



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

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2012

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

When They Almost Blew Us Up

by Dr. Arnold Oliver

If you were born around 1950 or earlier, you probably remember where you were in October of 1962. This month marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis - when nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States was only narrowly averted.

Coincidentally, the last Presidential debate for 2012 just happens to be on foreign policy, and is scheduled for October 22nd - fifty years to the day since President Kennedy's dramatic television address to the nation which led to a week of heightened anxiety, to put it mildly, among the people of the world. It is to be hoped that candidates Obama and Romney will be asked to weigh in on the lessons learned from 1962.

First, some background: The crisis developed out of the conflict over the Cuban revolution of 1959. The Kennedy administration pulled out all the stops in an effort to bring down the new Castro regime. Trade sanctions, sabotage, assassinations and finally the Bay of Pigs invasion were launched in an effort to roll back Castro's revolutionary government which then took a sharp turn to the left and turned to the Soviet Union for support.

Premier Nikita Khrushchev, acutely aware of U.S. nuclear Jupiter missiles based close to Soviet territory in Turkey, approved sending military aid, troops and nuclear weapons to Cuba. Khrushchev's goals were to protect his new Cuban allies and to achieve nuclear deterrence vis a vis the United States on the cheap. At that time, the Soviets had very few long range nuclear missiles.

When a U.S. spy plane discovered missile sites under construction on October 14th, the crisis rapidly escalated. When Kennedy spoke to the nation, he demanded that the missiles be removed, and imposed a naval blockade of the island.

We know now that the crisis was a classic example of misperception and misunderstanding - the fog of war in action. Russian leaders thought incorrectly that the United States government would accept missiles in Cuba since the U.S. had missiles in Turkey, on the doorstep of the USSR. U.S. leaders did not know that the Soviet military already had 162 nuclear warheads in Cuba as well as nuclear armed torpedoes on its submarines. Both sides thought, incorrectly, that they understood the situation as well as the motives of the other side. They were wrong.

It seems clear in retrospect that the President was poorly served by his top military advisers. Secret White House tapes made during the crisis reveal that the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were unanimous in pressing for war, and hurled charges of “appeasement” in an effort to intimidate President Kennedy into launching an attack on Cuba. At one point, after the President left the room, the Chiefs can be heard mocking him.

It later emerged that both sides had grossly misunderstood the situation, and nuclear war had been averted more by accident than competent statesmanship. Robert McNamara, Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, later became one of many former nuclear warriors who worked to abolish those weapons worldwide. In the end he concluded that, unless we act, the indefinite combination of human fallibility and nuclear weapons must at some point result in “the death of nations”.

What is perhaps most alarming about the crisis is that both U.S. and Soviet leaders behaved as if the addition of nuclear weapons to the mix had little impact on their handling of the crisis. In a mind-boggling display of hubris, they allowed a dispute over a transient tactical advantage to put at risk the fate of the entire planet, both the natural world and human generations yet unborn.

If that sounds insane, it should. This is precisely what Albert Einstein warned about in 1946 when he declared that, “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.”

Do you think either Mr. Romney or Obama would have done better than JFK during the crisis? Do you trust either one of them to be stewards of weapons quite capable of extinguishing life on the planet? I didn't think so. So on this our fiftieth anniversary of being more lucky than good, let us make a commitment to rid the earth of nuclear weapons. It can be done.

[Dr. Oliver is Emeritus Professor of political science at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. He is now in Eureka, California helping Veterans For Peace restore the Golden Rule, the very first anti-nuclear sailing vessel. He can be reached at <soliver@heidelberg.edu>]



You Should've Served US Better and Died!' Debt Collector Berates

by Michael Nagle

A debt collector, angered that a disabled US Army veteran was living off of disability payments, told him he "should have died" in war instead of "taking advantage of" other Americans.

Minnesota-based debt collection agency Gurstel Chargo is now facing a lawsuit for verbally abusing the Army vet over a \$6,000 defaulted student loan, Courthouse News reports.

"If you would have served our country better you would not be a disabled veteran living off Social Security while the rest of us honest Americans work our asses off," one of the agency's debt collectors allegedly told the vet. "Too bad, you should have died."

Michael Collier was declared 100 per cent disabled after suffering permanent spine and head injuries while in the Army. As a result, both Collier and his wife receive disability payments from the federal Social Security Administration, which are exempt from seizure by debt collectors.

But in an attempt to collect on the defaulted student loan, the collector seized the money from Collier's wife's savings account. The credit union then proceeded to freeze her account.

The Colliers filed an objection and requested a court hearing, at which the couple was told their frozen funds were exempt from such garnishment.

But the debt collection agency's lawyer continued to harass the couple. Telling Collier "he would need to get a lawyer in order to get his money back," an unidentified paralegal cursed at and threatened him over the phone.

"F--k you!" the paralegal allegedly said, "Pay us your money! You can't afford an attorney. You owe us. I hope your wife divorces you."

The couple is now seeking compensation for actual damages, statutory damages, and punitive damages for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), privacy invasion, malicious infliction of emotional distress and conversion.

The FDCPA considers it abusive for a debt collector to make empty threats, misrepresent the legal status of a debt, or use obscene of profane language.

According to the Daily Beast, debt collectors sometimes use abusive techniques to pry money from the indebted because of the commission rates they receive. On average, debt collectors make 20 cents for every dollar recouped. At this rate, the Colliers' debt would be worth \$1,200 to Chargo.

Verbal harassment is a commonly-used technique to instigate debtors into making payments. In 2010, the Federal Trade Commission received 50,000 complaints about severe harassment from debt collectors, 18,000 of which included the use of obscene language. And some say that number is low.

"That's just the tip of the iceberg, as far as I'm concerned," attorney Sergei Lemberg told the Daily Beast.

While Chargo's berating took it too far for the Colliers, there are of thousands of cases of abuse that never make it to court.

US Navy Sailors Accused of Raping Japanese Woman on Okinawa

By *Matthew M. Burke and Hana Kusumoto Stars and Stripes*

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — Two U.S. Navy sailors were arrested Tuesday for the alleged rape and assault of an Okinawan woman, an incident that could further inflame anti-American sentiment on the island.

Okinawa Prefectural Police said they arrested Seaman Christopher Browning and Petty Officer 3rd Class Skyler Dozierwalker, both 23, after the alleged incident was reported to police by an acquaintance of the alleged victim.

The alleged victim, who according to media reports is in her 20s, told police she was walking home from work in central Okinawa between 3:35 a.m. and 4:20 a.m. when the men followed, assaulted and raped her, police said. A U.S. Navy official said the incident allegedly took place in the parking lot of her apartment building.

The woman also suffered minor injuries to her neck, police said.

During their investigation, police said, they learned that two "foreigners" who fit the description of the attackers were staying at a nearby hotel and had returned to the hotel in the morning.

Browning was arrested around 7:30 a.m. at the hotel, but police were unable to identify Dozierwalker as the other suspect at that time. He was taken to a police station for voluntary questioning where he admitted to committing the crime, they said.

The sailors told police they were scheduled to return to America
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on Tuesday morning, according to police officials, who were unable to provide details of how long the men had been in Okinawa or what they were doing there.

Japanese media reported that both men had been drinking alcohol before the incident.

Japanese authorities have primary jurisdiction but Naval Criminal Investigative Service is assisting in the investigation, Commander Naval Forces Japan spokesman Jon Nylander said. Police said they planned to send the case to the Okinawa Public Prosecutor's Office in Naha on Wednesday.

The alleged incident comes at a time when relations between the Okinawan public and the U.S. military were already strained over the recent arrival of the controversial MV-22 Osprey aircraft. For months, the U.S. and Japanese governments have been trying to assuage Okinawans' fears over the safety of the Marine Corps aircraft, which has been called into question following two major accidents. Despite those fears — and protests, which have drawn crowds into the tens-of-thousands — the U.S. deployed the hybrid helicopter-airplane to its Futenma air station earlier this month.

To many, the U.S. military has been an unwelcome guest on the island, especially following the abduction and rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl at the hands of three U.S. servicemembers in 1995.

Additionally, those on the island believe the Japanese government has placed an unfair burden on them because Okinawa is home to more than half of all U.S. troops in Japan — 28,000 of 52,000 — despite being one of the country's smallest prefectures. Plans to ease some of that burden by removing some 9,000 Marines from the island have been hung up for years by governmental bureaucracy.

Japanese government officials quickly reacted to the news of this week's alleged rape.

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Shuji Kira lodged a diplomatic protest and expressed "strong regret" to U.S. Ambassador John Roos, according to a statement. Roos pledged to cooperate with the Japanese investigation.

"The United States Government is extremely concerned by recent allegations of misconduct by two individual United States servicemembers," Roos said in a statement. "We are committed to cooperating fully with the Japanese authorities in their investigation... These allegations, given their seriousness, will continue to command my full personal attention."

Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima was in Tokyo on Wednesday to discuss his opposition to the deployment of the Osprey when he heard about the alleged rape, a Military Base Affairs Division spokesman said. He was scheduled to meet with Kira and Roos to ask them to take measures to prevent such incidents.

There were no reports of protests on the island on Wednesday,

but Okinawan officials said that calls have started trickling in from all over Japan expressing concern at the savage nature of the reported crime.

After Lengthy Wait, Military Issues Surface in Presidential Debate

by Leo Shane III and Joyce Tsai Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — It took three debates and a year of campaigning, but the military finally got its turn in the spotlight Monday night.

Whether voters cared about the issues remains to be seen.

The foreign policy debate between President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney was the final showdown before next month's election, and it came as both men stand deadlocked in national polls.

The previous debates — and most of the presidential campaign — has focused on the national economy and unemployment. The first two debates featured as many mentions of Big Bird and Romney's proposed cuts to public television as they did mentions of the war in Afghanistan.

But leading up to Monday's event, most pundits speculated that the issues of overseas wars and defense spending wouldn't

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Next VFP56 meeting will be held
on Thursday, November 1st at
7:00 PM.
Meeting will be held in the
Commons Room at 550 Union
Street in Arcata.
Veterans and non-veterans are
more than welcome to come and
help us dialogue about what we to-
gether can do to bring about peace
in this complex world.



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sway many votes, in part because of the national focus elsewhere, and in part because the two candidates agree on many military issues.

Even though it was a foreign policy debate, the 11-year-old war in Afghanistan wasn't discussed seriously on Monday until late in the evening. But by the end of the third debate, troops overseas had a clear message that they'll be heading out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014, regardless which candidate wins in November.

Romney said that he believes plans for a full withdrawal over the next two years are on track, thanks to the combat and training efforts of U.S. forces. "We're going to be finished by 2014 ... our troops will come home at that point."

That mirrors Obama's guidelines for withdrawal of American troops from the region -- a rare point of agreement between the two partisan campaigns.

Obama said that with the build-up of Afghan security forces, "we're now in a position where we can transition out, because there's no reason why Americans should die when Afghans are perfectly capable of defending their own country."

Romney has criticized Obama for setting timelines on when troops will leave the country, but agrees with the basic withdrawal plan.

The two men sparred over how effective the president's anti-terrorism strategies have been, with Romney stating bluntly that al-Qaida is no longer "on the run" from American forces. Obama said that the terrorist network "is much weaker than it was when I came into office, and they don't have the same capacities to attack the U.S. homeland and our allies as they did four years ago."

Romney also said he'll have a firmer hand with Pakistan, requiring that any aid provided to the country be conditioned upon certain benchmarks being met. Obama said his administration has done a better job building partnerships not just with officials from Pakistan but across the globe, making the world a safer place.

"Across the board, we are engaging them in building capacity in these countries, and we've stood on the side of democracy," he said.

One of the few surprises from the debate came on the issue of sequestration, \$500 billion in mandated defense spending reductions over the next decade scheduled to start in January.

Both men said they oppose the idea of sequestration, but Obama went further, stating, "The sequester will not happen."

Lawmakers have decried the plan for most of the year but failed to come up with any alternatives to reduce the national debt. The issue

will be the main focus of Congress when they return from break after the elections.

Both the White House and Defense Department have maintained that Congress must find an alternative, but have not been optimistic about the progress.

For his part, Romney paired those looming cuts with an additional \$487 billion in defense spending reductions proposed by Obama. He expressed concern that the Navy's fleet and Air Force's supply of aircraft were shrinking and growing increasing outdated -- and that would only get worse with more budget cuts.

"In my view, the highest responsibility of the president of the United States ... is to maintain the safety of the American people," he said. "I will not cut our military budget by a trillion dollars, which is the combination of the budget cuts the president has, as well as the sequestration cuts. That, in my view, is making our future less certain and less secure."

Obama countered that the ship and aircraft counts have decreased because of innovations in technology, and painted his challenger's statement as a sign of his inexperience.

"You mentioned the Navy, for example, and that we have fewer ships than we did in 1916," Obama said. "We also have fewer horses and bayonets, because the nature of our military has changed. We have these things called aircraft carriers where planes land on them. We have these ships that go underwater, nuclear submarines."

Both candidates acknowledged that the United States' lingering debt problem is weakening the nation's national security, and sought to position themselves as the best choice for fixing the economy.

Obama argued that a smaller, more efficient, post-war military was key not just for the Defense Department but also other domestic programs, including continued care for veterans. The president highlighted the need for more efforts to find jobs for unemployed veterans, and more research into combat-related injuries like brain trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Romney did not mention veterans in any of the three debates, but he has blasted Obama for inefficient spending at the Department of Veterans Affairs and promised to fix the ongoing benefits backlog problems there.



MONTESSORI SCHOOL VISIT TO GOLDEN RULE

Below are a few pictures of the visit on October 23rd, to the Golden Rule by the children at the Montessori School in Manila. The children asked numerous questions about the construction, history and purpose of the Golden Rule and what it's future peace efforts might involve.



Interested bystander



UK Support for US Drones in Pakistan May be War Crime, Court is Told

by Ian Cobain

Lawyers for Pakistani man whose father was killed by drone strike seek to have sharing of UK intelligence declared unlawful. A US Predator drone armed with a missile: lawyers are seeking permission for a full judicial review of the lawfulness of any British assistance for the US drone programme. Photograph: Massoud Hossaini/AFP/Getty Images

The British government's support for US drone operations over Pakistan may involve acts of assisting murder or even war crimes, the high court heard on Tuesday.

In the first serious legal challenge in the English courts to the drones campaign, lawyers for a young Pakistani man whose father was killed by a strike from an unmanned aircraft are seeking to have the sharing of UK locational intelligence declared unlawful.

Noor Khan, 27, is said to live in constant fear of a repeat of the attack in North Waziristan in March last year that killed more than 40 other people, who are said to have gathered to discuss a local mining dispute.

The British government has declined to state whether or not its signals intelligence agency GCHQ passes information in support of the CIA drone operations over Pakistan, although the court heard that media reports suggest that it does.

The case opened as the RAF confirmed that it is to double the number of its own drones flying combat and surveillance operations over Afghanistan. The five additional aircraft will be operated from the UK for the first time, rather than the US. The UK's existing Reaper drones, which are used to target suspected insurgents in Helmand province, have been operated from Creech air force base in Nevada because the RAF has not had the capability to fly them from Britain.

Martin Chamberlain, counsel for Khan, said that a newspaper article in 2010 had reported that GCHQ was using telephone intercepts to provide the US authorities with locational intelligence on leading militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The report suggested that the Cheltenham-based agency was proud of this work, which was said to be "in strict accordance with the law".

On the contrary, Chamberlain said, any GCHQ official who passed locational intelligence to the CIA knowing or believing that it could be used to facilitate a drone strike would be committing a serious criminal offence.

"The participation of a UK intelligence official in US drone strikes, by passing intelligence, may amount to the offence of encouraging or assisting murder," he said. Alternatively, it could amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity, he added.

Chamberlain said that no GCHQ official would be able to mount a defence of combat immunity, but added that there was no wish in this case to convict any individual of a criminal offence. Rather, Khan was seeking a declaration by the civil courts that such intelligence-sharing is unlawful.

Between June 2004 and September this year, according to research by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, drone strikes killed between 2,562 and 3,325 people in Pakistan, of whom between 474 and 881 were civilians, including 176 children.

With the number of drone strikes increasing sharply under the Obama administration, the London case is one of several being brought by legal activists around the world in an attempt to challenge their legality of the programme.

In Pakistan, lawyers and human rights activists are mounting two separate court claims: one is intended to trigger a criminal investigation into the actions of two former CIA officials, while the second is seeking a declaration that the strikes amount to acts of war, in order to pressurise the Pakistani air force into shooting down drones operating in the country's airspace.

During the two-day hearing in London, lawyers for Khan are seeking permission for a full judicial review of the lawfulness of any British assistance for the US drone programme.

Lawyers for William Hague, the foreign secretary, say not only that they will neither confirm nor deny any intelligence-sharing activities in support of drone operations, but that it would be "prejudicial to the national interest" for them even to explain their understanding of the legal basis for any such activities.

For Khan and his lawyers to succeed, they say, the court would need to be satisfied that there is no international armed conflict in Pakistan, with the result that anyone involved in drone strikes was not immune from the criminal law, and that there had been no tacit approval for the strikes from the Pakistan government – another matter that the British government will neither confirm nor deny.

The court would also need to consider, and reject, the US government's own legal position: that drone strikes are acts of self-defence. It would also need to be satisfied that the handing over of

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intelligence amounted to participation in hostilities.

The government also says that Khan's claim would have a "significant impact" on the conduct of the UK's relations with both the US and Pakistan in an "acutely controversial, sensitive and important" area, and also impact on relations between the US and Pakistan.

The case continues.

Vet For Peace Arrested by NYPD Writes to Bloomberg

Organized locally. Recognized nationally. Exposing the true costs of war since 1985.

October 22, 2012,

Mayor Michael Bloomberg

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly

Dear Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Kelly,

A few Sundays ago, on October 7, I was arrested, along with 24 others, mostly U.S. military veterans, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza. At the time of the arrests, we were peacefully and solemnly reading the names of those who had fallen in the Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan wars and laying white carnations in honor of all those killed in these wars. Prior to that, a number of speakers, including an Afghanistan war veteran, two Iraq war veterans and three Viet Nam combat veterans, expressed their sense of betrayal at being lied to and deceived by our government as those wars began and raged on.

Those of us who were there had a peaceful mission that night. We wanted to express our opposition to 11 years of war and waste in Afghanistan, to oppose all U.S. wars of aggression, to honor and remember the fallen and to stand for our right to do this and our First Amendment right of assembly.

The city, as you may know, has imposed a 10 pm curfew at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, this public place of memory. Regarding that curfew, my friend, fellow veteran Paul Appell said, "War veterans, loved ones of the fallen, and certainly those living in war zones do not have the option of closing down their memories at 10 pm. There is a good reason why suicide is an attractive option for many. It is truly the only sure way of ending the memories. For a memorial to shut down at some convenient time for the city is an insult to all those who do not have the luxury of shutting down their war memories at a specific time. I know that many want us war vets to go out of sight and not bother them, except when we are needed for some parade. Some of us are not going away at 10 pm or any other time. If they do not like it, maybe they should have thought of that before they sent us to war."

Mike Hastie, a Viet Nam combat medic, was the first to be arrested as he asked of the NYPD, "Why? Why are you doing this? I was a medic in Viet Nam. I saved lives. Why are you arresting me?" There was no answer from the police, nor could there have been one. I ask you, Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Kelly, the same question. The Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC, and other memorials around the country have no closing time. Why did you arrest military veterans and others who were peacefully remembering the fallen and why is there a closing time at this public place of memory?

I also ask the NYPD, whose supposed duty it is to serve and protect the public, in what way were they doing that? Was there a crime being committed at the Memorial, was anybody's safety imperiled, was property being damaged? As the answer to these questions is in the negative, we have to ask, exactly who were the NYPD serving and protecting that night when they arrested 25 veterans and others peacefully assembling, reading the names of the dead and laying flowers?

Mr. Mayor, you have publicly bragged that "I have my own army in the NYPD." It was my understanding prior to that, although not from experience, that the police are there to insure public safety, to serve and protect the public and that they are paid for with taxes from that same public. Is there an unholy alliance, Mr. Mayor, between a billionaire Mayor of NYC, and the NYPD? Does the NYPD exist to serve and protect the ruling 1%, the Wall Street bankers, the politicians, those who lie and deceive to initiate and perpetrate wars for profit and power?

Mr. Mayor, we ask you to prove this is not so. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial needs to be open 24/7 and we ask that the charges against the 25 arrested on October 7 be dropped immediately.

Tarak Kauff
Veterans For Peace
Board of Directors
845 679-3299





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

Phone 707-826-7124

Email: VFP56@aol.com

WE'RE ON THE WEB:

<http://www.vfp56.org>

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Steve Sottong, Jim Sorter,
John Schaefer, John Mulloy
Ernie Behm**

EDITOR OF FOGHORN

Jim Sorter

STANDING COMMITTEES

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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER FOGHORNS COMBINED

by Jim Sorter

Due to the record year we were having in Mexico this summer with collecting nests of sea turtles, I was not afforded time to publish the October Foghorn. We had 300 more turtle nests this year than any previous year. Consequently the work load was staggering.

Linda and I spent five weeks in Mexico and VFP56 member Chuck DeWitt spent two months working for the preservation of the Olive Ridley, which has made a tremendous recovery from past dismal years of collecting data on this species.

10 years ago we were only recording approximately 150 nests per season. This year we will have recorded and collected over 1300 nests, which amounts to 120,000 or more hatchlings being returned to the ocean. Only one in 600 of the hatchlings will reach maturity and return to the beaches to lay their eggs due to depredation. We have to save many to save a few, but it is worth it!! Peace to all, Jim

Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56
P.O. Box 532
Bayside, CA
95524