

## World Focus – August 27, 2017

### Blase's Commentary on Our Addiction to War, and Interview with Frank Dorrel

When will we hold American officials and military accountable for killing tens of thousands of civilians in Mosul? One city only! And for conducting a cynical propaganda campaign to minimize accountability and worldwide political opposition which could have stopped the slaughter! Or for using the same propaganda strategy over the last 50 years so we could kill millions of people with impunity? When will our media come to grips with the reality that adding up isolated, fragmentary reports of civilian casualties can only count a fraction of the real number being killed in places where there are no western reporters or US officials?

Remember when the Guatemalan civil war ended, and the truth commission found that 20 times more people had been killed than the highest numbers previously reported, and that nearly all - at least 93 percent of the killings - were by US-backed governmental forces? When will we get this kind of accountability for post 9/11 aggression?

These questions are asked by Nicholas Davies. He is very knowledgeable on the subject. He'd like us to do some thinking. In a new article, he accuses US officials of a propaganda campaign to cover up the true extent of civilian casualties in the so-called war on terror, which of course is a *war of terror*. He suggests that the purpose of this propaganda is to ensure that the killing can continue without political opposition or accountability. We're grateful to Nicholas Davies, proud of his work and the work of so many others who are conscious, aware people who know the horror that is being conducted in our name.

Religion continues to be used as a cloak for malice. Now, we know that the National Catholic Reporter has a statement. The headline for the article, published after the election, says *Bishops Elects Trump*. That's quite a statement from a Catholic paper, and they weren't saying it with any kind of glee. Issues like abortion, which puts blame on the people and refuses to put direct pressure on countries that are conducting the killing, namely our own, blame the people for their behavior. Get the fact that the nation is conducting endless murder, and that that is increasing day by day. This also applies to other religions - many religions. We've had a lot of talk this week about a book, *Evangelicalism in*

*America*. Eighty one percent of white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump. From an article by the author, Randall Balmer:

“The statistics tell one story: 81% of white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump. The deafening silence from leaders of the religious right in the wake of the neo-Nazi violence in Charlottesville, Va., points to an even larger one, which places racism at the very heart of the movement.

On the face of it, evangelical support for Trump is anomalous. How can a movement ostensibly concerned about “family values” support a twice-divorced, thrice-married man who said that his “personal Vietnam” was avoiding sexually transmitted diseases? How could evangelicals vote for someone who flaunted his infidelities and who boasted about his tawdry behavior toward women?

The standard rejoinder is that evangelicals were so concerned about abortion and, therefore, judicial appointments that they were prepared to ignore Trump’s indiscretions to advance the one cause — opposition to abortion — that lay at the core of their political movement. That argument collapses, however, on historical examination.

Several evangelical leaders and evangelical organizations applauded the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision. The late Paul Weyrich, architect of the religious right, was emphatic that abortion had nothing whatsoever to do with the genesis of evangelical political activism in the 1970s, a sentiment echoed by other conservative leaders, including Richard Viguerie and Grover Norquist.

Hired hackers share real-world stories of breaking into computer systems (legally) through phishing scams and other high-tech mischief.

What does it tell us when businessmen demonstrate a greater moral resolve than ministers?

What galvanized Jerry Falwell and other leaders in the 1970s was not abortion, which they considered a “Catholic issue.” They mobilized instead to protest the rescission of tax-exempt status at Bob Jones University and other “segregation academies.” (Falwell had opened his own

segregation academy in Lynchburg, Va., in 1967.) Only later, in advance of the 1980 election, did Weyrich and others recognize that abortion could mobilize grass-roots evangelical voters.

Evangelicals' overwhelming support for Trump represents not so much a concern for securing a "pro-life" judiciary as a return to the founding principles of their political movement. Trump himself may or may not be a racist, but his campaign rhetoric undeniably appealed to racist sentiments: his assertion that a judge of Mexican heritage could not be impartial, his characterization of Mexican immigrants as rapists, his castigation of Muslims.

The 2016 presidential election, then, allowed the religious right finally to dispense with the fiction that theirs was a movement concerned about family values. Evangelical voting behavior suggests that the religious right was merely reverting to the racism that prompted its entry into the political arena in the late 1970s.

If this interpretation is mistaken, if the religious right — or at least its leadership — is not racist, then we might reasonably expect that the leaders of the movement would rush to condemn white supremacists and the equivocal responses of the president, who blamed the violence in Charlottesville on "both sides." Where are these evangelical voices of condemnation? In a word, nowhere.

What about Richard Land, former official of the Southern Baptist Convention and now president of Southern Evangelical Seminary? Land was unsparing in his criticisms of Presidents [Clinton](#) and Obama, and he once worried that Hillary Clinton would "park her broomstick" at the Supreme Court. Regarding Trump, however, Land has been uncharacteristically silent.

How about Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council and frequent visitor to the White House? Perkins, who addressed white nationalist groups when he was a state legislator in Louisiana and who has had dealings with David Duke, former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, issued a statement condemning the violence in Charlottesville, but not one condemning Trump.

Where's Ralph Reed or Paula White or James Dobson, who in the course of the 2016 campaign pronounced Trump a "baby Christian"? (He was half right.) All of them have vocally supported the president, but they have remained mute on his relationship to racism and white supremacy. To my knowledge, only one member of the president's 25-person Evangelical Advisory Board, A.R. Bernard of Brooklyn's Christian Cultural Center, has stepped down — and that was several days after Trump's equivocation. By way of contrast, several business executives immediately resigned from economic advisory boards in protest against Trump's equivocation.

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In fairness, several evangelical leaders have spoken out, but their responses could hardly be characterized as denunciations of white supremacy. Franklin Graham cried "shame" on those who were trying to blame Trump for what happened in Charlottesville. Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, who recently disclosed that God had authorized Trump to assassinate North Korea's Kim Jong Un, said that "racism comes in all shapes, all sizes and, yes, all colors." Jerry Falwell Jr., son of the founder of Moral Majority and his father's successor as president of Liberty University, applauded Trump's "bold truthful statement about Charlottesville tragedy."

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, evangelicals took the part of those on the margins of society — women, the poor, workers, people of color. The 2016 election, coupled with the religious right's anemic response to racism and white supremacy, suggests that this once proud and noble tradition is morally bankrupt."

Here is Senator John Young, in the midst of a foreign relations committee meeting. This is from Voices for Creative non-Violence:

"On July 18, 2017, at a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing focused on "The Four Famines: Root Causes and a Multilateral Action Plan," Republican Senator Todd Young, a former Marine, asked officials present if ongoing war in Yemen could fail to exacerbate the catastrophe developing there — one of four countries, along with Southern Sudan, Nigeria, and Somalia, set to collectively lose 20 million people this year, one third the death toll of WWII, from conflict-

driven famine. One third of the death toll of World War II from conflict-driven famine." This is republican senator John Young, a former marine.

Yemen is being bombarded and blockaded, using U.S.-supplied weapons and vehicles, by a local coalition marshaled by U.S. client state Saudi Arabia. Yemen's near-famine conditions, with attendant cholera outbreak, are so dire that in Yemen it is estimated a child dies every 10 minutes of preventable disease."

Here our president is worried about what he calls a dictatorship in Venezuela, and he is, heart and soul, bound with one of the greatest dictatorships on earth, Saudi Arabia. This madness is overwhelming.

"At the hearing, Senator Young held aloft a photo of a World Food Program warehouse in Yemen, which was destroyed in 2015. Senator Young asked David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Program, to name the country responsible for the airstrike that destroyed the food warehouse. Mr. Beasley said the Saudi-led coalition blockading Yemen had destroyed the warehouse, along with the relief supplies it contained.

This could not happen without our direction and assistance, killing the people of Yemen for no reason. We have no excuse for it. And we are hearing racism coming from members of our own congress, not just the fringe of the president's but other who are not that friendly toward Trump, and equally dedicated and addicted to war. Senator Lindsey Graham has lobbied Trump to initiate an all-out attack if Pyonyang continues testing missiles capable of reaching the United States. Even if South Korea and Japan are turned into a wasteland. What a statement from a purported senator of the United States! He'd be happy to see our ally South Korea turned into a wasteland, together with Japan. I think the racism is also quite obvious. We don't have a white planet. We have a colored planet. People of many, many colors, and the color white is certainly fading internationally. Now if people want to destroy the planet because of the beautiful colors that are involved, that's their crime and they should be attacked for that crime.

We have many things going on at this time apart from the wonderful statements in response to Senator Young. The horror of nuclearism, of losing the planet, of destroying the beautiful planet we live on - and to understand that we're dealing with cults here. The Trump cult is very similar to the cult in India,

where the people supported the horrible behavior of their cult leader so much in this last week that they were killing those that opposed the cult. In spite of the fact that the law makes very clear that the cult leader was a horrible criminal. Once we enter into the cult, once we snap in, then the cult leader gives us all truth, and we give up our reasoning, our minds, our understanding to the cult leader. We have to snap out of that because nuclear weapons are illegal, and that may be of no interest to the framers of our policy because they have been ignoring international law for decades. Now we've reached a moment when following orders can end life on the planet, and no one, civilian or military, can obey an order to start a nuclear war. It's very clear in the military code of conduct. Even for simple things that should be obvious. You cannot be ordered to fire on shipwrecked enemy forces. If you do, you're committing a crime regardless of who gave the order. You cannot order people to kill non-combatants, and if you follow the order you are committing a crime. And what is an order to use nuclear weapons other than an order to assassinate non-combatants? Absolutely illegal, totally immoral. The Catholic Church itself advises that such orders not be obeyed. Be ready to disobey any order to use nuclear weapons anywhere for any purpose. Trump or no Trump, our addiction to war has to cease. And this is what we're focusing on today.

We have two cases of Soviet soldiers refusing orders and refusing to fire nuclear weapons. A film has just been made about one of these soldiers, and I do hope that everyone is able to see this film and know about the film, which is coming up very soon. The second in the Soviet Union was in a submarine on the way to Cuba with orders to use a missile with a nuclear warhead. He simply refused. Now the Soviets have twice saved us from nuclear destruction. The film I'm talking about is called *The Man Who Saved The World*. It's a 110-minute docudrama which recreates the incident on September 26 1983 when Stanilas Petrov disobeyed military protocol and probably prevented a nuclear holocaust. He says he was not a hero - just in the right place at the right time. Amen. I hope you'll see this movie, which also includes Petrov himself, Kevin Costner, Matt Damon and Robert De Niro. Extremely important.

Now it's our turn to save the world. Petrov did. WE have to do the same.

Well, friends, today I have a friend who has made his life about peace. And he's with us today. I think many of you know about the work of Frank Dorrel. It's such important work. He was a member of the US Air Force, and now he's a member of Veterans for Peace. They are opposed to ALL WARS. They are dedicated to ending the war system. Frank Dorrel, publishes and distributes *Addicted to War: Why the*

*US Can't Kick Militarism*, by Joel Andreas. This anti-war comic book is a history of the US military and has become one of the most popular books in the peace movement. It's being used in hundreds of high schools and colleges, all over this country. At least a half a million copies are out there right now. He put together a 2-hour film, *What I Learned About US Foreign Policy: The War Against the Third World*, which has been seen by 2 million people since 2000. He also distributed *Arlington West*, by Peter Dudar and Sally Mar. And also, Dorrel is a member of Veterans for Peace, both local and national chapters, as a former member of the Air Force. He helped to start the Arlington West memorial in Santa Monica, a project of the Los Angeles Chapter of Veterans for Peace. The Arlington West Memorial has been erected next to the Santa Monica pier each and every Sunday since February of 2004, and we're so happy to say that he is on the Executive Board of the Office of the Americas, and he's received the OOA annual peace award. Frank has worked with so many in the peace movement, and he has put together so many events in the Los Angeles area, so many times hosting the great Don White, who was with us until recent years. During the same time Frank and his wife have hosted endless events at their home. So, welcome, Frank Dorrel.

**Frank:** Thanks Blase, and thanks for having me on.

**Blase:** Are you ready for a showing of *Paying the Price for Peace*? Are you going to offer that as a premium?

**Frank:** Yes, I am. *Paying the Price of Peace: The Story of S Brian Willson*. It's a great film. You're in it. So many great activists are in it. And many of your listeners probably know something about the life of Brian Wilson. I want to tell the listeners, Blase, that I got into all this anti-war work when I discovered KPFK around 1980. I was a driver for USC, I drove all day long, and I changed the channel one day and heard Alan Watts. And I listened every Monday at 2 to hear Alan Watts, and I punched the channel in and after a while, there was a fund drive, and I heard Noam Chomsky talking about US-supported death squads in El Salvador. And that's what started me on the work I've been doing all these years. And, of course, listening to you, Blase, all this time, for over 35 years I've been listening to you - you've been a mentor to me and so many others. What an incredible truth-teller you are Blase. As Patricia Todd said recently, Blase is our own Howard Zinn.

**Blase:** Thank you, Frank. I appreciate that every much. I am also a big fan of this film about Brian Willson. We covered Nicaragua together during the Contra War. He was received by the people of that country as the great hero that he is, and got their highest award for giving his legs to stop the munitions trains that were delivering weapons and bombs to kill some 40,000 Nicaraguans. This film is rightly called, *Paying the Price for Peace*. How this one individual and the Veterans for Peace actions teams went throughout Nicaragua and saw what reminded them of Vietnam. Brian himself had this tremendous epiphany in Vietnam when he went to access the damage done by our bombs. He went to a village to access the damage and saw nothing but women and children dead - he just freaked out, you might say: and thought: this is my family.

**Frank:** That was in 1969. He was an officer in the Air Force. He was a conservative republican, All American young man - valedictorian of his class, a top athlete, but when he saw those villages, five in one week. The first one, he went out with a Vietnamese officer who worked with us, trained in the United States, to do an assessment. He said the damage and the targets - he just didn't understand that the target was a fishing village. And he saw around a hundred people, all dead, mostly women and children, and he almost stepped on this one woman, and her eyes were open, and he thought she might be alive but the napalm had burned her eyelids off, and her three children were in her arms, and they were all dead. That's when Brian had his epiphany. He threw up, and he started crying, and the Vietnamese officer said "What's wrong with you? Why are you crying?" and Brian said the words just came out of his mouth: "This is my family." And after that he saw four other villages where the same thing had been done, and they were counting them all as VC. But they were just people living in small villages.

**Blase:** Lying is part and parcel of every war. They lie. They lied about Mosul. They've killed 40,000 people in Mosul recently, mostly non-combatants. The lying goes with the war. Thanks to David Swanson for writing his book *War is a Lie*. It starts with lies, it continues with lies, and it ends with lies. Three sets of lies for every war. Brian Willson is a lawyer, and he used his lawyerly skills so well. So tell me about the premium you're offering today.

**Frank:** The film, *Paying the Price for Peace*, and anyone who gets the film by giving a donation to KPFK today also gets tickets to a screening. I first learned about Brian listening to KPFK when Brian and fellow veterans were protesting on the capitol steps in Washington DC against US foreign policy. It was called

the Veterans Fast for Life and it was really a big thing. I got involved in that, sent money and a letter, and then a year later, when Brian was on the tracks with two other veterans in Concord, blocking these trains that carried weapons to ships to be sent down to kill people in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, it was you Blase, I was listening to you while doing my job, I heard you announce that Brian had been run over. And then a year later - and Brian has done the research; he believes that he may be the only person hit head on by a train who has lived. And a year later he came and I heard from KPFK that he was going to be speaking at a church in Los Angeles and I went to hear him. It really changed my life, hearing Brian speak, because he's just such an incredible speaker. He's so clear, he's so real. And then later on we became friends. The film was directed by Bo Boudart, who did an incredible job, and it's narrated by Peter Coyote.

**Blase:** You're the associate producer, aren't you?

**Frank:** Yes, I am. Brian asked the director, Bo Boudart, to let me be involved in the film. Bo has been involved in films for more than thirty years with films about the environment, Native Americans, and has made many award winning films. But he hadn't make a film about the anti-war movement, so he wasn't as familiar with the people in the movement. So that's why Brian asked to let me be involved with the film, so I have worked on it with them for the last six years. I want people to know that it's not just about Brian Willson. Other people in the film are Daniel Ellsberg, Ron Kovic, Father Roy, Medea Benjamin, Blase Bonpane, Martin Sheen, Alice Walker, Amy Goodman, Ramsey Clark, Camilo Mejia, Phil Donahue, Col Ann Wright, David Hartsung, David Swanson, Chelsea Manning, Charlie Litkey, Bruce Gagnon, and President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua. They are all in this film. It's not just a film about one man, though Brian is the anchor. It's really a film about a big part of the peace movement in this country. And I have to say that the film, narrated by Peter Coyote, really came out well, it's a beautiful film to watch. It's so moving. It's historical, educational, and inspiring.

**Blase:** It also brings us up to date about the ongoing addiction to war that Frank has made so clear in his book, selling over 500,000 copies. Here we have a statement in the media from Kathy Kelly, the Nobel Prize nominee, speaking in response to the president's escalation of the war in Afghanistan. And by the way, if we count all the years we've been involved in Afghanistan - 58 years. Here's Kathy's analysis after being there.

“The United States is one among many warlords right now. It’s certainly the heaviest-armed warlord with the most access to funding, but it’s not the case that the United States has been shoring up some kind of governance that’s been advantageous to people in Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan is a country that needs to be able to feed its people, not sending them down into the dungeons and mines to work as serfs. To restore that agricultural infrastructure would require reseeded the orchards, cleaning out the irrigation systems, replenishing the flocks. It would require weening people off of the opium trade. Those are things that could be done.”

You know, under the Taliban the opium trade had been extinguished. They got the country weaned off the opium trade. And the United States put the country back on the opium trade. The US should seek the assistance of somebody like Alfred McCoy who has done great research with a large team of people at the University of Wisconsin in the past regarding other situations where the United States collaborated with drug runners and warlords. He's also done some considerable investigation in Afghanistan. They need to bring people in who know how to restore the agricultural infrastructure to produce food and the creation of clean water systems. Vietnam was loaded with drugs. And now it's happened again, and the US is awash with opioids.

In the month of June 2017, the United States carried out 389 air strikes against Afghanistan, the highest monthly total in five years. We are addicted to war. It was terrible before the Trump Administration. It has expanded under the Trump gang. Two weeks ago the United Nations said that the number of civilian deaths have reached a record high. How about this? Can we possibly increase security for the people of Afghanistan? Is there any sense in the US being there to "help" the civilian population by bombing them?

Friends, this violence increases support for the Taliban. 389 strikes in one month, primarily killing - what do you think? - civilians. They just lie about it, talk about "pin point strikes," but there's nothing pin point about bombs that tear the heads off of children.

We talk about the awful ISIS decapitations. What do you think cluster bombs do? They tear the heads off of children. Let's stop this. Let's stop destroying the planet. Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Non-Violence has been there constantly during these awful events working to make it happen. There was no

need for the war in Afghanistan. A group of Saudi Arabians committed a terrible crime by attacking three of our buildings. Apparently somebody thought they might be hiding in Afghanistan. Of course, they live in Pakistan, which everyone apparently knew - so we've been killing people in Afghanistan in the name of trying to get the Saudi Arabians who were responsible for the attack. Totally insane, totally illogical. Without justification, against the will of the world. It will go on for another hundred years. Look how long the Korean War has gone on. Sixty-three years. You know what the North Koreans are asking for? A peace treaty. They're asking us to end the war and to stop our constant maneuvers around their country. And they're asking to reunite one nation, one culture, one language - that's what they want. And instead of that, our Senator Lindsay Graham is willing to see the destruction of Japan and South Korea! We're dealing with people who are not competent and should not be in government. We have so many of them. We have two military industrial parties. Now we have some nice people in those parties - a few of them are quite intelligent, some who really want peace in the world. But the overall message is the military industrial message of fight anyone any time, there's good money in it, you know, and we don't care about the young people who die or the children we kill.

The number of civilian deaths has reached a record high, continuing an almost unbroken decade-long trend of rising civilian casualties. This is a war that should never have happened. The number of deaths of women and children grew especially fast during the operations against the Taliban and by homemade Taliban bombs causing a great deal of deaths. But the 389 air strikes is the highest total in years, and two weeks ago the US said that the number of civilian deaths in the Afghan war has reached a record high. This is unnecessary. This is why you can't go to college. This is why you can't get medical care. This is why you can't get a decent education. It's because we've turned the treasury over to the military. It is not helping us. It is hindering us. It is counterproductive. It's time to end the charade. A few people got extraordinarily rich, well isn't that lovely? They go rich on the blood of our young and the blood of women and children abroad.

Do you have any final thoughts, Frank?

**Frank:** This great film shows much of what you're talking about. But it also shows people fighting the fight, walking the walk. I really want people to see it. It will inspire them to redouble their efforts in this dark time. Brian has been made a citizen of Nicaragua, where he's now living. He's a hero there. He's a hero here.

**Blase:** Thanks so much for joining me today on World Focus, Frank Dorrell.

**Frank:** Thank you Blase.

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