

I'm trying to get Gaza on the phone today. Trying to reach Raji Soriani, who is the executive of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. We'll keep trying. He recently spoke of "eleven years of criminal, illegal, inhuman siege which suffocated Gaza socially and economically. And three wars in which Israel targeted Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure. At this time when Israel didn't allow the rebuilding of Gaza and denied us our basic rights to the level that we are not able to treat our water or our sewage. So people are protesting because they don't want a conspiracy of silence after so much pain and suffering. They want to demonstrate for their dignity. And I'm sad to say that the US press uses phrases like violence broke out. Well, well, that's something. We won't say that there were hundreds of sharpshooters prepared to open fire on command, and they fired as commanded. Killing civilians was planned. It was carried out with knowledge and forethought.

Today, my thoughts are going to come mainly not from the Palestinian world but actually from the Jewish community. I think this is where we're seeing so much. And we're getting comments from all over the world. Here's one that came in from Canada:

"Israel's cold-blooded murder of Palestinians reveals what this society is." Now this is coming from independent Jewish voices.

One week after Israeli sharpshooters deliberately killed 18 unarmed Palestinian protesters captive in Gaza and critically wounded hundreds more on the eve of Passover — when we celebrate the ancient Hebrews' escape from captivity — Israel has done it again. On Friday, they murdered nine and injured hundreds more inside Gaza for protesting.

We in Independent Jewish Voices Canada grieve the killing of non-violent Palestinian protesters, people offering their lives before the world in a desperate cry from the heart. This ultimate sacrifice by Palestinians marching to the border knowing they will be shot, follows decades of living without freedom or hope inside the toxic Israeli prison called Gaza.

We join Israeli human rights agency B'Tselem urging soldiers to disobey orders to shoot at unarmed civilians.

Imagine if Canadian police again imprisoned Indigenous people in reserves, destroyed their homes, schools, workplaces, hospitals, power plants and sewage systems, then intentionally opened fire on them for protesting their plight. Further, imagine that our press blamed the dead for threatening our security. We would

believe our country had lost its mind, and that our new rulers were determined to murder the remaining original peoples of this land.

But Israel's attempts to crush Palestinians' dignity is completely enabled by Western "mainstream" media, political parties and Jewish organizations. Their irresponsibility is why we support the BDS movement to pressure Israel to respect human rights and obey international law.

We are sick of this banality of evil by Israel's defenders here in the West. Regardless of their rhetoric, their bankrolling Israel with trade and military accords, along with charities, maintains Israel's subjugation of Palestinians.

Israel's slaughter of Palestinians reveals the hypocrisy of supposed Western-liberal enlightenment. Further, it violates and hollows out age-old Jewish teachings of morality. What moral lessons can Jewish youth be taught when our synagogues, our schools and our mainstream organizations honour Israeli soldiers for murdering captive Palestinian youth.

Now comments like these are coming in from all over the world. This is just one. And we're looking today especially for comments from the Jewish community, the international Jewish community, referring to the "lynching" that is taking place. This was from Independent Jewish Voices of Canada.

We see press people getting shot. Yassi Murtaha was shot and killed. He had a big sign on him saying PRESS. He is dead. Killed covering the protests in Gaza. This is the type of thing that is taking place and has been taking place for decades. We have wonderful organizations in the United States like MECA, the Middle East Children's Alliance. This program has been run by a Jewish grandmother who has done so much work. They state:

People in Gaza are fed up, and trying to send a message to the world: enough is enough. Twelve years of siege is killing them in a slow way. We need to go back to our village, that's the message we hear again and again as people travel Gaza visiting schools, community centers, hospitals. Now tens of thousands of Palestinians are protesting their displacement and the Israeli occupation and siege on Gaza's borders. Israeli army is attacking protestors with tear gas and live bullets. Israeli tanks, snipers and drones are targeting the protestors. So far more than 30 people have been killed and 2500 wounded, including women, children, youth. Gaza's hospitals are completely overwhelmed.

In Gaza, two million people live on just 239 square miles. It's the biggest open air prison on earth. More than 40 percent are under 15 years of age. These child prisoners are living without a childhood. Most children in Gaza only know life under siege. The severe deprivation of basic necessities, the inability of sick people to leave for the treatment they need; the unemployment, which causes depression in children and adults alike - days and nights without electricity.

They also know life under Israeli bombs from major attacks in 2009, 2012, 2014. Hundreds of children have been killed. Thousands have life-long injuries. Every child in Gaza has been traumatized. They suffer from insomnia, panic attacks, depression. Many children wet their beds, even older children. Some have become violent, taking their anger out on friend and family.

The Gaza project explained how poverty, mostly created by Israeli policies, has led to food insecurity with 40 percent of the children in Gaza suffering from anemia. It's been 70 years since the Nakba, when three quarters of the Palestinian population was brutally uprooted and trapped in refugee camps. The Palestinian people are showing the rest of the world how never to give up on the fight for freedom and the right to return to their land and home. We thank you for standing in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Barbara Lubin is the Jewish grandmother who is responsible for developing this wonderful organization. They identify children and journalists who have been victims. Even the Washington Post got into it. That is surprising because there's been so much blind support for Israel in the US press.

More comments from the Jewish community. Mondoweiss states:

Israel just lost American Jews. It finally happened. In the last day or so, major mainstream voices condemned Israel's shootings of unarmed Palestinian protesters on March 30, in which 17 were killed.

Chris Hayes did it on MSNBC last night. "A frankly unconscionable use of force." Ayman Mohyeldin of MSNBC called out the racism in the media's indifference to the killings. David Rothkopf of the Carnegie Endowment questioned Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. The New York Times, Washington Post and J Street all criticized the murders (albeit with equivocations), while on WNYC's Brian Lehrer show, Cornel West said Martin Luther King Jr would have spoken out against

Israel's "massacre" in Gaza, and Brian Lehrer, an Israel supporter who regularly hosts neoconservatives, did not seek to contradict West.

Why did the dam break and what does it mean?

It happened because the left is applying all the force here, largely through social media; and the rightwing advocates are silent. Bill Kristol, Jeffrey Goldberg and Jennifer Rubin seem to have taken one look at the awful videos from Gaza and, finding the Israeli actions indefensible, turned back to Trump.

It is hugely meaningful: The American Jewish love affair with Israel is over. We are going to see more and more outright signs of the breakup in the discourse and in our politics too in coming years.

Let's consider the dynamics first. The mainstream editorials appeared only after social media, alt web sites, and human rights groups said emphatically for several days what was plain as the nose on your face: that these were war crimes. And more important, the mainstream spoke after seeing there was no pushback from the Zionist center/right.

The Onion did as much for the narrative as anyone. "Teen On Birthright Trip Hadn't Expected To See So Many Dead Palestinians," it mocked. The Onion's fictitious young Jew, Sarah Caplan, said she was "surprised that there were so many people her age in the Israeli Defense Forces killing Palestinians."

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem condemned the shootings as crimes the day they happened. Four days later, Human Rights Watch called the killings "unlawful" and "calculated," and said the soldiers fired because of a "longstanding culture of impunity."

Then Omar Shakir of Human Rights Watch threatened to prosecute Israeli officials for war crimes.

Israel, we will be watching & documenting what you do in Gaza on Friday. Domestic impunity won't protect you from prosecution abroad.

IfNotNow, the non-Zionist Jewish group, did not need to be told these were murders. It led demonstrations at the Israeli consulate in Boston on Tuesday, at which eight young Jews were arrested for saying the killings go against the spirit

of Passover, and at the offices of a New York Jewish establishment group last night:

The group called on the URJ [the Union for Reform Judaism], the largest denomination of American Jewry — which has taken bold progressive positions against gun violence and Israel's mistreatment of liberal Jews, among other issues — to condemn the shocking murders of Palestinian protesters by the IDF.

Some voices in high places spoke out. Mohyeldin of NBC hit the racist blind spot in the mainstream coverage of Gaza:

Its not just a double standard among liberals & progressives... ask yourself what the mainstream media coverage would have been like if 15 Israelis were killed? This conflict will never be solved so long as the public & politicians remain misinformed & uninformed

After Rula Jebreal wrote, “The 1-state reality...is gun practice to liquidate humans rights, ultimately killing Israeli democracy,” David Rothkopf responded eloquently,

Until every resident of the land over which Israel enforces control has equal rights and protections under the law it's not a democracy.

Rothkopf is as Jewish establishment as they come. The former head of Foreign Policy magazine, he once tarred Walt and Mearsheimer as gentile anti-Semites (“they made a cynical decision to cash in on anti-Semitism by offering to dress up old hatreds in the dowdy Brooks Brothers suits of the Kennedy School and the University of Chicago”). But Rothkopf was enraged:

Israel's brutal treatment of the demonstrators in Gaza...and Gaza itself...is the anti-Passover. It represents the height of hypocrisy: A supposedly Jewish state violating the most basic concepts of the religion in order to defend its “right to exist.”

Notice his sarcasm about a mantra Israel supporters have tried to shove down our throats forever: its right to exist.

The most important element of the reaction to the massacre was the fact that the neocons and rightwing loudmouths were quiet. They know they cannot defend Israel's conduct, so they sat on their hands. Bill Kristol is silent. Jeffrey

Goldberg silent. Jennifer Rubin silent. Bret Stephens silent. Bari Weiss silent. Tamara Cofman Wittes, silent.

The usual chorus of very connected mainstream hooligans who campaign for Israel in the press and on television was dumfounded. They don't understand why Israel did this, they just wish it would go away. (And they can all say that they have bigger fish to fry: Trump. But it must tear them up that Netanyahu loves Trump.)

Their silence left the field to Bernie Sanders, for his good statement on the killings—including to Jake Tapper on TV. Followed by Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Rep. Betty McCollum of Minnesota:

I am horrified by the tragic wounding & killing of Palestinian protesters in Gaza last Friday. Attacks on peaceful Palestinian protesters must end, and the U.S. & the international community must do more to support a resolution to the conflict.

Ari Fleischer is surely right, when he observes that progressive Democrats are beginning to turn against Israel:

Democrats – welcome to what your party has become. 1) It's not a protest when you cross a sovereign border. It's an invasion. 2) The Democrats used to support Israel. Now, many of them don't.

Liberal media is responsive to these stirrings. This week there were finally outspoken Palestinian voices on the most important platforms. Diana Buttu had an op-ed in the Washington Post saying, It's "time to crack down on Israel."

[A]s the United States and the E.U. continue to try to appease Israel, Palestinians pay the price — with their lives.

Rawan Yaghi got an op-ed in the New York Times, with a wrenching description of a visit to the protests on Sunday:

I left the protest thinking of the rest of Gaza — shellshocked for years, its borders closed and its United Nations-funded infrastructure in decay. I thought of the kids in my neighborhood who play football in what used to be the ground floor of a tall residential building, with bare concrete columns and poking iron rods as their only audience. And I thought: Once again, Gaza the Injured has come out to protest, and to scream for life.

So the left was dominating the commentary on the massacre; and mainstream voices finally spoke up.

The New York Times ended its three-day silence on the killings with an editorial that had unusually sharp language for Israel. The Israeli ambassador to the U.N. was angered. Though the Times typically framed the matter as a crisis for Israel, with the headline, “Israel Courts Catastrophe in Gaza Protests,” it dared to pronounce that Israel should “not use live ammunition on unarmed demonstrators.”

Israel’s response appears to have been excessive, as human rights groups have asserted.

A godawful Washington Post editorial said that Israel fell into Hamas’s “trap” by killing so many Palestinians. But it conceded that Israel had suffered “a moral and political blow.”

J Street ended its three-day silence with a statement putting blame on Palestinians and Hamas, but noting the “disturbingly high number of casualties.”

We urge the Israeli government and IDF to exercise maximum possible restraint and to use non-lethal force in such situations. We are dismayed that members of the Israeli government have already dismissed out of hand calls to conduct a thorough and independent investigation of these events.

And last night Chris Hayes broke his silence with a segment denouncing the shooting of 750 Palestinians. “Yes that is a correct number.” After the usual disclaimers about Palestinian extremism, he said that that “in no way justifies what Israeli soldiers appear to have done, which is perch on a hill and pick off protesters with sniper fire.” They “rained down bullets on unarmed people, again and again and again.” Then Hayes called out the “vast number of Congressmen” who have said nothing against the massacre.

Yes, Hayes was late, but he knows the story. He and Mohyeldin work for a network that is run by a man (David Cohen) who threw fundraisers for the Israeli army, and that is chaired by a man (Brian Roberts) “known for his affinity for Israel.” Jake Tapper works for a network whose marketing exec wrote speeches for Netanyahu.

My headline says that American Jews are done with Israel. The deluge is coming. Ten years ago Max Blumenthal came out as an anti-Zionist at rallies for the Israeli massacre of the moment, and it was shocking. Today David Rothkopf comes out as

an anti-Zionist, and we all get it. So much has happened since Cast Lead of '08-09. One massacre after another, that ravaging Israeli Jews fully approved. American Jews are not going to hold the bag any more.

Friends, we not only see the very necessary dissent coming in a massive way from the Jewish community. We're very proud to see that resistance. We're also very proud of our own people, our own citizens, who are equally or more disgusted with our own behavior. Here we have Major Arnie Gerson, a US-army officer and former history professor at West Point who served tours of duty with recon units in Iraq and Afghanistan. He quotes an old timer, General Smedley Butler, the most decorated marine in American history, who said

"War is just a racket... I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service...during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism."

~ Major General Smedley Butler, US Marine Corps, 2 time Medal of Honor recipient (1935)

And here is Major, who is saying much the same thing:

I grew up in blue-collar Staten Island, New York City. My mother was a waitress, my father an overqualified civil servant who also painted houses and delivered Chinese food in Brooklyn. I come from a world where it seems you're either a cop, a fireman, or a junkie. My mother had four brothers; two, along with my grandfather, were FDNY to the core; the others fell deep into the drug and alcohol game; it killed them both. But not me; no, I was the family's golden child, always the pleaser, always high achieving, and I'd do something special. I thought it was my destiny.

In July 2001, while my high school friends partied during the summer before college, I found myself at Cadet Basic Training – "Beast Barracks," as we called – a new officer candidate at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Hating it from the start, I wanted out, but, well, quitting wasn't an option. Four years later, I was one of 911 cadets who graduated – Time magazine profiled us as the "Class of 9/11" – and commissioned in the US Army on May 28, 2005. Some 18 months later, I arrived in Baghdad.

For me, a high school senior in the year before the world changed, the army seemed glamorous, and, surprisingly safe. Back then there were no long, or "real,"

wars. American soldiers almost never fired a shot in anger, let alone got killed. I guess I imagined overseas travel, at worst a tour peacekeeping in Kosovo or something, which, I figured, would provide cool photo ops and interesting stories.

Two months after beginning basic training, in September, while sparring in plebe (freshman) boxing class, the towers fell, and everything changed. I'm embarrassed to admit that, for the next four years at West Point, my biggest fear was that the wars would end before I could ship over and do my part. Truth is, I don't recognize that kid anymore.

The intervening 17 years have been a blur: training, deployment, promotions, more training, another deployment. It's been a long, emotional path from enthusiasm, to belief, to doubt, to dissent. Reflecting, now, on my wars – Afghanistan and Iraq – and on my country's other conflicts – Libya, Syria, Yemen, etc. – is both difficult and cathartic. What's been most disturbing is discovering the gap between who we, the vets and this whole nation, thought we were, and, in reality, who we actually were.

And, in each war, in every case, there's been a tremendous chasm between the comforting fables we're told to believe, and the reality of the American military's role in the Greater Middle East.

\*Afghanistan seemed the most defensible invasion. Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda were there, they'd planned the broad contours of the 9/11 attacks in that landlocked, barren shithole (to borrow a cheeky phrase from our current commander-in-chief). We, the soldiers and the American citizenry, were told to kick ass, take vengeance, and, in the process, to bring democracy, gender equality, and basic modernity to Kabul and Kandahar.

In reality, bin Laden escaped, Al Qaeda fighters died or fled, and counter-terror quickly morphed into armed nation-building. The US military backed venal warlords, an increasingly illegitimate, corrupt central government run by the Karzai-clique and a slew of drug lords. By the time I arrived, in 2011, we were battling illiterate farm boys calling themselves "Taliban," and fighting and dying for scraps of worthless dirt we'd evacuate soon enough. And, we're still there.

\*Iraq, we were told, had WMDs, had colluded with Al Qaeda, and that Saddam Hussein was a loose cannon who had to be stopped...like now! Once there, on the ground, the U.S. military had to stay indefinitely, to "fight them over there," so that

we didn't have to "fight them here at home." It was a farce, a fiasco. Then, we were told, we had to reengage, keep fighting (we still are) to vanquish the ISIS menace.

In reality, it was all so much BS. The intelligence was wrong, potentially fabricated, and Saddam, in truth, was a tightly caged animal unable to menace his neighbors. The U.S. military injected chaos, shattered a society, unearthed sectarian tensions, and unleashed a brutal civil war. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed, millions became refugees. By the time I arrived, in 2006, the place was on fire and we found the tortured corpses in the streets. We locked up who we could, killed who we couldn't, and paid off former insurgents to lay down their arms. ISIS, which didn't exist on 9/11, was birthed and matured in our prison camps. It exploded across northern and western Iraq in 2014, a veritable Frankenstein's monster of our ill-advised invasion. Iran backed the Shia militias that saved Baghdad from ISIS and it was Iran, not the U.S., which emerged as the real winner in Iraq. Of course, we're still there, anyway.

\*Libya was a supposedly "humanitarian" intervention, unleashed by a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, a "liberal" president. We had an R2P – a responsibility to protect – rebels who'd otherwise be slaughtered by their brutal dictator, "Mad Dog" Gadhafi. It'd be short, it'd be neat, and the U.S. military could do much good with little exertion.

In reality, the U.S. and its NATO allies took it a step further. The R2P morphed into all out regime change, and – without any real plan for the day after Gadhafi was brutally murdered – Libya descended into chaos. "No-drama" Obama candidly called it a "shit show." Rival militias carved out fiefdoms, ISIS opened a local franchise, and tribal fighters once allied with Gadhafi took their skills – and an arsenal of weapons – south, destabilizing Mali, Cameroon, and Niger. Soon enough, American soldiers would start dying in that last locale. We're still there, too, and still bombing Libya.

\*In Syria, we'd back local rebels to topple another pitiless tyrant, Bashar al Assad. No ground troops or airstrikes would be necessary. The Saudis and other Gulf States were on our team. The rebels were moderate, they'd take Damascus and install a democratic government allied to the West.

Friends, it's been 50 years since the Catonsville MD action. That's when Dan and Phil Berrigan and several others decided to go to the draft board in Catonsville MD, take the files out into the parking lot, and napalmed the files asking whether it

was better to burn paper or people. They were arrested, and many of them - in fact all of them - spent hard time in federal prison. Was that a one-time event? No, friends. Similar events happened at least 100 times. Throughout all of those events, there was no violence on the part of the protestors except to paper. And some people were very shocked that the paper was burned, but didn't seem shocked at millions of wonderful Vietnamese non-combatants were burned to death. Women and children burned to death. And the horror went on in Vietnam after we left, because we poisoned the soil and waterways with Agent Orange and other toxins of war.

So what do we see? Well, these same patriots are back. One of them is the wife of Phil Berrigan, Elizabeth McCallister; Elizabeth McAlister, 78, Jonah House, Baltimore, Fr. Steve Kelly SJ, 69, Bay Area, California and Carmen Trotta, 55, New York Catholic Worker. They indicted the King's Bay Plowshares. What was the indictment for?

Today through a non-violent action...

And this is now, friends, not 50 years ago. This is in the wake of the Catonsville 9.

Today, through our nonviolent action, we, Kings Bay Plowshares—indict the United States government, President Donald Trump, Kings Bay Base Commander Brian Lepine, the nuclear triad, and specifically the Trident nuclear program.

WHEREAS, This program is an ongoing criminal endeavor in violation of international treaty law binding on the United States under the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution (Article VI, Section 2):

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

WHEREAS, The United States is bound by the United Nation's Charter, ratified and signed in 1945. Its preamble affirms that its purpose is to "save future generations from the scourge of war". It directs that "all nations shall refrain from the use of force against another nation". Article II regards the threat to use nuclear weapons as ongoing international criminal activity.

WHEREAS, The Nuremberg Principles, also promulgated in 1945, primarily by the U.S., prohibit crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, war crimes and

genocide. They render nuclear weapons systems prohibited, illegal, and criminal under all circumstances and for any reason.

WHEREAS, The U.S. government is obligated as well by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in force since 1970 that requires the signers to pursue negotiations in good faith and to eliminate nuclear weapons at an early date. The U.S. government is also obligated by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits full-scale nuclear explosions.

WHEREAS, the members of the United Nations are currently negotiating a treat to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

THEREFORE, the work being at done at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base violates all these agreements and is thus criminal.

The seven chose to act on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who devoted his life to addressing the triplets of militarism, racism and materialism. In a statement they carried with them the group quoted King, who said: “The greatest purveyor of violence in the world (today) is my own government.”

Carrying hammers and baby bottles of their own blood, the seven attempted to convert weapons of mass destruction.

Kings Bay Naval base opened in 1979 as the Navy’s Atlantic Ocean Trident port. It is the largest nuclear submarine base in the world. There are six ballistic missile subs and two guided missile subs based at Kings Bay.

The activists went to three sites on the base: The administration building, the D5 Missile monument installation and the nuclear weapons storage bunkers. The activists used crime scene tape, hammers and hung banners reading: “The ultimate logic of racism is genocide, Dr. Martin Luther King”, “The ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide” and “Nuclear weapons: illegal – immoral.” They also brought an indictment charging the U.S. government for crimes against peace.

Friends, these statements are made by true patriots at a time of extreme corruption in our polity known as the United States. And it might be better not to be as upset about the number of prostitutes that any of our politicians have, and be a little more concerned about how many nuclear weapons are ready to destroy this planet.

There have been at least a hundred similar actions to this plowshares action. It began in 1980 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. That was also a repetition of what happened in Catonsville in 1968.

Witness Against Torture formed in 2005 when 25 Americans went to Guantánamo Bay and attempted to visit the detention facility. They began to organize more broadly to shut down Guantánamo, end indefinite detention and torture and call out Islamophobia. During our demonstrations, we lift up the words of the detainees themselves, bringing them to public spaces they are not permitted to access. Witness Against Torture will carry on in its activities until torture is decisively ended, its victims are fully acknowledged, Guantánamo and similar facilities are closed, and those who ordered and committed torture are held to account.

This is an amazing piece of work by people who care enough to spend hard time in prison in order to make the point about ending our military industrialism which is a cancer on both parties. One of the members made a statement saying:

i just received word, that on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., dear friends, community members and family have undertaken a courageous and prophetic act of repentance & resistance (their full statement is in the comments below).

in short, these folks have entered the Kings Bay Strategic Weapons Facility in Georgia, armed with simple tools and their own blood, to mark this site – one of the many places where MLKs triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism exist – and begun the process of converting swords (weapons of mass destruction) into plowshares.

Their statement (and the indictment they brought with them – also in the comments below) is beautiful and powerful. their words speak to my conscience and my soul, and offer both a challenge and invitation.

The litany of atrocities in this country and our world right now is growing and dire. but the spirit of resistance is expanding and deepening.

I don't believe there to be a hierarchy of resistance (though suffering is surely borne by some to a greater degree than others).

We see Martin Luther King's triplet of racism, extreme materialism and militarism all around us today, which is why they refer to Isaiah Chapter II verse 4, "to beat swords into ploughshares," by disarming the world's deadliest weapon, the Trident submarine. Think about that - the world's deadliest nuclear weapon.

Well, friends, aside from the attacks made by people who symbolically are demanding an end to our militarism, we have those who are involved in tax day. Tax protests, demanding an end to war and military spending, are everywhere. More tax resisters direct tax dollars from the pentagon to the people, calling for an end to endless war, for funding people and planet. Thousands of people across the US are taking public action from today through Tuesday. From Maine to Los Angeles, featuring bake sales, marching bands, street theater, lots of signs. Participants will take their message to the public, the IRS, and to the offices of elected officials.

Calling for an end to endless war and for funding for people and planet, thousands of people across the United States are taking public action from April 15 through tax day, Tuesday, April 17. From Maine to Los Angeles, featuring bake sales, marching bands, street theater, and "Burma shave" sign displays during rush hour, participants will take their message to the public, the IRS, and to the offices of elected officials.

Not waiting for the government to act, some activists will openly refuse to pay their taxes to the IRS and give the money to humanitarian programs instead. Bill Glassmire of Corvallis, Oregon, says, "I am resisting war taxes in order to redirect resources away from U.S. militarism and routine violence and toward building a peaceful and healthy earth."

In Berkeley, California, members of Northern California People's Life Fund will redirect over \$65,000 in resisted war taxes in a public granting ceremony on April 15. The group was founded by war tax resisters in 1971 to pool their resisted war taxes, and this is the largest amount they've ever granted. People's Life Fund member Susan Quinlan says, "There are so many excellent groups that are working to protect families, communities and the natural environment, and we are delighted to support these efforts. With U.S. military spending surpassing \$1 trillion, we invite others to imagine what good could come from redirecting these military funds on a grand scale."

Also on Sunday, April 15, a coalition of more than 100 groups nationally is sponsoring rallies and marches under the banner of “End U.S. Wars at Home and Abroad.” Minnesota War Tax Resisters will be marching in Minneapolis, and members of New York City War Resisters League will demand “taxes for peace” in the Manhattan march. Noura Khouri, who will be joining the march in Oakland, California, says, “Tax resistance is a way to address all of the overwhelming issues facing the earth and its people at this time where literally everything of importance and of value to our communities is under attack.”

More local actions, large and small, are planned for tax day itself, April 17. The Peace Resource Center of San Diego is holding a bake sale in front of the IRS office in San Diego to “envision a time when schools have all the money they need and the air force needs to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber.”

In Kingston, New York, activists along with the Tin Horn Uprising marching band will make their demand to “Cut War Spending — Fund Human Needs” in front of Congressman John Faso’s office.

In Knoxville, Tennessee, the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance will drive their “UPF Bomb Plant Express” to Senator Lamar Alexander’s office and ask for an answer to their question, “Why are you spending our tax dollars on a uranium processing bomb plant when we need raises for teachers, housing for the homeless, affordable health insurance for hundreds of thousands of uninsured Tennesseans, protections for the environment?”

The National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) has coordinated tax day actions since 1983. The full list of actions has more details and local contact information.

NWTRCC is a coalition of local, regional and national groups providing information and support to people who are conscientious objectors to paying taxes for war. NWTRCC partners with the Global Days of Action on Military Spending coordinated from Barcelona, Spain, to join protests of war spending in the U.S. with a demand for global disarmament and a shift in priorities to sustainable development.

We These and other efforts are trying end the militarism that is destroying not only

innocent people of the planet but our country as well, very clearly. WE have basic problems that have to be dealt with. Many of them are on Wall Street, and even if we spent only a portion of the time focusing on the problem of our economic system to what we spend talking about Russia, we'd be ahead of the game. Why? Well, what is the system? Well, the system generally is called capitalism. Neo-liberals are people who want to go back to 19th century laissez faire capitalism. That is what is taught at Harvard University - but they don't teach 19th century engineering. So what is this ideology? It would be hard for elementary schools to believe that there was anything there if you just present it to them. What is the system. Say you're in fourth or fifth grade. The system is this: if you have money, you are paid for having money. If you do not have money, you must pay to get money. Therefore, according to Senator Sanders, three people in our country own more wealth than the bottom 160 million people. That's what the system does. The fact is that people are not paid in accord with the wealth they have produced. They may be paid some miserable wage, but create tens of thousands of dollars of wealth every day that someone else appropriates for themselves. So the economic system is part and parcel of the problem we're dealing with as we deal with the question of poverty.

So how do you deal with it? Well, for a religious perspective from James Carroll, who wants us to see the religiosity of war and how what we're doing is being called a crusade - a horrible word to use. He states:

American may be sinking ever deeper into the moral morass of the Trump era, but if you think the malevolence of this period began with him, think again. The moment I still dwell on, the moment I believe ignited the vast public disorder that is now our all-American world, has been almost completely forgotten here. And little wonder. It was no more than a casually tossed-off cliché, a passing historical reference whose implications and consequences meant nothing to the speaker. “This crusade,” said President George W. Bush just days after the 9/11 attacks, “this war on terrorism...”

Despite the threads of causality woven together as if on some malignant loom that brought about his election — the cult of reality-show celebrity, the FBI director's last-minute campaign intervention, Russian mischief, Hillary Clinton's vulnerability to self-defeat and misogyny, electoral college anomalies, Republican party nihilism, and a wickedly disenchanted public — the ease with which such a

figure took control of the levers of power in this country should still stun us. Some deep sickness of the soul had already played havoc with our democracy's immune system or he wouldn't have been imaginable.

Friends, this is what we face today, and we are extremely proud of the real patriots who are stepping up their activism to confront this moral decay. I want to thank you for tuning in today to World Focus.