courts from offering genuine defenses, such as a First Amendment argument in Assange's case. Also unmentioned is the fact that Sweden has never promised not to make such an extradition to the US after questioning him.

The *Times*, which enthusiastically published articles based upon many of the very leaks that Assange brought to light via Wikileaks, including Pvt. Manning's devastating in-flight video of a US attack helicopter slaughtering innocents in Baghdad (as the pilot and gunner laugh), cites others who have "accused" Assange, "even those who have hailed his exposes of government secrets," of being "reckless with personal information," and of "using leaks to settle scores." As an example of "those" people, the editorial cites film director Alex Gibney, who authored a *Times* Op-Ed piece. It doesn't note that Gibney's claim to fame was producing a documentary film on Wikileaks that was little more than a fact-challenged hit piece on Assange.

As evidence of Assange's alleged lack of principles, the *Times* cites Wikileaks' release of recently hacked Democratic National Committee emails disclosing the DNC's efforts to throw the party's nomination to Hillary Clinton, and to undermine and destroy the campaign of her rival, Bernie Sanders. The release, the *Times* writes archly, came "days after Mr. Assange's denunciation of Hillary Clinton and just before she was officially named the Democratic presidential nominee."

Now hold on there. The *Times* during the course of this primary season, repeatedly used its supposedly unbiased news pages to ignore, ridicule and red bait Sanders, while repeatedly declaring Clinton the likely nomination winner, even as she lost primary after primary. It joined in a corporate media stampede to declare the race over before the June 7 primary in which California

and six other jurisdictions had yet to vote in primaries that could have still handed the victory to Sanders. Meanwhile, the *Times* is known to have held stories from publication in the past that could have been devastating to President George W. Bush back in his 2004 race against John Kerry. These concerned evidence of a hitherto unknown massive warrantless spying campaign on American citizens by the National Security Agency, and even a fully written and edited report that Bush had likely cheated in his three debates with Kerry. Both were held until after Bush was re-elected, and the latter article was never published by the *Times*.

Is that what the *Times* was suggesting a "principled" Assange should have done with information he had in his possession exposing a corrupted DNC working for Clinton? Withhold it from publication?

Apparently so.

The real issue here is not Assange's principles, which have always been about giving Americans and the rest of the peoples of the world access to secret information that is being improperly hidden from them by people in power, but is rather the lack of principles at the *New York Times*, which seems long ago to have forgotten that the role of the so-called Fourth Estate is supposed to be openness and, as Joseph Pulitzer put it, "to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted."

Instead, the *Times*, with its sycophantic news pieces blaming Russia, on the basis no evidence, of being behind the DNC hack, and of being an aggressive threat to the sovereignty of eastern European nations, with its gentle reporting on Clinton, which glides over the epic corruption at her and husband Bill's Clinton Foundation, and with its one-sided coverage of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories on the West Bank and the decades-long Israeli siege of Gaza, is little more than a propaganda organ of Washington.

It is symptomatic of this propaganda role that the *Times* sees nothing wrong with the Justice Department's finding no cause to prosecute Hillary Clinton for her willful violation of the Freedom of Information Act and of State Department regulations in handling all her communications as Secretary of State on a private server in her own home, and sees nothing wrong in Attorney General Loretta Lynch rejecting an FBI request to investigate corruption at the Clinton Foundation, but at the same time, finds it perfectly acceptable for that same Justice Department to have a four-year active secret espionage indictment sitting ready on the shelf to file against journalist Assange, should prosecutors manage to get their hands on him.

Maybe that's because the *Times* is unhappy that Assange and Wikileaks have been doing what the *Times* is so clearly unwilling to do: aggressively pursue real journalism that matters.

Source URL: <http://thiscantbehappening.net/node/3266>

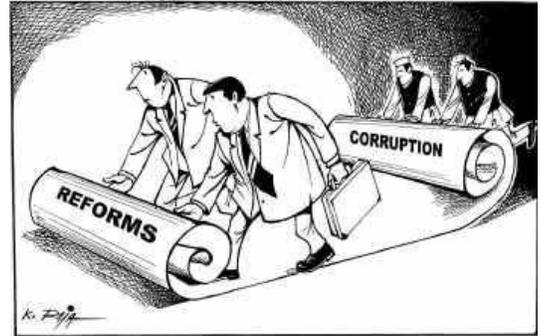
2016-08-17 Audit finds chaotic financial management at Tennessee's Achievement School District

August 17th, 2016 by [Andy Sher](#) in Local Regional News Read

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2016/aug/17/state-audit-documents-chaotic-financial-operation-tennessees-achievement-school-district/381759/>

NASHVILLE - It's in charge of turning around Tennessee's failing schools, but the state's Achievement School District now has its own flunking grade from state Comptroller watchdogs.

The just-released audit by the Division of State Audit provides a blistering critique into what auditors say the agency's lack of internal financial controls over basic functions.



Will Indian Higher Education Get Freedom from Corruption ...

(image by [dreducation.com](#)) [License DMCA](#)

Cartoon from [opednews.com](#)

So just how bad are things at the agency that directly manages five public schools and contracts with private charter groups to operate 24 other schools falling into the bottom five percent of schools statewide in terms of student performance?

Even as Division of State Audit accountants' examination was still underway this spring, the state Department of Education, which had allowed the ASD to operate independently, informed the Comptroller's office in April that it had staged an intervention and seized control over the ASD's "fiscal and federal processes."

As a result, the functions were transferred from Memphis to Nashville with a turnover of the ASD's financial staff. Education Commissioner Candice McQueen's staff told auditors they were hiring a fiscal director, fiscal manager, accountant, account tech, federal programs director and federal programs manager.

Problem areas cited by the Division of State Audit ranged from loose controls over spending, travel and credit cards to insufficient monitoring of the actual schools that ASD runs or contracts out.

Specific findings include:

- 1) The Achievement School District's management did not establish adequate controls over several key human resources and payroll processes

State law directs that it "shall develop written procedures, subject to the approval of the commissioner, for employment and management of personnel as well as the development of compensation and benefit plans."

"During our audit," watchdogs wrote, "we found seven key areas where ASD did not establish processes over key human resources and payroll functions, including segregating duties; maintaining personnel files; verifying education credentials; documenting time and attendance; completing performance reviews; documenting approvals of bonuses and pay raises; and exiting

employees.

2) The Achievement School District's management "failed to implement adequate internal controls over its expenditures, travel claims, and purchasing card purchases

"Based on our testwork," auditors wrote, "we found several deficiencies that indicate that ASD management did not establish adequate internal controls over expenditures and purchasing card purchases. Specifically, we noted that management did not properly approve expenditures, travel claims, and purchasing card purchases, nor did they provide adequate support for some transactions.

3) The Achievement School District's fiscal management "did not perform sufficient fiscal monitoring of its direct-run schools and charter management organizations

"Considering the problems identified in previous Tennessee Single Audits," auditors noted, "we inquired with management to determine if ASD management conducted fiscal monitoring of ASD's Achievement Schools and charter management organizations; we found that ASD's main office staff do not conduct such monitoring.

In one instance, auditors discovered there were payments of \$5,895 to employees who no longer even worked for ASD.

Among other things, auditors also couldn't find six expenditure transactions for a dental insurance premium, donation, coffee supplies, and accrual calculations, totaling \$131,637, and for three travel claims for a flight and expenses involving charter school operators. That totalled \$4,734 and, the audit says, "management could not provide supporting documentation."

Auditors wouldn't even publicly cite specifics in one of their findings on "internal controls." Instead, they found refuge in an exclusion to the Tennessee Open Records Act. It deals, among other things, at ensuring sensitive information about security problems with information systems doesn't get out.

But according to the new audit, that's on top of a lot of other problems that both the state and federal government, which in addition to Tennessee provides funding, have found in previous audits.

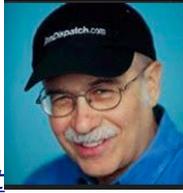
On March 30, 2016, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, released an audit of Tennessee's Race to the Top grant, which included funds spent by the ASD.

"This federal audit identified similar internal control deficiencies and areas of federal noncompliance with the Race to the Top grant at ASD," the latest Comptroller notes. "During our current audit, we continued to find similar issues relating to fiscal deficiencies and noncompliance, but we have also identified new areas of deficiencies related to human resources and purchasing cards."

It notes that ASD "did not have sufficient processes, procedures, and specific critical controls in place to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements, including proper administration of federal and state funds. In some instances, we found that ASD had actually created or adopted procedures but had failed to follow them."

The audit said that the Comptroller's office has previously "reported deficiencies in ASD's internal controls and noncompliance with federal program requirements, resulting in approximately \$721,000 of federal questioned cost."

2016-08-18 Best of TomDispatch: Andrew Bacevich, Pentagon, Inc.



By [Tom Engelhardt](#)

[Note to TomDispatch Readers: *Today, TD pays a visit to a classic piece published at this site on January 27, 2011. In a way, it couldn't be a sadder story, since so little has changed in the five-and-a-half years since Andrew Bacevich wrote it and so it remains, as he suggests in his new introduction, painfully relevant. Tom]*

A writer who dares to revisit a snarky article dashed off five-plus years earlier will necessarily approach the task with some trepidation. Pieces such as the one republished below are not drafted with the expectation that they will enjoy a protracted shelf life. Yet in this instance, I'm with Edith Piaf: *Non, je ne regrette rien*. The original text stands without revision or amendment. Why bother to update, when the core argument remains true (at least in my estimation).

This past weekend, I attended the annual meeting of Veterans for Peace (VFP), held on this occasion in funky, funky Berkeley, California. The experience was both enlightening and humbling. VFP members are exemplars of democratic citizenship: informed, engaged, simultaneously realistic -- not expecting peace to bust out anytime soon -- and yet utterly determined to carry on with their cause. To revive a phrase from another day, they insist that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

What particularly impressed me was the ability of rank-and-file VFP members to articulate the structural roots of American militarism and imperialism. They understand that the problem isn't George W. Bush and Barack Obama (and therefore won't be solved by Hillary or The Donald). It's not that we have a war party that keeps a peace party under its boot. No, the problem is bigger and deeper: a fraudulent idea of freedom defined in quantitative material terms; a neoliberal political economy that privileges growth over all other values; a political system in which Big Money's corruption has become pervasive; and, of course, the behemoth of the national security apparatus, its tentacles reaching into the far quarters of American society -- even into the funky precincts of the San Francisco Bay Area. There is no peace party in this country, even if a remnant of Americans is still committed to the possibility of peace.

If any of my weekend confreres have occasion to read this piece on the second go-round, I hope that it will pass muster with them. If not, I know they will let me know in no uncertain terms.

Andrew Bacevich

Cow Most Sacred Why Military Spending Remains Untouchable

By [Andrew J. Bacevich](#)

In defense circles, "cutting" the Pentagon budget has once again become a topic of conversation. Americans should not confuse that talk with reality. Any cuts exacted will at most reduce the rate of growth. The essential facts remain: U.S. military outlays

today equal that of every other nation on the planet combined, a situation without precedent in modern history.

The Pentagon presently spends more in constant dollars than it did at any time during the Cold War -- this despite the absence of anything remotely approximating what national security experts like to call a "peer competitor." Evil Empire? It exists only in the fevered imaginations of those who quiver at the prospect of China adding a rust-bucket Russian aircraft carrier to its fleet or who take seriously the ravings of radical Islamists promising from deep inside their caves to unite the *Umma* in a new caliphate.

What are Americans getting for their money? Sadly, not much. Despite extraordinary expenditures (not to mention exertions and sacrifices by U.S. forces), the return on investment is, to be generous, unimpressive. The chief lesson to emerge from the battlefields of the post-9/11 era is this: the Pentagon possesses next to no ability to translate "military supremacy" into meaningful victory.

Washington knows how to start wars and how to prolong them, but is clueless when it comes to ending them. Iraq, the latest addition to the roster of America's forgotten wars, stands as exhibit A. Each bomb that blows up in Baghdad or some other Iraqi city, splattering blood all over the streets, testifies to the manifest absurdity of judging "the surge" as the epic feat of arms celebrated by the Petraeus lobby.

The problems are strategic as well as operational. Old Cold War-era expectations that projecting U.S. power will enhance American clout and standing no longer apply, especially in the Islamic world. There, American military activities are instead fostering instability and inciting anti-Americanism. For Exhibit B, see the deepening morass that Washington refers to as AfPak or the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater of operations.

Add to that the mountain of evidence showing that Pentagon, Inc. is a miserably managed enterprise: hide-bound, bloated, slow-moving, and prone to wasting resources on a prodigious scale -- nowhere more so than in weapons procurement and the outsourcing of previously military functions to "contractors." When it comes to national security, *effectiveness* (what works) should rightly take precedence over *efficiency* (at what cost?) as the overriding measure of merit. Yet beyond a certain level, inefficiency undermines effectiveness, with the Pentagon stubbornly and habitually exceeding that level. By comparison, Detroit's much-maligned Big Three offer models of well-run enterprises.

Impregnable Defenses

All of this takes place against the backdrop of mounting problems at home: stubbornly high unemployment, trillion-dollar federal deficits, massive and mounting debt, and domestic needs like education, infrastructure, and employment crying out for attention.

Yet the defense budget -- a misnomer since for Pentagon, Inc. defense per se figures as an afterthought -- remains a sacred cow. Why is that?

The answer lies first in understanding the defenses arrayed around that cow to ensure that it remains untouched and untouchable. Exemplifying what the military likes to call a "defense in depth," that protective shield consists of four distinct but mutually supporting layers.

Institutional Self-Interest

Victory in World War II produced not peace, but an atmosphere of permanent national security crisis. As never before in U.S. history, threats to the nation's existence seemed omnipresent, an attitude first born in the late 1940s that still persists today. In Washington, fear -- partly genuine, partly contrived -- triggered a powerful response.

One result was the emergence of the national security state, an array of institutions that depended on (and therefore strove to perpetuate) this atmosphere of crisis to justify their existence, status, prerogatives, and budgetary claims. In addition, a permanent arms industry arose, which soon became a major source of jobs and corporate profits. Politicians of both parties were quick to identify the advantages of aligning with this "[military-industrial complex](#)," as President Eisenhower described it.

Allied with (and feeding off of) this vast apparatus that transformed tax dollars into appropriations, corporate profits, campaign contributions, and votes was an intellectual axis of sorts -- government-supported laboratories, university research institutes, publications, think tanks, and lobbying firms (many staffed by former or would-be senior officials) -- devoted to identifying (or conjuring up) ostensible national security challenges and alarms, always assumed to be serious and getting worse, and then devising responses to them.

The upshot: within Washington, the voices carrying weight in any national security "debate" all share a predisposition for sustaining very high levels of military spending for reasons having increasingly little to do with the well-being of the country.

Strategic Inertia

In a 1948 State Department document, diplomat George F. Kennan offered this observation: "We have about 50 percent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population." The challenge facing American policymakers, he continued, was "to devise a pattern of relationships that will permit us to maintain this disparity." Here we have a description of American purposes that is far more candid than all of the rhetoric about promoting freedom and democracy, seeking world peace, or exercising global leadership.

The end of World War II found the United States in a spectacularly privileged position. Not for nothing do Americans remember the immediate postwar era as a Golden Age of middle-class prosperity. Policymakers since Kennan's time have sought to preserve that globally privileged position. The effort has been a largely futile one.

By 1950 at the latest, those policymakers (with Kennan by then a notable dissenter) had concluded that the possession and deployment of military power held the key to preserving America's exalted status. The presence of U.S. forces abroad and a demonstrated willingness to intervene, whether overtly or covertly, just about anywhere on the planet would promote stability, ensure U.S. access to markets and resources, and generally serve to enhance the country's influence in the eyes of friend and foe alike -- this was the idea, at least.

In postwar Europe and postwar Japan, this formula achieved considerable success. Elsewhere -- notably in Korea, Vietnam, Latin America, and (especially after 1980) in the so-called Greater Middle East -- it either produced mixed results or failed catastrophically.

Certainly, the events of the post-9/11 era provide little reason to believe that this presence/power-projection paradigm will provide an antidote to the threat posed by violent anti-Western *jihadism*. If anything, adherence to it is exacerbating the problem by creating ever greater anti-American animus.

One might think that the manifest shortcomings of the presence/power-projection approach -- trillions expended in Iraq for what? -- might stimulate present-day Washington to pose some first-order questions about basic U.S. national security strategy. A certain amount of introspection would seem to be called for. Could, for example, the effort to sustain what remains of America's privileged status benefit from another approach?

Yet there are few indications that our political leaders, the senior-most echelons of the officer corps, or those who shape opinion outside of government are capable of seriously entertaining any such debate. Whether through ignorance, arrogance, or a lack of imagination, the pre-existing strategic paradigm stubbornly persists; so, too, as if by default do the high levels of military spending that the strategy entails.

Cultural Dissonance

The rise of the Tea Party movement should disabuse any American of the thought that the cleavages produced by the "culture wars" have healed. The cultural upheaval touched off by the 1960s and centered on Vietnam remains unfinished business in this country.

Among other things, the sixties destroyed an American consensus, forged during World War II, about the meaning of patriotism. During the so-called Good War, love of country implied, even required, deference to the state, shown most clearly in the willingness of individuals to accept the government's authority to mandate military service. GI's, the vast majority of them draftees, were the embodiment of American patriotism, risking life and limb to defend the country.

The GI of World War II had been an American Everyman. Those soldiers both represented and reflected the values of the nation from which they came (a perception affirmed by the ironic fact that the military adhered to prevailing standards of racial segregation). It was "our army" because that army was "us."

With Vietnam, things became more complicated. The war's supporters argued that the World War II tradition still applied: patriotism required deference to the commands of the state. Opponents of the war, especially those facing the prospect of conscription, insisted otherwise. They revived the distinction, formulated a generation earlier by the radical journalist Randolph Bourne, that distinguished between the country and the state. Real patriots, the ones who most truly loved their country, were those who opposed state policies they regarded as misguided, illegal, or immoral.

In many respects, the soldiers who fought the Vietnam War found themselves caught uncomfortably in the center of this dispute. Was the soldier who died in Vietnam a martyr, a tragic figure, or a sap? Who deserved greater admiration: the soldier who fought bravely and uncomplainingly or the one who served and then turned against the war? Or was the war resister -- the one who never served at all -- the real hero?

War's end left these matters disconcertingly unresolved. President Richard Nixon's 1971 decision to kill the draft in favor of an All-Volunteer Force, predicated on the notion that the country might be better served with a military that was no longer "us," only complicated things further. So, too, did the trends in American politics where *bona fide* war heroes (George H.W. Bush, Bob Dole, John Kerry, and John McCain) routinely lost to opponents whose military credentials were non-existent or exceedingly slight (Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama), yet who demonstrated once in office a remarkable propensity for expending American blood (none belonging to members of their own families) in places like Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It was all more than a little unseemly.

Patriotism, once a simple concept, had become both confusing and contentious. What obligations, if any, did patriotism impose? And if the answer was none -- the option Americans seemed increasingly to prefer -- then was patriotism itself still a viable proposition?

Wanting to answer that question in the affirmative -- to distract attention from the fact that patriotism had become little more than an excuse for fireworks displays and taking the occasional day off from work -- people and politicians alike found a way to do so by exalting those Americans actually choosing to serve in uniform. The thinking went this way: soldiers offer living proof that America is a place still worth dying for, that patriotism (at least in some quarters) remains alive and well; by common consent, therefore, soldiers are the nation's "best," committed to "something bigger than self" in a land otherwise increasingly absorbed in pursuing a material and narcissistic definition of self-fulfillment.

In effect, soldiers offer much-needed assurance that old-fashioned values still survive, even if confined to a small and unrepresentative segment of American society. Rather than Everyman, today's warrior has ascended to the status of icon, deemed morally superior to the nation for which he or she fights, the repository of virtues that prop up, however precariously, the nation's increasingly sketchy claim to singularity.

Politically, therefore, "supporting the troops" has become a categorical imperative across the political spectrum. In theory, such support might find expression in a determination to protect those troops from abuse, and so translate into wariness about committing soldiers to unnecessary or unnecessarily costly wars. In practice, however, "supporting the troops" has found expression in an insistence upon providing the Pentagon with open-ended drawing rights on the nation's treasury, thereby creating massive barriers to any proposal to affect more than symbolic reductions in military spending.

Misremembered History

The duopoly of American politics no longer allows for a principled anti-interventionist position. Both parties are war parties. They differ mainly in the rationale they devise to argue for interventionism. The Republicans tout liberty; the Democrats emphasize human rights. The results tend to be the same: a penchant for activism that sustains a never-ending demand for high levels of military outlays.

American politics once nourished a lively anti-interventionist tradition. Leading proponents included luminaries such as George Washington and John Quincy Adams. That tradition

found its basis not in principled pacifism, a position that has never attracted widespread support in this country, but in pragmatic realism. What happened to that realist tradition? Simply put, World War II killed it -- or at least discredited it. In the intense and divisive debate that occurred in 1939-1941, the anti-interventionists lost, their cause thereafter tarred with the label "isolationism."

The passage of time has transformed World War II from a massive tragedy into a morality tale, one that casts opponents of intervention as blackguards. Whether explicitly or implicitly, the debate over how the United States should respond to some ostensible threat -- Iraq in 2003, Iran today -- replays the debate finally ended by the events of December 7, 1941. To express skepticism about the necessity and prudence of using military power is to invite the charge of being an appeaser or an isolationist. Few politicians or individuals aspiring to power will risk the consequences of being tagged with that label.

In this sense, American politics remains stuck in the 1930s -- always discovering a new Hitler, always privileging Churchillian rhetoric -- even though the circumstances in which we live today bear scant resemblance to that earlier time. There was only one Hitler and he's long dead. As for Churchill, his achievements and legacy are far more mixed than his battalions of defenders are willing to acknowledge. And if any one figure deserves particular credit for demolishing Hitler's Reich and winning World War II, it's Josef Stalin, a dictator as vile and murderous as Hitler himself.

Until Americans accept these facts, until they come to a more nuanced view of World War II that takes fully into account the political and moral implications of the U.S. alliance with the Soviet Union and the U.S. campaign of obliteration bombing directed against Germany and Japan, the mythic version of "the Good War" will continue to provide glib justifications for continuing to dodge that perennial question: How much is enough?

Like concentric security barriers arrayed around the Pentagon, these four factors -- institutional self-interest, strategic inertia, cultural dissonance, and misremembered history -- insulate the military budget from serious scrutiny. For advocates of a militarized approach to policy, they provide invaluable assets, to be defended at all costs.

Andrew J. Bacevich, a [TomDispatch regular](#), is author of [America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History](#).

Copyright 2011 Andrew Bacevich

2015-08-15 When the Levy Breaks

<http://www.mikemalloy.com/shows/when-the-levy-breaks/>



North Baton Rouge, La. Saturday Aug 13/16

While focus is riveted on the orange fruitcake, deadly flooding continues to devastate southeastern Louisiana and southern Mississippi. Seven people have died in the floods, more than 20,000 have been rescued, 11,000 sought refuge in shelters, and the crisis isn't over. Ariel photographs of the swampy parishes are eerily reminiscent of the hurricane Katrina damage 11 years ago. And as expected, the climate change deniers continue their thick-headed insistence that the record-breaking heat, floods, droughts, and wildfires have any basis in scientific fact.

This is from the [Washington Post](#):

On Monday, climate researchers and weather experts were in what's by now a familiar posture — explaining that, no, this event wasn't "caused" by climate change, but then again, it's precisely the sort of event that you'd expect to see more of on a warming planet.

"Climate change has already been shown to increase the amounts of rain falling in the most intense events across many parts of the world, and extreme rainfall events like this week's Louisiana storm are expected [to] grow increasingly common in the coming years," [wrote](#) the Weather Underground's Bob Henson and Jeff Masters.

"Louisiana is always at risk of floods, naturally, but climate change is exacerbating that risk, weighting the dice against us," Katharine Hayhoe, a climate researcher at Texas Tech University, told The Washington Post. "How long will it be until we finally recognize that the dice are loaded?"

The easiest link between climate change and extreme weather events involves heat waves, a [recent study](#) by the National Academy of Sciences found. This makes sense: A warming planet overall breaks warm-temperature records more frequently than cold-temperature records and sets the stage for lengthier, or stronger, bouts of extreme heat.

But one of the other relatively simple links involves rainfall and heavy flooding. "Heavy rainfall is influenced by a moister atmosphere, which is a relatively direct consequence

of human-induced warming, though not as direct as the increase in temperature itself," the NAS report noted.

This is because as the atmosphere warms, [its ability to retain water vapor increases](#). Thus, the climate influence on precipitation events runs from tropical cyclones to blizzards, and all of them should be able to produce more precipitation in extreme events than before.

Climate scientist Kevin Trenberth of the National Center for Atmospheric Research [has argued](#) that we should turn the tables and, rather than assuming that a climate link to a given extreme event remains to be proved, simply assume one exists for extreme events driven by thermodynamic factors — e.g., heat and moisture — like heat waves and major rain events.

"Because global warming is real and present, it is not a question as to whether it is playing a role but what that role is," wrote Trenberth and two colleagues in a 2015 paper.

Climate scientist Kevin Trenberth of the National Center for Atmospheric Research [has argued](#) that we should turn the tables and, rather than assuming that a climate link to a given extreme event remains to be proved, simply assume one exists for extreme events driven by thermodynamic factors — e.g., heat and moisture — like heat waves and major rain events.

"Because global warming is real and present, it is not a question as to whether it is playing a role but what that role is," wrote Trenberth and two colleagues in a 2015 paper.

And our political leaders continue to ignore the crisis and avoid the topic at all costs. We can gasp at the latest goofy remark that escapes The Donald's pursed lips (shut down the Internet to stop ISIS?) or cringe every time Hillary screams into the mic about electing a "You're Hired!" president. But nary a peep about the single most important issue facing us today.

The lives of our children and grandchildren will be forever impacted by the choices we make right now. The Neocons generate a lot of squawk about protecting the little embryos – frozen or not – that are threatened by stem cell research or Planned Parenthood . . . what are we saving them for if their future is so inconsequential?

-KBM

<http://www.mikemalloy.com/shows/when-the-levy-breaks/>

2016-08-17 The Birth of Agro-Resistance in Palestine

By [Jonathan Cook](#)

Global Research, August 17, 2016

[Jonathan Cook](#) 17 August 2016

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)



For decades Israel has been driving Palestinian farmers off their land by imposing restrictions on agriculture. But one company, Canaan Fair Trade, has found an innovative way to resist

www.ameu.org/Current-Issue/Current-Issue/2016-Volume-49/Agro-Resistance.aspx– August 2016

Across the West Bank, olive trees can be found that have survived from the time of Herod, a legacy of the Romans' cultivation of the tree throughout its empire, including in Palestine. The trees are easily identified. In Arabic, they are known as "amoud" – or column – distinguished by the enormous girth of their gnarled, twisting trunks. They have a place in most Palestinians' affections. Hatim Kanaaneh, the Galilee physician and writer, observes that the amoud symbolises "stability, permanence and stature – physically, figuratively and economically".

The olive tree roots Palestinians in a tradition and identity as deeply as the trees themselves are rooted in the soil. When the first heavy winter rains wash away the dust of the summer drought from the leaves and fruit in late October or early November, extended families hurry out to their fields to harvest the crop. Erecting ladders, they reach into the grey-green foliage to pick the abundant fruit. The distinctive, gentle patter of an olive rainfall can be heard on the tarpaulins below.

For a few weeks, the hills and valleys of Palestine are filled with families, young and old, sharing a simple life outdoors together under the trees – one their great-grandparents would have recognised. With an estimated 10 million trees growing in the valleys and on the hillsides of the West Bank, it is huge undertaking that much of the society mobilises for. It is a moment of familial and communal solidarity, of a celebratory communion with nature and its bounty, and of connection to a heritage barely changed over millennia.

During the olive harvest, every Palestinian embodies "sumud", or steadfastness – a value whose significance has intensified under decades of belligerent Israeli occupation. The harvest represents

the ultimate kind of resistance by Palestinians: an individual refusal to be moved, and a collective refusal to be ethnically cleansed.

The olive continues to play a central part in the Palestinian economy too. More than 100,000 families are believed to depend on the trees as their primary source of income. The rural economy – much of it dedicated to olive oil production – is worth \$500 million, and accounts for about 13 per cent of the Palestinians' GDP.

Israel has done much to try to weaken Palestinians' connection to the olive tree, understanding that the "amoud" is the Palestinians' defence against Israeli guns, bulldozers, settlers and ill-will. Since the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza began in 1967, Israel has waged a relentless assault on Palestine's olive groves and the way of life they support.

Swaths of fertile land have been confiscated and reclassified as "state land", later transformed into army firing ranges and national parks or incorporated into the illegal Jewish colonies spreading across Palestinian territory. Water resources have been stolen too, starving farmers of the primary fuel needed to ensure a good yield. The army has uprooted or cut down hundreds of thousands of olive trees on security pretexts, claiming they can conceal stone-throwers or snipers. Settlers regularly inflict additional damage, burning down trees and attacking families when they try to reach their fields for the annual harvest. And over the past decade, hundreds of thousands more trees have been lost, cut off behind Israel's concrete and steel "separation barrier" from the families that tended them for generations.

Some threats to the Palestinian farming community are more insidious, though no less menacing. In the lands around the city of Jenin, in the northern West Bank, a new kind of long-term war against the ancient olive groves is playing out. Ostensibly a struggle between two competing economic models of the future, the battle is, in truth, one for Palestine's soul.

The first model derives from the Oslo accords of the mid-1990s, and represents the culmination of a decades-old story of Palestinian dispossession. It offers unskilled work to an impoverished population in a series of industrial zones, removing them from their agricultural traditions and their lands, and snaring them into economic subordination to Israel. It ensures the Palestinians a future of both food and employment insecurity. This colonial vision of economic dependence and exploitation – it goes without saying – is being promoted by Israel and the international community.

The second model, of self-sufficiency and dignity, is being championed by a cooperative farming project known as Canaan Fair Trade. It has grown rapidly, and now assists some 2,000 small-hold farmers in the West Bank. It offers them help to grow organic crops that can withstand water shortages and other privations of a hostile occupation; buys their products at above-market prices to ensure farming families can make a sustainable living; and finds local and foreign markets for the produce, as a way to bypass Israeli control and to raise prices. Staff have nick-named their approach "agro-resistance".

Canaan is receiving little more than ambivalent support from the compromised Palestinian national leadership.

Nasser Abufarha, who founded Canaan little more than a decade ago, after he returned from the United States, eloquently expresses what is at stake. "The olive is the number one crop for

Palestinians. This is the land of the olive, and it has always been central to our diet,” he tells me in Canaan’s offices in the village of Burqin, just outside Jenin. “The olive is important for our food security and our cultural representation. It is a symbol of our identity. The trees connect us to our land, to a place, to a history and to past generations. They also link us to future generations, to our children and grandchildren. They represent the continuity of a nation and our rootedness in the land.”

Economic re-engineering

To understand why these two models of the Palestinians’ future are fighting it out, we need to examine the ways Israel re-engineered the Palestinian economy after it began aggressively settling the Palestinian territories post-1967. It wanted to destroy farming as a way of life for Palestinians and thereby weaken their passionate attachment to their ancestral lands.

At that time, much of the Palestinian population outside the main cities depended on agriculture, working their small holdings as peasant farmers. But they soon found themselves targeted by the hundreds of new military orders issued by the occupation authorities. As well as seizing large tracts of territory, Israel severely limited the types of crops Palestinians could grow to prevent them from competing with Israeli farmers. It further rigged the market by taxing Palestinian exports while allowing Israeli produce to enter the territories tax-free.

Figures today show how economically dependent on Israel the Palestinians have become: more than 60 per cent of imports into the Palestinian territories come from Israel, while Palestinian businesses export 80 per cent of their products to Israel.

As the settlements began expanding through the 1970s and 1980s, Palestinian farmers found themselves in an ever-more desperate struggle to hold on to their lands. The settlers, unlike the Palestinians, had the might of a modern state – and one of the most powerful armies in the world – on their side. The settlers not only came to dominate more and more of the best agricultural land, but often controlled the water sources too. It was a battle few Palestinians could afford to fight for long.



The olive harvest in the West Bank. [copyright: Jonathan Cook]

By the time the Palestinian leadership under Yasser Arafat returned from exile to the occupied

territories under the terms of the Oslo Accords in 1994, many Palestinians – especially the younger generations – had abandoned farming. At least 160,000 Palestinians had become directly dependent on the Israeli economy, working as casual labourers. Hundreds of thousands more Palestinians – a sizeable chunk of the occupied population – relied on these workers' incomes.

Some members of this newly urbanised Palestinian proletariat worked in the settlements, building homes or working in greenhouses on land that had been stolen after 1967 from families much like their own. Other Palestinians travelled into Israel each day to work in the most unskilled and dangerous parts of the Israeli economy. They cleaned dishes in Tel Aviv's restaurants, worked on construction sites in Israel's burgeoning towns and cities, or picked tomatoes and cucumbers in Israel's agricultural communities, the kibbutzim, that had grown fat and lazy on the abundance of land stolen from the Palestinian refugees after 1948.

Israel had engineered a system of industrialised humiliation.

The success of the settlement project in transforming the Palestinian population from farmers into unskilled labourers can be gauged by considering the dramatic demographic changes effected in the most fertile parts of the West Bank over the past five decades of occupation.

Under Oslo, 62 per cent of the West Bank came to be designated as Area C – chiefly the rural areas where Palestinians had practised agriculture and which were being actively targeted by Israel for settlement. Area C was to be under full Israeli control for the duration of the intended five-year period of the Oslo process, though, of course, Israel is still in charge more than two decades later. Meanwhile, the Palestinian towns and cities and their environs, identified as Areas A and B, fell under varying levels of control by the newly created Palestinian Authority, a Palestinian government-in-waiting.

Although there are no precise data, in the late 1960s, shortly after the occupation began, there were many hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in what would later come to be classified as Area C. Without the disruption of the settlements, natural Palestinian growth might have ensured that as many as a million lived in Area C today. But, according to the best estimates, only around 100,000 Palestinians have remained there. The rest, we can assume, were gradually forced off their land in a process of what the Israeli general Moshe Dayan termed "creeping annexation". The loss of agricultural land and the increasing difficulty of farming sustainably were the main drivers of these momentous demographic changes.

The employment paradox

The Oslo accords were designed to modify – though certainly not end – this form of economic exploitation. Premised on the idea of a minimalist Palestinian state, Oslo sought physical separation between Israel and the occupied Palestinians. The slogan of the time was: "Us here; them there." Separation was never mutually observed, however. During the official five-year Oslo period of the late 1990s, Israeli Jews poured into the occupied territories, particularly the West Bank, in larger numbers than ever. As a consequence, the settlements grew at an unprecedented rate. Israel left it intentionally unclear where the separation line would eventually be drawn. But for Palestinians, separation was soon being strictly enforced – and on the worst possible terms.

From the early 1990s Israel introduced a system of permits and checkpoints that would eventually harden into the steel and concrete barriers that surround Gaza, eat into significant parts of the

West Bank, and carve up East Jerusalem. The goal was to keep out as many Palestinians as possible. Those hit hardest were the Palestinians who had formerly laboured in Israel. From the 1990s onwards, they began being replaced by a new cheap labour force: immigrant workers from China, Nigeria, Thailand and the Philippines.

In parallel, employment opportunities in the occupied territories grew scarcer. As diplomats celebrated the imminent arrival of a Palestinian state, Israel aggressively stepped up its takeover of land on the far side of the "separation barrier", in the West Bank. In a memorable analogy provided by American-Palestinian lawyer Michael Tarazi, as the two sides negotiated over their respective share of the pizza, Israel set about devouring it. The settlements' control rapidly expanded in Area C. Increasingly, Palestinian farmers were forced to abandon their land and head towards the Palestinian towns and cities in the territorial archipelago of Areas A and B.

Even those Palestinians who managed to stay in agriculture found themselves in ever harsher economic straits. Even though the West Bank sits atop aquifers that supply most of the water to Palestinians and Israelis, Israel decides how much goes to the Palestinians. Typically Palestinian households receive less than a fifth of the supply to Jewish settlers living close by. With water for domestic use hard to come by, many Palestinians in Area C collect winter rainwater in large underground storage tanks. Those who need additional water for agriculture usually have to truck it in privately at great expense.

The result was that many farmers in the West Bank concentrated on a single crop, the olive, because mature trees can survive through a dry summer, even if the yield and size of the fruit are greatly reduced. But the laws of supply and demand cannot be ignored. If most Palestinians farm olives, there is an abundant oversupply. With most farmers unable to export their produce outside the limited markets of Israel and the occupied territories, prices fell. Olive farmers found it increasingly hard to make ends meet, adding to the pressure on them to abandon agriculture – and with it, their ancestral lands.

The architects of the Oslo process recognised these dual pressures, and the potential danger they posed to Oslo's success. Israel had transformed Palestinian farmers into a causal labour force by stealing their land and resources. These Palestinians had joined what economists now call the "precarariat", a proletariat class living in economically precarious conditions. They had been made entirely dependent on unskilled work in the Israeli economy. But if Israel then denied them access to Israel and jobs as part of a new policy of "separation", it risked stoking a dangerous social and political instability. A new kind of employment option was needed – and so was born the idea of free-trade industrial zones.

This solution had been actively promoted for decades by Shimon Peres, the Israeli politician most closely identified with the Oslo process. He argued for creating a series of such zones between Israel and the occupied territories. Here they would serve as a bridge between separated territory: readily accessible both to the Israeli companies searching for a cheap labour force and to the Palestinian labourers who would have few other economic choices but to work on Israel's terms in these industrial areas. The zones would serve a dual function: both to continue the transformation of Palestinian farmers into an industrialised labour force; and to ensure they were kept economically pacified.

Industrialised labourers

The creation of industrial zones became official Palestinian policy in 1998. As part of the Oslo process, the PA signed a law to create a series of zones that would take as their template an industrial park called Erez, established by Israel just outside the Gaza Strip in the 1970s. Nearly 200 businesses, from carpentry workshops and garages to textile factories, had been attracted to Erez by the cheap labour and low taxes. The inherently degrading treatment of Palestinians at Erez only intensified after Israel erected an electronic fence around Gaza in the early 1990s, in line with its new "separation" philosophy. Many thousands of workers from the tiny coastal enclave had to queue daily, in the hours before dawn, in what looked like cattle grids to be collected and transported to Erez's high-security businesses.

The breakdown of Oslo and the eruption in 2000 of a renewed Palestinian uprising – the second intifada – posed problems both to Erez and to the plan for more industrial zones. In 2004, as the intifada intensified, Erez was closed and hopes for further industrial zones went into abeyance.

Paradoxically, the plan has been revived under the premiership of Benjamin Netanyahu, an outspoken opponent of Oslo. Rejecting the idea of a Palestinian state, Netanyahu focused instead on what he called "economic peace", especially for those Palestinians who had abandoned agriculture and moved into the more urban Areas A and B. Netanyahu adopted a hybrid model designed to pacify "good" urbanised Palestinians through economic incentives. His approach has incorporated three main economic elements:

- Limited numbers of Palestinian workers, currently a few tens of thousands, receive permits to enter Israel. Most are middle-aged men with families and considered a low security risk.
- Restrictions on Israelis entering Palestinian Areas A and B have been lifted for the country's 1.7 million-strong Palestinian minority. They are now encouraged to shop and buy services in the Palestinian cities as a way to inject extra money into the urban economy of the territories.
- The plan for free-trade industrial zones is again being advanced, with the backing of third parties such as the United States, Germany, Japan, France and Turkey.

This summer the largest such zone was due to open outside Jenin, financed by Turkey and Germany. Palestinian officials say it will create 5,000 jobs in Jenin and 15,000 in the surrounding area. The Israeli media trumpeted Jenin's industrial zone as a triple victory for Israel: thawing ties with Turkey, bolstering security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, and benefiting Israeli businesses. The benefits for Jenin and the surrounding population are far less clear.

The Jenin industrial zone is part of a wider economic programme called the Valley of Peace Initiative that has begun developing zones near the Palestinian urban populations of Jericho, Bethlehem, Gaza, Hebron and Tulkarm. Like similar industrial parks in neighbouring Jordan and Egypt, all will be eligible to export goods to the United States under a free-trade agreement between Israel and the US, without tariff or quota restrictions. In Jenin's case, businesses will be able to access Haifa's port in Israel without paying Israeli taxes and customs. To qualify, however, exported products must have significant Israeli input.

Notably, the Jenin zone required the mass expropriation of agricultural lands in the villages of Burqin and Jalameh, over the opposition of many farmers. George Kurzum, a development and environmental expert at the Ma'an Development Center in Ramallah, has observed that the

location of these industrial zones on fertile land in Area C is a criminal waste of Palestinian agricultural resources.

Further, most of the industrial zones' factories will be owned by foreign and Israeli companies, making it even less likely that these lands in Area C – temporarily assigned to Israel by Oslo – will ever be handed over to Palestinian control. In fact, says Iyad Riahi, a researcher on economic and social policies at Al-Marsad in Ramallah, the zones are likely to encroach on the sovereignty of the neighbouring Palestinian cities too. "The [Jenin zone], for instance, will be under the supervision and control of the Turkish developing company, which will contract with a private security company to preserve stability in the city, regardless of the Palestinian security or police."

Figures suggest that by 2025 the zones are ultimately intended to employ anywhere between 200,000 and 500,000 Palestinians. But crucially as Palestinian businessman Sam Bahour observes: "Because the zones will depend on Israeli cooperation to function, and because they will exist within an Israeli-designed economic system that ensures Palestinian dependence on Israel, they cannot form the basis of a sovereign economy. Relying on them will perpetuate the status quo of dependency." He, like others, expects them to "host 'dirty' businesses – those that are pollution-prone and sweatshop-oriented." Palestinians fear that Israel will be able to shut down the zones at a whim to punish Palestinian misbehaviour – whether strikes against poor pay and conditions, or protests against the occupation.

Bahour concludes: "Donor funds and Palestinian efforts would be better placed if such investments targeted Palestine's natural economic comparative advantages, for example, tourism and agriculture."

The birth of agro-resistance

Opposition to the industrial zones is not likely to come from the Palestinian leadership. With the PA accepting the neo-colonial parameters of Oslo, it has as much incentive as Israel to keep ordinary Palestinians economically pacified. It has therefore fallen to Palestinian grassroots movements to identify a model other than neoliberal economic exploitation. The most significant is Canaan Fair Trade, its offices based in the village of Burqin, just a few kilometres outside Jenin and close to the new industrial zone. It is the brainchild of Nasser Abufarha, whose family has farmed this corner of Palestine for generations.

The inspiration for Canaan came shortly after the turn of the millennium while Abufarha was conducting research for his doctorate in anthropology at the University of Wisconsin. Travelling back and forth between the US and the West Bank, he was struck by the premium prices American students were prepared to pay on campus to enjoy coffee that was organic and fair trade. It offered a clue as to how Palestine's olive farmers, battling to stay on their lands and maintain the olive as a viable economic crop, might change their fortunes.

Sitting in his office above Canaan's modern processing plant, Abufarha, aged 52, relates a business success story that would be impressive in ordinary circumstances – but is astonishing given the conditions of belligerent occupation Palestinians live under. In little more than a decade, Canaan has become the largest fair-trade business in the Middle East, as well as the largest fair-trade supplier of olive oil in the world. It is now selling some 800 tonnes of oil each year, with a turnover of \$9 million last year. It has clients, based in 18 countries, including Ben and Jerry's, LUSH cosmetics, Dr Bronner's soaps, the US retail chain Whole Foods and the UK supermarket

Sainsbury's. In recent years Canaan has rapidly expanded into other fair-trade products, including almonds, freekeh, zaatar, olive pastes and sun-dried tomatoes.

Abufarha makes the challenges the company faced sound far easier than they must have appeared in 2004, when he returned to the West Bank and abandoned a promising academic career. He had just completed his doctorate on the "human bomb" – the suicide bombers that had grabbed most attention during the early stages of the second intifada as they extinguished their own lives and those of others by detonating their explosives in Israeli buses and restaurants. Jenin and the surrounding villages had earned a reputation for dispatching many of these suicide bombers.

Abufarha's inspiration came not from the nihilistic human bombs he had studied but the life-affirming traditions of "sumud", or steadfastness, he had experienced as a child during the annual olive harvest in his parents' villages of Burqin and Jalameh, both just outside Jenin. Palestinian farmers, he concluded, could defy Israel's efforts to evict them from their land by taking a central place in the burgeoning global movement supporting fair trade and organic agriculture. They could open a new kind of front of non-violent resistance to the occupation.

"When I came back from the US, it was clear that the farmers I had grown up around were economically in trouble. Prices had plummeted to a level that made olive farming unsustainable." The figures told the story: olive trees accounted for 40 per cent of Palestinian land under cultivation, but supplied only 18 per cent of the earnings from agricultural production. "If we lost this crop, it would be both a cultural disaster and leave our communities in a situation of extreme food insecurity. Remember, most Palestinian children start the day with a breakfast of bread and olive oil before going to school. If the trees were lost, ultimately so too would most of these villages."

In response, Abufarha founded the Palestine Fair Trade Association in 2004, quickly followed by Canaan Fair Trade, which served as a production, marketing and export company. He began with only a handful of farmers, selling abroad to Dr Bronner's soaps. In 2008 he used the profits, his savings, as well as donor money from the Palestinian Authority and the Dutch government, to install a state-of-the-art Swedish press, and a storage and bottling plant at Burqin.

The problems facing Abufarha and the farmers were manifold. They could not change the environment created by the occupation or Israel's deep-seated hostility to Palestinian farming. After all, Zionism's early ideologues had been inspired by the idea that land could be "redeemed" only through Jewish colonisation and Hebrew labour. "Making the desert bloom", in the movement's favourite slogan, was integral to its redemptive strategy.

Instead, Abufarha identified the Palestinian farmers' biggest weakness as a potential strength. Agriculture in the West Bank was still largely a family affair. Each family had a small plot of land on which its members depended economically. That made them extremely vulnerable to Israel's abusive military and economic policies. It meant, for example, that Israeli buyers of olive oil could play Palestinian farmers off against each other, waiting them out after the late autumn's harvest until the price fell so low it barely justified cultivating the land. But if the farmers organised and worked together, Abufarha concluded, they had enormous power. They could become an army of amoud – as steadfast as their olive trees.

An evangelist for his revolutionary idea, Abufarha began travelling across the Jenin area, trying to persuade the farmers that they would be best served by establishing co-operatives and pooling

their resources. It was no accident that the model took hold quickly in the Jenin region. The settlements had never managed to get real purchase in the northern West Bank, and the few that did were dismantled by Ariel Sharon during his Gaza disengagement in 2005. The farmers in the Jenin area were in a relatively privileged position, suffering the lowest levels of interference from the occupation authorities.

Today Canaan has 52 villages set up as separate cooperatives, representing some 2,000 farmers. The model's efficiency can be gauged by recent production figures: Canaan's farmers constitute about 2 per cent of those farming olives in Palestine, but produce some 7 per cent of the total crop.



Canaan Fair Trade's range of products keeps on growing.

The second stage was simpler. The family-run farms already largely respected fair trade practices, and they used techniques that often accorded closely with organic cultivation. The PFTA developed the first internationally recognised fair-trade standard for olive oil, and started certifying farmers who qualified.

"Before the cooperatives, the [olive oil] buyers had been able to drive down prices and, of course, with it standards," says Abufarha. "There was no government around to protect the farmers by insisting on minimum standards or price tariffs. So our job was to create the standards, adding quality and value, and thereby empower the farmers. We ensured that there was a business model that rewarded the farmers' traditional production methods. It recognised not only the economic value of their labour but also its deeper cultural value. It understood that the Palestinian farmer is the care-keeper of a treasure we inherited, of traditions that date back thousands of years."

Canaan Fair Trade provided the final piece of the jigsaw. It offered a central address to which the village cooperatives could sell their olive oil, guaranteed a premium price. The farmers would not be selling individually to Israeli buyers but collectively to Canaan. Foreign markets eager for fair trade and organic products meant Canaan could pay the farmers a much higher price for the oil. And Canaan would act as the international face of the farmers' cooperative movement, developing and investing in new markets.

The wider changes on the marketing of Palestinian olive oil have been dramatic. Where once only

15 per cent of oil sold abroad was labelled as extra-virgin grade, today 80 per cent is.

“There is a market abroad that identifies with the Palestinians and their struggle but it is not the biggest one for us,” he says. “Increasingly, people understand that there has to be a proper relationship between people and land, one that nurtures rather than ruins our planet. We have to be guardians, protecting and supporting the treasure we have here in Palestine by encouraging biodiversity.”

The name, Canaan Fair Trade, he explains, refers to the name of this region more than 3,000 years ago, one that precedes Israel’s political claims based on a presumed Biblical birthright. In fact, the Canaanite culture is frequently referenced in the Bible. “We have inherited here a paradise that dates back to the time of Canaan,” he says. “We must not live exclusively in reaction to Israel and the occupation. We must draw on our own traditions and cultivate our own strengths. They are to be found in our natural environment, which is why the settlements are so intrusive and corrosive – they disrupt our sense of home.”

A convert to fair trade

A decade ago, Khader Khader was one of the youngest farmers to help establish a Canaan Fair Trade village cooperative – and one of the most sceptical. Then aged 25, he had little faith in the future of Palestinian farming. His village of Nisf Jubeil, with a mixed Muslim and Christian population of 400, nestles on the lower slopes of one of the many dome-shaped hills characteristic of this area of the central West Bank. Concealed behind the hills south of the village lies the city of Nablus. Nisf Jubeil is relatively fortunate. Close to Nablus and located in Area B, it rarely sees incursions by Israeli soldiers and there are no settlers nearby. Nonetheless, for Khader the relentless decline in the price of olive oil had made agriculture – following in his father’s footsteps – an unappealing prospect. “Like many of the young people here, I was looking for a way to leave the village,” he says.

Khader never finished school. Instead he went in search of work in Israel and what he thought would be a better life. His dreams quickly ran up against reality. For several years he laboured in an Israeli plastics factory, working more than 12 hours a day. Unable to make the journey daily, he often slept for days on end away from home, in the manufacturing plant. In 2001, after the attacks on the World Trade Centre, Israel withdrew his entry permit and he was left without work.



The entrance to Nisf Jubeil. [copyright: Jonathan Cook]

A few years later, when Abufarha came to Nisf Jubeil to speak to the local inhabitants, only six of the village's 40 farmers turned out. Khader tagged along with his father out of curiosity. He thought the man from Canaan Fair Trade was selling snake oil – and told him so. "It just didn't sound plausible," he told me as we sat in the courtyard of his farm, enjoying the small, sweet orange fruit from his loquat trees.

At the time, a litre of olive oil sold for 8 shekels [\$2.20]. "It was hardly worth the effort of harvesting it," said Khader. Abufarha was offering them at least double – 16 or 17 shekels [\$4.50]. "It was too good to be true. We could respect the environment and grow organic produce, increase our yields, and get paid a price over the market rate. To be honest, I thought Nasser was going to steal from us. He would take our oil and we would never see a shekel for it."

Nonetheless, Khader had few other options. He could no longer work in Israel, and selling on the open market would leave him without a profit. So he started attending Canaan's workshops, learning the steps needed to increase his yields and win organic and fair trade certification. If oil is to be certified extra-virgin, Canaan insists on the farmers picking the fruit by hand, not rakes, and transporting the crop carefully to avoid bruising. Nisf Jubeil's farmers also learnt that, if they pooled their harvest, they would have enough olives to press each day, ensuring that the oil was fresh and less acidic.

"It was like a dream coming true. I could work my land, live with my wife and children, and make a better living than I had ever done before," says Khader. He and the six other farmers were soon prospering, and others from Nisf Jubeil came to ask about joining the cooperative. Prices have continued to rise, with Khader now receiving as much as 25 shekels [\$6.50] a liter. He used the early profits to buy a tractor and found extra work helping other farmers with spreading manure and ploughing fields. "My village is also my family. We help each other," he says.

It is not just Canaan's farmers benefiting. The price of olive oil more generally has risen, improving the incomes of Palestinian farmers outside the fair-trade system. "Because we sell abroad, we reduce the local supply, and that raises the price of the oil here," notes Khader.

Connections overseas

Canaan hosts an annual festival called a jaru'a, where hundreds of farmers meet in its grounds in Burqin to celebrate the end of the olive harvest. To accompany the tasting of the first pressed oil, taboun bread is baked in ovens fired with olive twigs and crushed pits. Together, the families enjoy traditional dishes, like maftoul, the Palestinian version of couscous, or a smoked cracked green wheat called freekeh. A Palestinian folk dance, dubka, rouses everyone to enthusiastic clapping in time to the beat.

Khader's first jaru'a at Canaan was a revelatory moment. He had the chance to meet members of the other village cooperatives, as well as buyers from abroad and international solidarity activists who attend to offer their support. "For the first time I made all sorts of connections outside my village and realised I was part of a much larger struggle to change our situation here. It was very empowering."

After one jaru'a, he was invited to Germany to give a series of talks on fair-trade and organic farming. He smiles as he remembers. Early on, he was introduced to someone in a business suit who looked vaguely familiar. "Suddenly, I realised he was a volunteer who had stayed with us the previous year picking the olives. He was very hard working, lived with us, and didn't mind getting dirty. I was delighted to see him. 'You're looking very smart,' I said. 'What are you doing here?' He told me he was the boss of the company that imports Canaan products into Germany! It made me realise that there really are people out there who want to help us."

Khader points out that the cooperatives have benefits beyond simply improving the farmers' economic situation. Nearly 2 per cent of the price consumers pay for a bottle of olive oil is a social premium that is invested in improving the infrastructure of villages in the Canaan cooperatives, as a way to strengthen the community. In Nisf Jubeil, they have recently completed the renovation of a kindergarten and built a community centre. "It is something truly life-changing for us," says Khader, sounding as evangelical about the project as Abufarha. "It gives us a sense of security about our community and our future here."



Khader Khader is experimenting with trees like apricot and plum. [copyright: Jonathan Cook]

Canaan has helped Nisf Jubeil's farmers in other ways. The workshops encouraged Khader to use the garden next to his parents' farm buildings to plant fruit trees like loquat and citrus that were once an integral part of the dietary self-sufficiency of these isolated rural communities. Canaan offers micro-loans to farmers' families to set up small businesses and has established women's cooperatives helping more than 200 women. Khader's wife, Ransees, now specialises in growing the local herb zaatar and raising goats. The farmers' children are eligible for scholarships to further their education. After 10 years' service, Canaan's administrative staff can apply for an interest-free loan of up to \$100,000 to start their own social innovation projects. And a Trees for Life program hands out 10,000 saplings a year, either to new farmers or to those needing to replace trees the Israeli army or settlers have destroyed.

Unlike many other villages, Nisf Jubeil has not suffered in the past from severe water shortages. On Khader's family farm is a spring that supplies the village's domestic and basic agricultural needs. But he says in the past few years the flow of water has reduced, in what he assumes to be a sign that Israel has started extracting water close by. "If we had more water, we would grow other, more water-intensive crops like cucumbers, tomatoes and courgettes. We just don't have enough water to do it."

With Khader's profits, he has bought his own plot of land further down in the valley, separate from his father's land. He is already experimenting with other fruiting trees, including plum and apricot. "My goal is to revive the many fruit trees that used to flourish in this valley but which are much harder to grow now, with water restrictions and climate change. I want to see how the trees do down here in the valley compared to the others up on the hill."

Reviving an ancient grain

Abufarha is not resting on his laurels. When we meet, he has just returned from a discussion with farmers in Iksal, a Palestinian village just over the other side of the Green Line, in Israel, close to Nazareth. He has been exploring ways to get farmers there involved in his latest scheme: to create a sustainable market for fair-trade Palestinian almonds. To encourage farmers to plant the new crop, he installed at Burqin an almond production facility last year, the first of its kind in the Middle East. It is another major undertaking, but one he is confident will succeed.

With Canaan's help, Nisf Jubeil's cooperative has planted 30,000 almond trees in recent years. Abufarha says the almond is an ideal crop for this part of Palestine. The climate is right. The tree can survive without irrigation after the first year. And it begins bearing fruit three years after planting, meaning the farmers do not have to wait long to receive an income. "We have found a variety that is large and flat and has an excellent taste," he says. "It thrives as a rain-fed tree, which is important when the farmers are denied access to water by Israel."

Canaan already has 4,000 dunams [400 hectares] of almond trees under cultivation, with more than 200 farmers in the Jenin area participating. He hopes to add another 1,000 dunams by the end of this year. Canaan harvested 100 tonnes last year and he expects to nearly triple that figure this. In another five years, he expects to be producing as much as 2,000 tonnes annually of raw almonds. "We select a crop only if it is likely to be beneficial for the farmers and the local community. We are thinking about its social impact."

Another international market he hopes to create is for freekeh, a wheat grain that has been

cultivated in the Middle East for millennia. Once freekeh was a staple of the local diet, though in recent decades it has been largely replaced by rice.



Nasser Abufarha, of Canaan Fair Trade, is adding new crops like the ancient grain, freekeh. [copyright: warscapes.com]

Each spring, three weeks before the wheat harvest is complete, an unusual production ritual can be seen at freekeh farms in the West Bank. Men in flameproof clothing fire propane blow-torches to burn the immature husks, which are then removed – freekeh derives from the Arabic word for “rub” – to reveal the roasted green wheat kernels inside. Freekeh has a delicate nutty, smoked flavor.

For decades Syria was famed for its freekeh, but with a civil war raging there production levels have fallen. Now West Bank farmers have stepped in to fill the void. Ten years ago, Abufarha says, only a few farms in the West Bank produced freekeh. Last year 60 tonnes were harvested, and he expects that figure to keep on growing. Canaan believes that a strong market can be developed in Europe and the US for the ancient, healthful grain, especially if it is produced in accordance with fair-trade and organic principles. Freekeh is high in protein and fiber, while low in calories.

Abufarha emphasises that it is vital to market the strengths of Palestinian agriculture. “We have hundreds of thousands of people who know how to farm the land. We have a wonderful soil and climate. The airflow is good. We have tasty varieties.” Such self-declared pride reflects a new confidence in Palestine’s global image. Once the small amounts of Palestinian olive oil exported abroad were labelled “From the Holy Land” or even as from Israel. Canaan, on the other hand, proudly declares on its labels: “From Palestine, the land of milk and honey”.

All of this, however, must take place in the context of a hostile occupation. Dozens of military orders are designed to make life as difficult as possible for farmers in Area C, where most of them reside. One of the biggest obstacles is Israel’s severe restrictions on irrigation. Installing water pipes is illegal without Israeli permission, but the military authorities rarely issue such permits. “The farmers ignore these orders because we have no choice if we are to survive here,” says Abufarha.

But in turn, that has created other problems. “There is no oversight of irrigation, which means lawlessness reigns. The danger is that every farmer extracts as much water as he can to improve his own yields. And that means that, if a farmer can dig deeper for water, he will destroy the prospects of his neighbors by over-extracting and drying up their wells. And because covert

digging is expensive and has to be done secretly, it becomes impossible to organise water extraction as an organised national infrastructure project or to recruit investors. Illicit well-digging means an unstable supply and a wasteful use of a key resource. And ultimately that limits our agricultural potential.”

He notes that Palestine’s current annual olive crop is worth \$200 million. “If we had access to water, it would be worth \$500 million. And that is just from one crop. Palestinians were once famous for their citrus industry, but that is long gone. As are other crops like apricots and plums. And the reason is our lack of access to water. We can’t solve that problem without first ending the occupation, so we have to mitigate its effects by developing other crops, like almonds, that can survive as rain-fed rather than irrigation-fed.”

The other major difficulty – in an export-driven business – are Israeli-imposed movement restrictions, creating delays and dramatically adding to Canaan’s expenses. Trucks are loaded in Jenin and then driven a short distance to an Israeli checkpoint, where they are inspected and then off-loaded to trucks bearing Israeli number plates. The trucks then drive to the port of Haifa where they are subjected to another security inspection. Only then are they loaded on to ships for export. Shipments can be delayed at any stage, with products in constant danger of being damaged.

The extra burdens and costs make it hard for Canaan’s farmers to compete with either the global agri-businesses or with the artisanal farmers of France and Italy.

Innovation and tradition

Abufarha would like to see his model being adapted to other areas of the Palestinian economy to pull it out of its extreme dependence on international aid. “Too many civil society organisations in Palestine are chasing after donor money, worrying about what the donors want rather than developing their own ideas rooted in the reality here.”

His latest innovation is the establishment of CORE, the Canaan Organic Research and Extension center, which supports farmers developing new ideas and matches them with companies that can market their produce. CORE has already created a model farm in the village of Zababdeh, south-east of Jenin, to train farmers and agricultural students in organic crop production, sheep-rearing and bee-farming. Another project converts the engines in the farmers’ tractors to run on used felafel oil.

Canaan is not alone, either in developing Palestinian cooperatives or in selling premium products abroad – though it has produced the most successful model to date. The small Christian village of Taybeh, outside Ramallah, for example, has developed a beer – manufactured according to German purity standards – that it exports to Japan, Germany and the UK. And cooperatives in areas like Jericho harvest and export dates, overseen by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee.

Another project very much in sympathy with Canaan’s aims is the recent creation of a Palestinian “seed bank” to preserve Palestine’s ancient agricultural heritage. Called the Palestine Heirloom Seed Library, it is designed to identify crop varieties that are suited to local Palestinian conditions but threatened by the aggressive selling of hybrid varieties by agri-businesses. It seeks to educate Palestinian farmers about practices that have been almost forgotten.

The project is being led by Vivien Sansour, who served for many years as Canaan’s product

relations manager. She hopes to revive once-famous varieties of cucumber, marrow and watermelon that have disappeared. She told the Guardian newspaper in April: "There is a kind of huge watermelon, known as jadu'i, that was grown in the northern West Bank. Before 1948, it was exported around the region. It was famous in places like Syria. It has almost disappeared. One of the most exciting discoveries so far is that we found some seeds for it. They are seven years old, so we need to see if they are viable."

Like Abufarha, she sees in traditional agricultural practices the key to holding on to an identity and way of life. "I realised that what was also under threat was something deeper – the connection to a sense of cultural identity. The songs women would sing in the fields. Phrases, even the words we use. So it is about preserving the local biodiversity, but it is also about the importance to Palestinian culture of traditional agricultural methods."

Canaan is still innovating, even with olive oil. Its new lines include Raw Extra-Virgin Olive Oil, which is unprocessed and unfiltered, and Crush Fusions, infused with a range of herbs like zaatar, basil, chilli, or garlic and lemon.

Diane Adkin, who was until recently Canaan's longtime agent in the US and is active in the Land of Canaan Foundation, which supports Canaan's work with Palestinian farmers, says that 10 years ago the company had little more than a website in the US and a handful of activists buying its oil online. "Since then our loyal customer base from our website and through our interfaith partners has grown tremendously. They are a big part of our success."

She adds: "We always knew to really help Palestine we had to expand beyond the 'choir' and get into stores. We attended our first trade shows in 2008 and now we are in natural food stores and fair-trade stores across the country, as well as Whole Foods. The last few years Canaan Fair Trade has sold to even more retailers through national distributors. That means we are on the shelf in stores that are buying because we are superb olive oil – and this so pleases our farmers. ... The social trend nowadays is towards foodies who look for simple artisan foods produced organically, sustainably and fairly."

Abufarha is equally hopeful about the future, and Palestine's place in it. "People are tired of the modern world's garbage, its wars, its damage to the environment and its threats to the social fabric. These things are all connected. People want better governments and policies. Through food, Palestinians can gain a voice in this global movement for change. Palestine is part of these efforts to forge new kinds of solidarity across borders. We have the chance to let people see Palestinians in a different light, and see that we are not 'the foreigner'. We can be a partner in a wider struggle for global justice."

The original source of this article is [Jonathan Cook](#)
Copyright © [Jonathan Cook](#), [Jonathan Cook](#), 2016

2016-08-18 [House Republicans apparently committing felonies in pursuit of Hillary Clinton](#)

By [RobRoy2](#)



She's still leading despite all the bullshit being thrown at her.

[Yet another story](#) whose full import won't be discussed anywhere that the majority of Americans are likely to see it:

After the Director of the FBI fully exonerated Hillary Clinton and made clear that she broke no laws and told no lies, House Republicans took the extraordinary step of demanding copies of the FBI's notes from its interview with Clinton. That request was granted, and almost immediately, information from those notes began leaking to the media. The trouble: every word of those notes is, by definition, classified information.

Jennifer Palmieri, the Communications Director for the Hillary Clinton campaign, tweeted this evening that she "Would remind all that this material is classified. So this is leaking of classified material." Clinton Campaign Chair John Podesta added that he's "Already hearing from people who have been contacted by reporters with knowledge of the content of their interviews in FBI 302's."

But, just as with PutinLeaks, we are told over and over that we shouldn't care about how this material came to light, much less that it was cherry-picked and artfully arranged to cast a false light on the whole truth.

[Friday, Aug 19, 2016 · 7:59:58 PM MST · RobRoy2](#)

Wow, came back here after a long day to see this on the Rec List. If I'd known that was going to happen I'd have fleshed this out a bit to make it worthy of such an honor. Thank you all!

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2016/8/18/1561696/-House-Republicans-apparently-committing-felonies-in-pursuit-of-Hillary-Clinton>

2016-08-20 **Donald Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort resigns**

By [Dana Bash](#), [Theodore Schleifer](#) and [Ashley Killough](#),

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/politics/donald-trump-campaign-chairman-paul-manafort-resigns/>

Story highlights

- Donald Trump said that he accepted Friday the resignation of his campaign chairman
- Paul Manafort is one of several high-profile departures from the campaign this summer

(*CNN*) Donald Trump's campaign chairman Paul Manafort has resigned from his position on the campaign, the Republican presidential nominee said in a statement Friday.

"This morning Paul Manafort offered, and I accepted, his resignation from the campaign," Trump said. "I am very appreciative for his great work in helping to get us where we are today, and in particular his work guiding us through the delegate and convention process. Paul is a true professional and I wish him the greatest success."

With just under three months to go until Election Day, Manafort's departure reflects the shifting power centers on the [Trump campaign](#): After consolidating influence and discarding with Trump's campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, Manafort has now found himself on the outs after Trump elevated two different aides to senior positions on Tuesday: Breitbart News [chief Steve Bannon](#) as campaign CEO and [Kellyanne Conway](#) as campaign manager.

It's the second high profile departure from the top of Trump's campaign structure after campaign manager Corey Lewandowski left the operation earlier this summer. A new campaign manager and executive were named earlier this week.

A Trump source said Manafort told Trump he was becoming a distraction and he wanted to end that. A senior Trump campaign aide added later Friday that Trump lost faith in Manafort a couple of weeks ago, feeling like Manafort wasn't quick enough with answers to his questions, instead offering to look into an issue or get him a report on it. Trump doesn't want people around him who he thinks are moving too slowly, the aide said.

"Trump and he don't have chemistry," the aide said.

A friend of Manafort's told CNN Saturday that he wasn't going to take orders or relinquish power to Conway or Bannon. The friend added that's not a knock on either of them, but just "how (Manafort) rolls."

Questions over Manafort's business past

The departure also comes as Manafort is defending himself from investigations into his extensive lobbying history overseas, particularly in the Ukraine, where he represented pro-Russian interests. Manafort has been beating back reports from multiple media outlets in recent days over his ethics, which have been egged on by a Clinton campaign eager to highlight Trump's ties to the Kremlin.

A pair of Republican congressman have also called for investigations into Manafort's business past.

"I want to know what money he got from a pro-Russian organization in the Ukraine," Rep. Sean Duffy of Wisconsin told CNN's Chris Cuomo on Tuesday.

"I think Donald Trump ought to really investigate this and where his chief adviser, what his association with the Russians are," Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois told CNN's Jake Tapper earlier this week.

Trump and his running mate Mike Pence were in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Friday morning, touring flood damage and meeting with residents there.

Manafort, a longtime Washington fixture, was originally brought on in the spring to save Trump from a defeat at the Republican convention should Trump have failed to win enough delegates to clinch a first-ballot nomination. Yet his role grew to serve as Trump's connection to the GOP establishment, telling Republican elders that their presidential nominee would run a traditional campaign that would not imperil down-ballot candidates.

After warring behind the scenes for months with Lewandowski, who had little regard for Manafort, Lewandowski was fired earlier this summer. That decision by Trump seemed to be an embrace of Manafort's strategy.

Manafort installed many of his associates in the upper echelons of the campaign, signaled his support for an allied super PAC and crushed attempts to embarrass Trump at the Republican convention in Cleveland.

Yet as his poll numbers tumbled, Trump decisively reversed course, installing a media provocateur -- Bannon -- as his campaign's CEO. Manafort's role had been diminished, and Bannon is expected to encourage Trump to embrace the hyper-aggressive attitude that won him the primary.

The Trump campaign said Friday that Rick Gates, Manafort's deputy, would now serve as its liaison to the Republican National Committee.

The Clinton campaign looked to use Manafort's resignation to tie Trump and Vladimir Putin together. "Paul Manafort's resignation is a clear admission that the disturbing connections between Donald Trump's team and pro-Kremlin elements in Russia and Ukraine are untenable," Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook said in a statement. "You can get rid of Manafort, but that doesn't end the odd bromance Trump has with Putin."

Trump's son Eric said Friday that while Manafort had been instrumental in steering the campaign through the GOP convention, the former chairman's business past had begun to detract from his father's messages.

"I think my father didn't want to be, you know, distracted by whatever things Paul was dealing with," Eric Trump told Fox News' Maria Bartiromo. "You know, Paul was amazing. But again, my father just didn't want to have the distraction looming over the campaign and quite frankly looming over all the issues that Hillary's facing right now."

Lewandowski said Friday that he had nothing to do with the change, but said it marked a much-needed course correction before Labor Day.

"Well, look it's obviously a difficult thing for anybody when they change jobs and have a position that they've been so invested in for a long time and really put their heart and soul into something, to not be part of it, particularly when you're this close," Lewandowski told CNN's Kate Bolduan on "At This Hour." "But what the most important thing is is this is a reminder to me and the American public that Donald Trump will do anything it takes to win."

CNN's Chris Frates contributed to this report.

2016-08-18 [Direct Democracy: An Empowering Solution to the Fake Left-Right Paradigm](http://www.wakingtimes.com/2016/08/18/direct-democracy-empowering-solution-fake-left-right-paradigm/)

<http://www.wakingtimes.com/2016/08/18/direct-democracy-empowering-solution-fake-left-right-paradigm/>



[Makia Freeman](#), Contributor

[Waking Times](#)

Direct democracy is an empowering social and political solution that we need to seriously consider, in the face of a corrupt and broken system that churns out tyrants and maintains the status quo. It's clear that [we need a new system and a new consciousness, not a new president](#). Every time election year rolls around in the US (and in other nations), the dysfunctionality of the current system is shoved in our faces. In 2016 we have the choice between anointed establishment candidate [Hillary Clinton](#) (of the longtime [Clinton crime family](#)) and Donald Trump, [ardent Zionist, probable pedophile](#) and [NWO-connected businessman](#).

In 2004 the contest was between George W. Bush and John Kerry, both of whom just coincidentally happened to be *bonesmen*, i.e. they belonged to the [Skull and Bones secret society](#), part of the network of secret societies that run the world behind the scenes. Voting is only meaningful if you have a spectrum of candidates that represent a broad range of different positions. When all the candidates are identical on nearly all the important issues (e.g. the issuance and control of currency), there is **no choice**. Voting then becomes an exercise in futility where people get trapped in a **fake left-right paradigm**. However, the beauty of **direct democracy** is that it bypasses the need for "representatives" (who mostly represent Big Banking, Big Corporate, [Big Pharma](#) and other moneyed interests) and puts a lot of decision-making power back into the hands of the people.

What is Direct Democracy?

Direct democracy is a system where the people vote directly on all the important issues using electronic technology – desktop computers, laptop computers, tablets or smartphones. Modern technology has made this possible for people living first world nations, and hopefully will soon for the rest of the world. In countries where internet access is common, standard, fast and often free or cheap, it is now relatively easy for the citizenry to access information, educate themselves about issues, submit votes on laws to be passed or not passed, suggest laws that need to be made or repealed, and give their general opinion on what issues need to be addressed and what areas need to be focused on. Direct democracy is an old idea; the early democracy in Athens (where people went to local town square and voted with their hands) was like this, as is the current Swiss democracy. As [John Reid \(theorganiceconomy.ca\) explains in his article](#) on direct

democracy:

"Incidentally, direct democracy is not a new idea. The Swiss have enjoyed it for 700 years and although their model could use some improvements, the Swiss are the most free and democratic nation in the western world. For example, recently the Swiss forced a referendum on who has the right to issue the nation's money! For those who understand that it is the present system of usury (interest) and fractional reserve lending which are the root cause of the world's issues, this is tremendous news!

There isn't a politician alive that would attempt this, attempt to go up against the central bankers, because doing so would be suicide.

This is a perfect example of the power of direct democracy, which is the power of the people. No banking institution or corporation can bribe, coerce or threaten an entire nation of voters. If a nation can rid themselves of central bankers then they can do anything they want, they can change everything the majority agrees to and when you understand how we can have true democracy, justice, freedom and abundance with just a few fundamental changes, you will never look back."

A system of direct democracy will not just allow people to vote on laws, which is by itself a big step forward, but will also allow people to choose the areas to focus on and discuss, which is massive. As the above quote references, when was the last time a major nominee of any left-right party in any major country made the **issuance of money** a cornerstone of his/her campaign? Ron Paul in the US did to some degree, but he never got nominated.

Direct democracy it's not just about voting, it's about stepping forward and collectively determining the focus and direction of our society, nation and world! Direct democracy recognizes that everyone is unique and has their own unique gifts and perspectives to offer. It's about stepping into an era not of singular heroes or individual leaders, but where everyone is a leader, where everyone has an equal amount of say and power, and where everyone joins in and engages in local, state and national decisions.

How Does Direct Democracy Work?

John outlines some practical steps for how direct democracy would work at the local level:

"A town usually has a council which are elected and their job is to guard the taxpayer dollar, discuss improvements and make sure the town runs efficiently. Direct democracy can be implemented whereby anything over a certain dollar value or a quality of life issue (such as a proposed multi-storey building blocking resident's views) would be researched and debated by council and put to vote by the local residents. This would give the residents the final say over all decisions which will or may affect them. However, the smaller issues could be dealt with as usual by the council. The same could apply to larger towns and cities.

My own local council in Ontario, Canada meets each month and I would propose that local voting is open for the entire week afterwards so everyone has time to vote."

The same basic idea would be applied to Government at the state (regional) and national level:

"At the federal level all decisions are major decisions and should be voted on by the people. Because of the removal of power from those elected, this system could

possibly evolve over time to one which no longer requires an elected government but a panel of citizens overseeing each administrative department of government such as energy, education and transportation.

In such a case general elections would no longer be necessary, rather a random selection of citizens who wish to serve a one or two-year term as a guardian of democracy and sit on a panel overseeing and keeping in check one of the many administrative or government departments.”

There may still be a need for members of Government, but with the power stripped away, the positions are less likely to attract power-hungry control freaks. Other possibilities to keep people in check are to make the panel positions honorary, and voluntary with no pay or with a low-level pay grade where it is written into the constitution that the pay may never rise beyond inflation.

One of the best features about such a system is that anyone, regardless of gender, age, race or income, could propose a topic, a discussion and a vote. John includes some questions and answers about other possible aspects of such system:

“Q. Electronic voting has in the past been compromised. How can you guarantee security and an accurate vote count?”

A. There are several ways to achieve security and accuracy with electronic voting. People have been using online banking for years now, they trust it and have no issues with it. Whatever the challenges, we are resourceful enough to overcome.

Q. Most people are too dumb to be allowed to vote?

A. That is in keeping with the present mindset, the present paradigm. Things will never improve all the while we maintain that same mindset. We need to project into the future and see how we can gradually change and evolve with such a new way of thinking. At first there will be many who do not fully understand certain issues and may vote the wrong way but over time, as people become engaged and discuss the upcoming votes they will naturally become more aware of what is going on and how their vote affects them.

Q. If every voter can propose an idea, how do we stop the time-wasting of frivolous proposals. What if I proposed free beer for all men between the ages of 21 and 35, what happens then?

A. All proposals have to be qualified by the people, this will remove frivolous proposals from the vote. How this works is at vote time there are 2 lists, potential proposals and qualified or real proposals. The first list is stage one, this is where the people decide if the proposal should be included in the next round of research and debates for the real vote.

If a majority agree that the idea or proposal has merit then it goes to the panel for further research and debate and prepared for the real vote.

Q. What happens if we vote yes for an idea which turns out to be a bad thing?

A. Anyone can propose to amend or remove it. This is an exciting aspect of direct

democracy, by trial and error we eventually find stability and equilibrium, the lowest common denominator by which the nation is in harmony. This is also far sooner than waiting for change for years as we do at present, and then nothing really changes!"

John has included many more answers and questions, so please visit his article for further information. No one has all the answers or every single detail worked out yet, but why do they need to? Isn't there enough in the idea already to seriously consider it and discuss it with others? We don't have to every little wrinkle ironed out before trying a new system.

Direct Democracy May Be the Revolution of Consciousness We Need

It is natural to want a revolution or massive change when you learn how deeply unjust the current system is, but we have to remember that violent and bloody revolutions get us nowhere. History has shown that most of these kind of revolutions end up replacing a tyrant or system with an even more draconian tyrant or system. Violence only begets more violence, and since Government is a creature of force, it will respond in kind when attacked, which will give politicians the excuse to further entrench the police state and enact harsher laws. The only revolution that will succeed will be the **revolution of consciousness**. Some may prefer to phrase this as an **evolution of consciousness**, since we are clearly still in the process of evolving, spiritually and emotionally as well as socially and politically. From this perspective isn't it natural that we would change our political system as we develop our awareness and understanding? Yes, representative democracy may be better than totalitarianism or despotic monarchy, but why do we think it's the best? Why do some of us think we are at the pinnacle of creating the perfect social structure?

Cut Out the Middleman For Good

The only way to stop an out-of-control Government is to ignore it, bypass it and make it irrelevant. In this way, it is starved of its power. Direct democracy is a superb way of bypassing Government and cutting out the middle man who is no longer a true or loyal representative. The same thing happened in the [history of religion when people awoke and realized they didn't need religious middleman \(priests\)](#) to tell them how to live and how to get to God or Heaven. The Catholic Church has lost some of its control ever since. The same thing happens when we represent ourselves in court as sovereigns, instead of allowing an attorney (whose sworn loyalty is to the court above all else) to represent us.

The era of **fake representatives** is over. It's time to stop letting people represent us and represent ourselves instead. It's time to take back the power which is rightfully ours.

Direct democracy requires more participation and more awareness, but the benefits are enormous, and with less Government comes less taxation (not just the income tax, but the other 99+ taxes Americans are faced with) and therefore, more money, more time and more sovereignty. Spread this article and spread the word, so people can begin to realize the possibilities and potentials that await us once we reject the fake left-right paradigm.

About the Author

Makia Freeman is the editor of [The Freedom Articles](#) and senior researcher at [ToolsForFreedom.com](#) ([FaceBook](#) here), writing on many aspects of truth and freedom, from exposing aspects of the worldwide conspiracy to suggesting solutions for how humanity can create a new system of peace and abundance

****Sources embedded throughout article.**

2016-08-19 **In Historic Shift, U.S. Government to End Use of Deadly, Costly, Negligent Private Prisons**

Guests [Seth Freed Wessler](#)

investigative reporter, author of a series on federal private prisons for *The Nation* magazine

In what some are calling a historic change in policy, the Justice Department says it will phase out the use of privately run federal prisons. In a memo describing the policy shift, Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates said research showed private prisons "simply do not provide the same level of correctional services, programs, and resources" and "do not save substantially on costs," either. Yates added that government education and training programs for prisoners "proved difficult to replicate and outsource" in the private sector. In the memo, she said as the contracts for 13 private federal facilities come to the end of their terms over the next five years. Some 22,000 federal prisoners out of a total of 193,000 will eventually be impacted by the move. Most are immigrants convicted of crossing the border without permission—charges that currently account for 50 percent of all federal prosecutions. This follows a series of reports by investigative journalists. In our first segment, we speak with reporter Seth Freed Wessler, whose yearlong probe for *The Nation* and *Reveal News* uncovered dozens of questionable deaths and years of dire warnings from internal monitors at the private prisons now set to lose their contracts.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: We begin with news that some are calling a major reversal of U.S. prison policy. On Thursday, the Justice Department announced it plans to phase out the use of privately run federal prisons. In a memo describing the policy shift, Deputy Attorney General [Sally] Yates said research showed private prisons, quote, "simply do not provide the same level of correctional services, programs, and resources" and "do not save substantially on costs," either. Yates added that government education and training programs for prisoners, quote, "proved difficult to replicate and outsource" in the private sector. In the memo, she said, as the contracts for 13 private federal facilities come to the end of their terms over the next five years, quote, "the Bureau [of Prisons] should either decline to renew that contract or substantially reduce its scope." Some 22,000 federal prisoners out of a total of 193,000 will eventually be impacted by the move. Most are immigrants convicted of crossing the border without permission—charges that currently account for 50 percent of all federal prosecutions.

AMY GOODMAN: The Department of Justice announcement will have no direct impact on private immigrant detention facilities, which contract with the Department of Homeland Security. It also has no direct bearing on contracts for privately run prisons at the state level which house less than 7 percent of the total state prison population. But the news still sent stocks plummeting—Corrections Corporation of America, The GEO Group and Management and Training Corporation, which operate the 13 federal prisons.

CCA issued a statement today saying, quote, "We are disappointed with the BOP's decision to reduce its utilization of privately operated facilities to meet their capacity needs, and believe our value proposition remains strong. ... At this time the contracts at the three facilities CCA operates on behalf of the BOP remain unchanged, and the BOP will determine whether to extend these

contracts at the end of their respective contract terms," unquote. The statement noted the contracts account for 7 percent of CCA's total annual revenue.

All of this comes after a report released last week by the federal inspector general that found federal prisons run by private companies are substantially less safe and secure than ones run by the Bureau of Prisons, and feature higher rates of violence and contraband. It also follows a series of reports by investigative journalists. Some documented riots at these facilities in recent years, sparked by substandard food and medical care, and poor conditions. In other cases, prisoners have suffered in silence until their plight was exposed.

For more, we're joined by three of these journalists. Seth Freed Wessler's yearlong probe for *The Nation* and *Reveal News* uncovered dozens of questionable deaths and years of dire warnings from internal monitors at the private prisons now set to lose their contracts. He's joining us via *Democracy Now!* video stream from Maine.

Joining us from Manchester, New Hampshire, Shane Bauer, whose 18-month [investigation](#) for *Mother Jones* recently took up its entire issue. Headlined "My Four Months as a Private Prison Guard," it chronicles his time as an undercover correctional officer at Louisiana's Winn Correctional Center, run by the CCA, the Corrections Corporation of America. His most recent [article](#) is headlined "This Prisoner Hanged Himself at the Private Prison Where I Worked. His Family Says He Didn't Have to Die."

Also joining us here in New York is *Democracy Now!*'s Renée Feltz, the criminal justice correspondent who has reported for about a decade on private immigrant detention centers.

We welcome all of you to *Democracy Now!* Seth Freed Wessler, let's begin with you. Talk about the significance of this historic announcement out of the Justice Department that they're closing for-profit prisons that are run by the DOJ.

SETH FREED WESSLER: Well, yesterday's announcement by the Department of Justice came as a surprise to nearly everybody outside and inside the Bureau of Prisons. What the announcement says is that the Bureau of Prisons, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, over the next several years, will have to start shutting down its private prisons. You know, few people know that the federal government has established, over the last two decades, a sort of subsystem of federal private prisons used exclusively to hold noncitizens convicted of federal crimes. And these prisons have been the sites of repeated protests by prisoners, as I've documented in my reporting, and, as I found in an investigation for *The Nation*, deep and systemic failures to provide baseline levels of care to prisoners held inside, dozens of deaths of men who are held in these facilities, after substandard, negligent medical care.

And so, this decision by the Department of Justice will begin a process of shuttering these very facilities that I've been investigating, where protests have erupted over the years. And over the next five years, we're going to see these prisons close. There are 13 of these federal prisons operating right now, scattered around the country, in Texas and California and the South and elsewhere. And I spoke yesterday to the relatives, actually, of several men who died inside of these facilities after pretty extreme kinds of medical neglect. Both of those families said that they felt that this decision to close these facilities brought some kind of justice, if too late for them. It's a big decision.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Well, Seth, you mentioned that this policy has been in effect about two decades. Actually, it was in the mid-1990s, during the Bill Clinton administration, actually, that this began. We normally associate privatization of government services with Republicans. This actually started under a Democratic president. What was the original rationale for them?

SETH FREED WESSLER: That's right. Well, as the federal government was beginning to incarcerate more and more people, and the size of the federal prison population was growing, the federal government, Congress and the White House, decided to begin a process of privatizing a subset of federal prisons to meet their capacity needs. In several years after the process began, the government actually decided, quite explicitly, that immigrants, noncitizens, would be an ideal group of people to be held in these stripped-down federal prisons. The government has said in statements, the BOP has said it in statements, that the immigrants, because they will later be transferred to immigration authorities and deported, that the government doesn't have to provide them with the same kinds of rehabilitative or re-entry services that they might provide to U.S. citizens, that immigrants are an ideal group for these kinds of segregated subsystem of prisons.

These facilities have expanded rapidly over the last 15 years as the number of immigrants who are prosecuted criminally for crossing the border has grown massively. Last year, 70,000 people were prosecuted in federal courts for border-crossing crimes, for entry after deportation or illegal entry. And this has helped to expand the federal criminal justice system and expand these private prisons.

AMY GOODMAN: We're going to go to break, then come back to this conversation. Seth Freed Wessler is an investigative reporter. His series on federal prisons, a latest [piece](#), "Federal Officials Ignored Years of Warnings About Deaths in Private Prisons." This is *Democracy Now!* We'll be back in a minute.

2016-08-19 **Private Prisons May Be Phased Out, But Industry Leaves Trail of Bodies from Medical Neglect & Abuses**

Guests [Shane Bauer](#) award-winning senior reporter for *Mother Jones*.
 [Seth Freed Wessler](#) investigative reporter, author of a series on federal private prisons for *The Nation* magazine.

News that the Department of Justice will phase out 13 private prisons sent stocks plummeting on Thursday for the companies that operate them: Corrections Corporation of America, The GEO Group and Management and Training Corporation. We look at the companies' track record with Shane Bauer, whose 18-month investigation of a CCA prison for *Mother Jones* recently took up its entire issue. Titled "My Four Months as a Private Prison Guard," it chronicles his time as an undercover correctional officer at Louisiana's Winn Correctional Center. His most recent article is titled "This Prisoner Hanged Himself at the Private Prison Where I Worked. His Family Says He Didn't Have to Die." We are also joined by reporter Seth Freed Wessler, who investigated several CCA prisons for the federal government that are now set to close.

AMY GOODMAN: We are talking about a historic decision, an announcement out of the Justice Department to close the federal government's contracts with private prisons. Shane Bauer is with us, an award-winning senior reporter at *Mother Jones*, as well as Seth Freed Wessler, an investigative reporter, and *Democracy Now!*'s Renée Feltz.

But, Shane, we want to turn to you right now. We last had you on, just a little while ago, based on this remarkable [issue](#) of *Mother Jones* magazine that you wrote as an undercover prison guard you acted as in Louisiana. Your most recent [article](#), "This Prisoner Hanged Himself at the Private Prison Where I Worked. His Family Says He Didn't Have to Die," this based on your four-month investigation as a private prison guard. Talk about your reaction to this news and what actually happened to this prisoner you spoke of.

SHANE BAUER: Well, this news is certainly unprecedented and surprising. I mean, the findings of the Inspector General's Office are not surprising. They're consistent with findings from the Department of Justice over the years, from, you know, reports by journalists. They're consistent with things that I saw at Winn in Louisiana. But, you know, this measure is certainly bigger than anything I expected.

As far as Damien Coestly, Damien was somebody who I had met while I was working at Winn. And after I left the prison, I learned that an inmate had committed suicide and that, you know, it was Damien Coestly. Damien was somebody who was very troubled. He, over the years, reported being suicidal. He also had been trying to change the way that CCA provided services, mental health services. At that prison of 1,500 inmates, there was only one part-time psychiatrist, one part-time psychologist and one full-time social worker. Damien had been trying to get into mental health programs; he had been waitlisted for two years. And he frequently went on suicide watch. And just to describe briefly what that is, it's a solitary confinement cell, where a prisoner is naked, has only a tear-proof blanket. He's given worse food, food that falls below USDA standards, and

usually has no reading material or anything whatsoever in his cell. So this is the mental health services that Damien had. Damien went on hunger strike to try to get better mental health services. And eventually, Damien was put on suicide, and he was taken off, even though he was still claiming to be suicidal. He was not checked on the way that he was supposed to. And from what I saw at Winn, this was standard procedure. And he hung himself. And at the time of Damien's death, he weighed 71 pounds.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Well, Shane, you mentioned this happened in a CCA prison.

SHANE BAUER: Yeah.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: I wanted to ask you about the role of CCA in particular.

SHANE BAUER: Yeah.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: After the DOJ announced Thursday that it would no longer use private prisons, stock prices for Corrections Corporation of America and GEO both plunged about 40 percent. But a financial analyst at Canaccord Genuity said, quote, "The massive falloffs in the stocks imply the risk will spread to other federal, state and local jurisdictions. ... We believe it is unlikely. As such, we think today's stock action is more based on fear than actual cash flow risk," unquote. But in June, the CEO of Corrections Corporation of America, Damon Hininger, told a forum of investors that his firm will be, quote, "just fine," no matter who is elected to the White House this fall. This is him speaking.

DAMON HININGER: We've had some nice growth in our business under those three respective presidents. We had a lot of growth under Clinton, we had a lot of growth under Bush, and we've had a lot of growth under President Obama. And so, with that, if we continue to do a good job on the quality, and, with that, we can demonstrate savings, both on capital avoidance but also cost savings in our services, then I think we'll be just fine.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: That was Damon Hininger, CEO of Corrections Corporation of America, just in June. Talk about this company. How did it rise, and its role within this general federal prison contracting?

SHANE BAUER: Well, CCA and GEO both, you know, started operating prisons in the 1980s. This was a time when the prison population was skyrocketing. States were trying to build prisons to take up, you know, some of that increased population, and they couldn't build them fast enough. And CCA stepped in and said, "Look, we'll operate prisons. We'll also build prisons. We'll run them more cheaply. And, you know, we'll be helping you deal with this overcrowding problem." So they kind of, you know, had—there was a need for them at one point.

And their argument now has consistently been that they're saving money. And this is questionable, as the Department of Justice inspector general pointed out. But what's important is that the—you know, to look at how they're saving money. The main way that they save money is through staffing costs. The prison that I worked at, guards were paid \$9 an hour. This was \$3.50 less than the starting pay of guards at state-run facilities. Medical costs—you know, the company at the prison I worked, they had—if they sent a prisoner out for medical care, they had to bear that cost, so there's, you know, a lot of resistance to sending prisoners out to the hospital. They had less mental health staff. There were days that I came into work where there were 24 guards

for 1,500 prisoners. This is far below what their contract requires. And this problem has been found throughout CCA's state and federal prisons. The inspector general has made reports on their audits showing that in one prison, where there were riots in the prison, that the riot was caused by understaffing and poor medical care. After they issued the report, they went back and found that that problem had not been corrected. This has happened in several states, as well.

And, you know, I think, to your question about how this is going to affect the states, I think it remains to be seen, but what I did see at Winn is that the company was under a lot of pressure by the state at that time to kind of get its act together, to improve security, improve healthcare, prevent escapes. There had been escapes while I was there. You know, the question is: How consistent is this throughout the country? But I certainly had a sense, from inside that one prison, that the company was struggling to try to hang onto it.

AMY GOODMAN: Shane, in your remarkable investigation, where you went undercover at the Winn Correctional Facility, again, run by CCA, the Corrections Corporation of America, you met a prisoner who had lost his fingers and legs because of inadequate medical care. We want to go to a clip from one of the videos that accompanied your [report](#) for *Mother Jones*.

ROBERT L. MARRERO: Gangrene. Mr. Scott complained about that for months to the medical staff at Winn. They gave him some—the equivalent of a couple of Motrin and told him to go away.

ROBERT SCOTT: Never saw a doctor. The whole time.

SHANE BAUER: He's now suing the prison.

JENNIFER CALAHAN: The people that are working there as nurses and all that, they're really not that qualified.

ROBERT L. MARRERO: There are doctors they can hire. There are doctors who are more or less affordable. I did some background checking on them, and one of them was a pediatrician who had lost his privileges to treat children.

AMY GOODMAN: Corrections Corporation of America said it's, quote, "committed to ensuring that all individuals entrusted to our care have appropriate access to medical services as needed." Now I want to turn to a clip from our other guest Seth Freed Wessler's report, that also deals with substandard medical care at private prisons. This is part of his interview with Dr. John Farquhar, the former clinical director at the Federal Correctional Institution in Big Spring, Texas, which is run by The GEO Group. It was featured on *Reveal*, a podcast from the Center for Investigative Reporting.

DR. JOHN FARQUHAR: There are times when I was critical. I'm a critical person, starting with myself.

SETH FREED WESSLER: You actually wrote at one point, "I feel bad for his shabby care."

DR. JOHN FARQUHAR: Well, I stand by that statement. I don't know who it's about, and I can't comment on any single record of any person, but there are times when the care was not what I wanted for any patient, period.

AMY GOODMAN: That's Dr. John Farquhar, the former clinical director at the Federal Correctional Institution. Seth Freed Wessler, weigh in here.

SETH FREED WESSLER: Well, I talked to medical workers, doctors, physician's assistants and nurses who work in this subsystem of federal prisons that will now begin to be shut down. And across the board, they said that they were pressed to cut costs. That particular doctor said that his corporate bosses, soon after he got his job as the medical director, had come to town to tell him to cut down on the number of 911 calls made, because they were expensive. In that very prison, shortly after he left his job, a prisoner died after suffering a stroke, and the prison decided to just leave him in his cell until morning. The only medical worker on the shift that night was a licensed vocational nurse with about a year of training. And across the board, these prisons are operating with deep understaffing, using undertrained workers. And I found stories in 30,000 pages of federal records I obtained through an open records request, an open records lawsuit—I found stories of people who went months, even more than a year, in some cases, seeing only nursing staff, often only licensed vocational nurses, complaining of increasing pain, increasing illness, until they became so ill that they died inside of these prisons.

What's remarkable about the documents that I obtained and the interviews I did with people who work in these prisons, as well as letters from prisoners who later died, is that the Bureau of Prisons knew for years about the very problems that I'm talking about. After the Bureau of Prisons set up this subsystem of federal private prisons, they actually established a monitoring system, an oversight system, hired monitors to go in and check on these facilities. And those monitors would flag repeat and systemic failures, especially in medical care, over and over again, send those flags to Washington in hopes that something would change. In fact, when those flags went up, federal officials in Washington refused to impose the fines, the full penalties available to them. And when monitors tried to shut down federal prisons that were failing, the top officials in the Bureau of Prisons in Washington actually refused to let those monitors shut these prisons down. So, the decision today about—rather, yesterday, to shut down these private prisons comes as a great surprise, because monitors have been saying for years these prisons are failing, documenting these problems, the very same problems, in some cases, that the inspector general found in its report and that I found in my reporting. Now, finally, these facilities are going to start being closed as their contracts come up for renewal.

2016-08-19 **As Feds Close Prisons Run by Private Companies, Will They Do Same for Immigrant Detention Centers?**

Guests [Renee Feltz](#) *Democracy Now!*'s criminal justice correspondent, who has reported for about a decade on private immigrant detention centers.

The DOJ's announcement that it will phase out federal prisons operated by private prison companies will have no direct impact on private immigrant detention facilities, which are operated by the same companies under contracts with the Department of Homeland Security. Detention Watch Network has now called for DHS "to follow suit and break their ties with private prison companies that operate more than half of ... U.S. immigrant detention facilities as a step towards ending detention completely." We get more details from Democracy Now! correspondent Renée Feltz, who notes the detention centers hold people who have committed civil offenses, and children as young as two years old.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: I want to bring in also Renée Feltz. You've been covering a lot of these issues with the private prisons, especially in terms of immigrants across the country. This only affects the federal prisons; it does not affect those detention—private detention facilities run by Homeland Security or even by the states themselves, who contract—many of the states contract with these private companies. Now, the Detention Watch Network has called on the DOJ to have this policy also for the the Homeland Security network. Can you talk about that?

RENÉE FELTZ: Well, that's right, Juan. And it's important to understand that this policy shift will not impact immigrant detention centers. Many people think about the prisons that will be impacted, that Seth described, because they are immigrant-only facilities—essentially, separate but equal prisons—that he helped to expose. But we want to be clear that this decision from the DOJ is not going to impact anything that has to do with DHS, Department of Homeland Security. However, that is sort of where the momentum is here. People are saying if there are flaws with how private prison operators, accused of shortcuts, run federal facilities under one agency, what about under another agency? Something else that I think is important to distinguish here is that—

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Because it's the same companies, more or less, running them.

RENÉE FELTZ: Right, it's Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group, primarily. They run the private prison contracts that are going to be ended by the DOJ. They also have the contracts for the immigrant detention centers, which are largely privatized, but not all.

Now, one thing I also wanted to mention is, you know, we talked about the federal prisons that are closing that hold so-called criminal aliens—that's what the government calls them. They are largely accused of crossing the border, being charged with a misdemeanor, and then, after a few times of that, being convicted of a felony for that same offense. So they are in prison for crossing the border without permission. It seems like an immigration offense, but it's not. Once they get done with that sentence, they then go on to immigrant detention. And one thing that is interesting about immigrant detention centers is that not everyone there has this prior criminal background. We're talking about people who largely are committed of civil offenses, coming to the country

without permission—no crime, but held essentially in a controlled environment with barbed wire, guards. And what's interesting recently at these privately run immigrant detention centers is that the Obama administration has brought back family detention centers. So we're talking about CCA and GEO, who have shortcomings in Federal Bureau of Prisons, running a facility where children as young as two years old are being held with their parents.

AMY GOODMAN: For example, talk about the Berks facility.

RENÉE FELTZ: That's right. Right now, Berks facility in Pennsylvania, which is run, interestingly, through a contract with the county and ICE, not even with a private entity, is also having problems being accused of holding immigrants there for way too long. There's a mandate to hold them for about 20 days maximum, if they hold children. The women there are on a hunger strike, because they want to get out. They've been held there for more than a year.

And that points to another quick thing I would say about how ICE characterizes these facilities. They're saying that the ICE immigrant detention centers that are private are short-term processing centers, where people are held for a very brief amount of time, doesn't have anything to do with rehabilitation. That's different than the prisons. So, you know, we are talking about different types of facilities.

AMY GOODMAN: You know, there is a hunger strike going on at Berks, and *Democracy Now!* was able to speak to one of the women who are part of that hunger strike this week inside Berks.

HUNGER STRIKER: [translated] We know we haven't committed any crime. We only came to ask for help in this country, help that still hasn't been offered to us. There are many children who have thought about throwing themselves out of the window, of escaping. There are others who want to break the window, who say maybe sacrificing their own lives is going to be a sacrifice to free us all. So it's very sad that children and adolescents are thinking of committing suicide, when really they should be focusing on their studies.

AMY GOODMAN: We will continue to follow these issues, the prisons that close and the prisons that don't. And I want to thank Seth Freed Wessler for joining us from Maine, as well as *Democracy Now!*'s Renée Feltz.

2016-08-19 **Former Iran Hostage Shane Bauer: Claim That \$400M U.S. Paid to Iran was Ransom Deal is "Absurd"**

Guests [Shane Bauer](#) **award-winning senior reporter at *Mother Jones*.**

We get reaction to the State Department's statement that a plane filled with \$400 million in cash for Iran was "leverage" to ensure that five American prisoners held by Iran were released. Republicans, including Donald Trump, have said the money sent in January was a ransom for the prisoners. The Obama administration says it was a pre-planned transfer that was part of the landmark nuclear deal and that the negotiations regarding the two issues were separate. We speak with Shane Bauer, a *Mother Jones* reporter who spent 26 months in Tehran's Evin Prison, four of them in solitary, after he and two other Americans, Sarah Shourd and Joshua Fattal, were captured while hiking near the unmarked Iran-Iraq border and then freed after negotiations.

AMY GOODMAN: But, Shane Bauer, we want to stay with you for one more moment, but on a different issue. I want to ask you about the recent developments in Iran. In addition to your recent reports for *Mother Jones*, in 2009, you spent more than two years in Tehran's Evin Prison, four [months] of them in solitary, after you and two other Americans—now your wife, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal—were captured while hiking near the unmarked Iran-Iraq border. You recount this in your book, *A Sliver of Light: Three Americans Imprisoned in Iran*. This is a clip of you speaking shortly after your release.

SHANE BAUER: The only explanation for our prolonged detention is the 32 years of mutual hostility between America and Iran. We were convicted of espionage because we are American. It's that simple. No evidence was ever presented against us. That is because there is no evidence and because we are completely innocent.

JOSH FATTAL: Many times, too many times, we heard the screams of other prisoners being beaten, and there was nothing we could do to help them. Solitary confinement was the worst experience of all of our lives. It was a nightmare that Sarah had to endure for 14 months. In all the time we spent in detention, we had a total of 15 minutes of telephone calls with our families and one short visit from our mother—our mothers. We had to go on hunger strike repeatedly just to receive letters from our loved ones.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, this week, the State Department said a plane filled with \$400 million in cash for Iran was "leverage" to ensure that five other American prisoners held by Iran were released. Republicans, including Donald Trump, have said the money was ransom for the prisoners. The money was sent to Iran in January. The Obama administration has said the money was a pre-planned transfer that was part of the landmark nuclear deal, and that the negotiations regarding the two issues were separate. But State Department spokesman John Kirby admitted the negotiations had been linked, to some extent.

JOHN KIRBY: We were able to conclude multiple strands of diplomacy within a 24-hour period, including implementation of the nuclear deal, the prisoner talks and the

settlement of an outstanding Hague tribunal claim, which saved American taxpayers potentially billions of dollars. As we said at the time, we deliberately leveraged that moment to finalize these outstanding issues nearly simultaneously.

AMY GOODMAN: That \$400 million had been owed to Iran since the 1970s, when the U.S. refused to send weapons Iran had already paid for following the Iranian revolution. Now, Shane, we're wondering your response to this news and the latest controversy over whether this money was actually ransom, given your situation and how you ultimately got out of Iran.

SHANE BAUER: I think the claim that this money was a ransom is absurd. Like you said, this money had been owed to Iran since the time of the overthrow of the shah. You know, this was a pre-existing negotiation, and pegging—using this as leverage to get Iran to release the prisoners is exactly what should have been done. You know, I could easily see criticism from the opposite direction from Republicans, saying, you know, "What if the Obama administration had not done this, and left these prisoners sitting in there and not included them in negotiations?" I mean, that would be way more ridiculous.

AMY GOODMAN: Actually—actually, that was Donald Trump's criticism of the Iran deal. Early on, when the Iran deal was struck, he said this is pathetic, if, included in this, the prisoners do not get released.

SHANE BAUER: Exactly. I mean, these criticisms are ridiculous, in my opinion. And I think, you know, when I had been in prison, there had not been, as far as I know, much in terms of negotiations between the U.S. and Iran. And the fact that the administration moved towards this and including these prisoners in those negotiations is exactly the right thing to do.

AMY GOODMAN: How, ultimately, did you get out, Shane?

SHANE BAUER: I had been released, as well as Sarah and Josh, through negotiations with Oman. Oman had actually initiated these negotiations themselves. They were interested in easing tensions between the U.S. and Iran, and in ultimately moving towards a nuclear deal. They made trips to Iran and to D.C., and kind of went back and forth bringing offers from each side. And after our release, that avenue, that had been created through our situation, was the way that the U.S. and Iran began nuclear talks, before they were publicly negotiating.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, Shane, thanks so much for being with us, Shane Bauer, award-winning senior reporter at *Mother Jones*. His recent [piece](#) is about his undercover investigation of private prisons, called "This Prisoner Hanged Himself at the Private Prison Where I Worked. His Family Says He Didn't Have to Die." It's part of this amazing [series](#) he did, "My Four Months as a Private Prison Guard," which chronicles his time undercover as a correction officer in Louisiana's Winn Correctional Center. But Shane also wrote the book, together with Sarah and Josh, called *A Sliver of Light: Three Americans Imprisoned in Iran*.

When we come back, we'll talk about the Olympics, the controversy there and some of the records that have been broken. Shane, thanks so much for being with us. Stay with us.

2016-08-19 Dave Zirin: Brazilians are Fed Up with U.S. Olympian Ryan Lochte and Privileged First-World Tourists

Guests [Dave Zirin](#) sports editor for *The Nation* magazine.

Ahead of the final weekend of the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian police have accused a group of U.S. Olympic swimmers of vandalism during an incident at a gas station last weekend and say they are now considering whether to recommend charges against them, including gold medalists Ryan Lochte and Jimmy Feigen. The swimmers said they were robbed by gunmen impersonating police officers in the early hours of Sunday as they returned in a taxi to the Athletes Village from a party in the city. However, after an investigation, Rio police said there had been no robbery. U.S. Olympic authorities later apologized to Brazil after two U.S. swimmers who were kept in the country for questioning were allowed to go home. We are joined by Dave Zirin, sports editor for The Nation magazine, whose recent article is headlined "Ryan Lochte is One of Many Privileged First-World Tourists—and Brazilians are Fed Up."

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: We turn now to the Olympics, which are heading into the final weekend in Rio de Janeiro. Brazilian police have accused a group of U.S. Olympic swimmers of vandalism during an incident at a gas station last weekend and say they are now considering whether to recommend charges against them, including gold medalists Ryan Lochte and Jimmy Feigen. The swimmers said they were robbed by gunmen impersonating police officers in the early hours of Sunday as they returned in a taxi to the Athletes Village from a party in the city. However, after an investigation, Rio police said there had been no robbery. This is the head of Rio de Janeiro's civil police, Fernando Veloso.

FERNANDO VELOSO: [translated] At this exact moment, what the police can say is there was no robbery the way the athletes reported. They were not victims of the criminal facts that they described. The police can say that now. In theory, they can be charged with giving false testimony and vandalism—in theory. They stopped at the gas station. They went to the toilets, as the images showed. And one or more than one—we are still investigating that—started vandalizing inside the toilets of the gas station.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: U.S. Olympic authorities later apologized to Brazil after two U.S. swimmers who were kept in the country for questioning were allowed to go home. U.S. Olympic Committee CEO Scott Blackmun said in a statement, quote, "We apologize to our hosts in Rio and the people of Brazil for this distracting ordeal in the midst of what should rightly be a celebration of excellence."

The incident was just one in an Olympic Games plagued by everything from green pools to empty seats. Brazil is also battling an economic recession, a massive Zika outbreak and the recent ouster of its democratically elected president, Dilma Rouseff. Human rights organizations have also expressed concern about the impact of the Games on Rio's most vulnerable communities.

AMY GOODMAN: But the Olympics were not without success stories. Thursday night, Jamaica's Usain Bolt dominated the men's 200 meters final, clinching his eighth Olympic gold medal.

Brianna Rollins led the American women in sweeping the 100-meter hurdles Wednesday. And the so-called Final Five women's gymnastics team, the most diverse team ever to represent the U.S., concluded their run in Rio with an historic nine medals.

To talk more about the Rio Olympics, we're joined by Dave Zirin. He's back in Washington; he was just in Rio. He writes for *The Nation* magazine. His recent [article](#), "Ryan Lochte is One of Many Privileged First-World Tourists—and Brazilians are Fed Up." He also is the author of *Brazil's Dance with the Devil: The World Cup, the Olympics, and the Fight for Democracy*.

Dave, talk about the Lochte scandal.

DAVE ZIRIN: No, absolutely. And we do have breaking news on this, in addition to what you've already reported. Jimmy Feigen, one of the two swimmers along with Lochte who was probably going to be charged for making false statements to the police and vandalism, has been released. He's on his way home. In return, he had to give an \$11,000 charitable donation to a foundation called Reaction, that attempts to use judo and sports as a way to bring favela kids into the mainstream of Rio. It's the place that Rafaela Silva, the Brazilian judoka from the *City of God* favela, that's where she trained, as well. And that might sound small to some folks, but in a city where the business leaders, the construction leaders and the real estate leaders want a Rio without favelas, and have built these exclusion games, where the favelas are under occupation, any monetary ability to give anything helps. So Jimmy Feigen is on his way back to the United States. As for Ryan Lochte, he could still be indicted in absentia for making false statements and vandalism. But at the same time, it would be for a misdemeanor, and it's not the sort of thing that would require any sort of extradition. So, the criminal part of this is largely done.

But I got to tell you, having just returned from Rio, the anger about this is not going anywhere, because Ryan Lochte has done the impossible: He's managed to unite people in Rio who are both against the Olympics and people who are for the Olympics, because it's very paradoxical down there, because, on the one hand, you know, I spoke to teachers, I spoke to people who depend on Brazil's ramshackle medical system, and people are, of course, furious about the fact that billions of dollars are being spent to put on these Games at a time when there is so much economic and social upheaval in the country, when the country is mired in its worst recession in decades. But paradoxically, there is a lot of pride in the fact that people are kind of holding this together, that volunteers, that low-wage workers are somehow keeping this together and holding the kinds of Games that can have the kinds of events, Amy, that you described, that can create these kinds of moments.

And to have Ryan Lochte and friends literally and figuratively urinate all over their efforts, and also be the kind of stereotype of the ugly American who believes there is no sin below the equator, who exploits people's biggest stereotypes about Rio and crime, and attempts to leverage the fact that they're wealthy and white and Olympians and could somehow just blame it on the brown people, get on a plane and go home, what it manages to do is touch every nerve in Brazilian society right now and create a kind of bizarre unity of Brazilians, who are saying, "Wait a minute, we deserve a lot better than this for the effort that we have put in to staging these Games under unendurable circumstances."

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And, Dave, I wanted to follow up on that, because obviously this scandal had two periods. There was the early narrative, that was reinforcing, well, Rio is a place of criminality, the athletes aren't safe, for the first couple of days, until the actual story came out, and now

there's been a reversal. It reminded me very much of—people may have forgotten—more than, I guess, 30 years ago now—

DAVE ZIRIN: Charles Stuart?

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: No, Bobby Knight—

DAVE ZIRIN: Oh, Bobby Knight, yeah.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: —when Bobby Knight was down in Puerto Rico with the U.S. team in the Pan American Games, and he ends up getting arrested because he assaulted a police officer there, and then gets—and then flees the country and becomes, really, a pariah in Latin America as a result.

DAVE ZIRIN: Yeah, Bobby Knight, a Trump supporter. Bobby Knight, oh, so, yeah, he assaulted a Puerto Rican police officer. And then, as he said later, he proudly mooned the entire country as the plane was taking off. It's that kind of ugly American stereotype that helps nobody. And fulfilling that stereotype certainly helps nobody.

And I'll you who it's also really upset, is that, you know, when I was down in Rio, I met a ton of people from the United States who were trying to do the right kind of work. They're trying to do favela support. They're trying to help train people with independent media, organizations like Catalytic Communities. When you have an American behave like this, behave with this kind of unfettered privilege, what it does is it affects everybody who's actually trying to do the right work and build solidarity. And that's why this is more than just like this kind of small story of Americans behaving badly. I'm sure that's what Ryan Lochte thinks it is. His comments on this have all reflected a kind of brain-deadness about the international incident aspect of this.

But for people who are down there, for people who actually have to deal with police violence, for people who have to deal with a very real thing in Rio, which is police actually robbing you, for people in the favelas who have to deal with police violence, to have wealthy Americans, the people who are most likely to be protected by police, to tell a story about being robbed by police, that also—that manages to offend people who fight police corruption, and also people who are defending the way that Rio has been able to create a secure Games, even though rumors beforehand said that these would be some of the least secure Games in history.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And what about that, Dave? How has Rio managed to pull off these Games? Now we're heading into the last weekend. We only have about 30 seconds.

DAVE ZIRIN: They've been able to pull off the Games through—basically, through Scotch tape, hard work and unpaid labor. A report was out today that the day laborers working in the Olympic Village make only \$15 a day, yet IOC officials get per diems—that's spending money—of \$900 a day. So people are doing it only out of a sense of national pride at this point. And to have their efforts just absolutely slapped around by Ryan Lochte and friends as if they're somehow less than human, believe me, that really touches the third rail of Brazilian identity.

AMY GOODMAN: Dave, stay with us, because we want to continue this conversation. We'll post it online at [democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org). Watch Part 2:

http://www.democracynow.org/2016/8/19/back_from_rio_dave_zirin_on

That does it for our show. I'll be speaking in [Seattle](#) at the American Sociological Association tonight at the Sheraton at 7:00.