



peace & justice news

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E P E A C E & J U S T I C E C E N T E R

HIGHLIGHTS

PAGE 2

■ From the Center

Rachel Siegel shares her ideas and thoughts about her new job.

PAGE 3

■ Reference for Radicals

A volunteer spoke about her interest for being more involved in the community, but struggled with joining groups that seem to have their own language.

PAGE 5

■ Fair Trade Chocolate helps Monkeys

Why two kids care about monkeys, the environment, and shade-grown chocolate.

PAGE 6-7

■ TPP

Trans Pacific Partnership: NAFTA on steroids.

PAGE 8-9

■ FOI and the F 35

Two orders issued by the Secretary of the Air Force beautifully describe how this agency will defend freedom of information.

PAGE 10

■ Calendar

Jan. 19 MLK event with speaker Sharon Robinson, daughter of Jackie Robinson

PAGE 11

■ Honduras

In early November, 2013, Alliance for Global Justice was fully accredited by the Honduran Government to facilitate documentation of human rights abuse and national election observation.

2014 Cost of War Series: Focus on Drones

Many Americans are pacified, believing that drones keep us safe and spare the deaths of American troops on the ground. Currently, Unmanned Aerial Drones are being used as semi-secret weapons of war in countries like Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen with who we are not at war. Over 430 strikes have occurred in these countries (this number does not count strikes in Afghanistan). Between 2500 and 4000 people have been killed by drone strikes. We must enforce the belief that all human life is valuable. We must remind each other that dealing death from the sky does not help us win the hearts and minds of people in other countries. Education is the first step to creating meaningful, long-lasting change. This is why the Peace & Justice Center has chosen a focus on Drones for the 2014 Cost of War Series.

Drones: The Result of a Flawed Policy

By Frank Smecker

A couple years ago I was in a hotel room in Boston, buying myself some time, flipping through television channels before attending a dinner later that evening. I ended up settling on an episode of NOVA, the popular science television series shown on Public Broadcast System (PBS). The episode was titled *Spies That Fly*. During that short span of time I learned the following: In the midst of the US Civil War, an unmanned hot-air balloon was designed to drop explosives.

During the Spanish-American War of 1898, kites were employed to snap “spy photographs.” The Nazis’ V-1 “flying bomb” was capable of carrying a 2,000-lb warhead for 150 miles. Throughout the Cold War era, the US deployed drones equipped with cameras to spy on Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, and China. In the 1980s, Israel used drones to locate their enemies’ weapons, and in the 1990s the US military used drones once again to provide a bird’s-eye view of Iraqi and Bosnian targets.

The point to all this, of course, is that drones are nothing new. In fact, apparently, the concept has been around for quite some time.

Like all things exposed to the passage of time, drone technology has evolved tremendously since its moment of inception. Since the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, what’s been dubbed the ‘Predator’ – a drone equipped with a 450-mile range, and which can reach an above-Himalayan altitude of 65,000 feet [a drone, mind you, that has come a long way from the old hot-air balloon model!] – has been flying around areas purported to be harboring terrorists. By 2002, the US Air Force had more than fifty Predators at their disposal, adding two a month to their fleet.

Today, under Obama’s administration, these drones are being used over countries with which we are not at war, such as Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. In fact, excluding Afghanistan, there’s been

Drones continued on page 4

EDITORS

Wendy Coe
Rachel Siegel

PUBLISHED

4/year
(See form on page 12)

CIRCULATION

1,200

The opinions expressed in the articles, including those by staff, are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the peace & justice center.

60 Lake Street #1C
Burlington, VT 05401
802.863.2345
fax: 802.863.2532
www.pjcvt.org
info@pjcvt.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(alphabetical order)

Linda Ayer
Jake Schumann
David Shiman
Nathan Suter
Andrea Swan
Judy Yarnall

STAFF

Rachel Siegel
Wendy Coe
Krista Panosian
Kyle Silliman-Smith
Carmen Solari

PJC MISSION

Our mission is to create a just and peaceful world. To this end, we work on the interconnected issues of economic and racial justice, peace, and human rights through education, advocacy, training and non-violent activism, and community organizing, since 1979.



From the Center

The Ridiculous, Racial Diversity, Peace, and Getting Involved

People keep asking me how it's going at my new job and I answer sincerely that I am thrilled about it! I feel like it is the perfect match for me. I love what the organization does and what I'm doing within it. Thanks to the amazing staff, the PJC programs are solid and I am awed by the unbelievably long list of last year's accomplishments. We are changing the world!

■ The Ridiculous is Possible

Thinking ahead to the future of the PJC, I truly see us creating a more peaceful and just world. *Peace and justice are possible.* Does that sound implausible? Ridiculous? Well then it is time to act ridiculous because if we don't visualize what we want, our efforts toward it are diminished. If we collectively visualize and work toward a peaceful and just world, *we will make progress.* So join me now, take a deep breath and visualize a peaceful and just world.

■ A Racially Diverse Board

Our main program areas, as many of you know, are human rights, peace, economic justice, and racial justice. None of these issues stand alone – they intersect and overlap greatly. For example, the racial injustice seen in international trade, in the United States' wars against brown people, and in the way economic disparity exists in the US, shows me that we cannot do any of our programs well without a genuine and effective racial justice program. *To that end, the board of directors recently committed to becoming 50% people of color.* This will not only give more authority to our racial justice programs here in our own backyard, but will strengthen all our work.

■ Advancing Peace

PJC is an organization people turn to for trainings, speakers, presentations. I want to be able to say yes to all these requests and build prominence in the community. As PJC continues to build capacity, we will again become an organization that can respond immediately to local and international crises, to mobilize people to action, to harness collective energy toward healing and change. PJC will work to avoid crises by organizing *against the inflated pentagon budget, against military action, and toward peaceful change.*

■ Internal Goals

Other goals I have include standardizing many procedures that are currently done seat-of-the-pants since the staff have been lacking a director for almost three years and have little time to create systems. Our computers and our server are dinosaurs and while that seems a dry task, I am addressing it speedily as we all rely on technology. Lastly, I'm hoping to organize the office so it looks as beautiful and navigable as the store. Have you seen the store lately? It is filled with fabulous, useful and beautiful products, each of which tells a story about the individual person who made it. Shop fair trade and local to support a more peaceful and just world. Come to the PJC store!

■ Stay Involved

If you want to help build a more peaceful, just world starting right here in your own community, please make a donation today. You can also support our work by educating your friends about what we do and encouraging them to be involved. Keep copies of the newsletter around to pass on to people. Spread the word because together we can do what we cannot do alone.

It is time we visualize a world free of war and the costs of war—free of oppression, free of fear. Visualize a peaceful and just world. And then join us at the Peace & Justice Center to create some real change!

Rachel

PS: A monthly donation of as little as \$5 per month makes giving more affordable while supporting peace and justice work year round. ☺

The Story of the Reference for Radicals Project

By Kyle Silliman-Smith, PJC Program Manager

Over the years, I have been a part of many different activist communities and fought for social justice in various ways throughout my professional and personal life. I was raised by an activist woman who took me and my siblings to nonviolent demonstrations, exposed us the day-to-day realities of running a non-profit and involved us in community organizing around various peace and justice issues. It is amazing to look back at my fairly short life and see all the efforts I have participated in first as a young person and then as an adult.

I also recognize that this is not the norm and that these experiences are in part because of privileges that I had and continue to have. I know that it is important to listen to, learn from and give power to people who have a different experience than me and sometimes a different process for how they seek to bring about positive change in the world.

Even with my background, joining a new activist community can be intimidating and I sometimes have difficulty speaking up when I have questions. I imagine that if I struggle to keep up with the terms and shorthand used at organizing meetings, it is likely that many other people have difficulty with too.

In the fall of 2012, the Peace & Justice Center held a meeting with members of the community on what they would like to see the Center work on. Amy Mulligan, a Store volunteer, spoke about her interest and enthusiasm for being more involved in activism in the community, but struggled with joining groups that seem to have their own language. This sparked a lively discussion about what the Center can offer the community to help encourage people from all backgrounds to get involved.

Amy's comment and the discussion that followed was the start of the Refer-

ence for Radicals Project which resulted in the publishing of a 50-page booklet and a 12-piece art exhibit. The booklet defined words, concepts, and ways of making change through the lens of social justice. The artwork was made by local artists to express one idea in the booklet they felt passionate about and were shown during the 2013 South End Art Hop and at Burlington City Arts this fall.

The show's closing event included a dialogue about inclusivity; the interconnected nature of economic and racial justice, peace, and human rights; and the importance of engaging and empowering



all people to build a movement for meaningful and sustainable change to better the world.

I believe that in order to bring about lasting change, organizers, facilitators, leaders, and all those in positions of power from a small scale to large, must actively encourage empowerment of people whose voices are quieted by society and those who may communicate and contribute to a movement in unpredictable ways.

As we work to lift up those around us and be lifted by others I hope that resources like *Reference for Radicals* can provide support along the way. I have had an incredible time working with so many passionate and dedicated community members on this project. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this project a success.

■ From the Artists

Andrea Swan describes this project as “an inspirational combination of art and activism... I find the art work so moving because it bears not only the artist's individual expression, but also the irremovable connotations of the terms that each viewer brings in a sometimes deeply personal and global context.” (Andrea is also a member of the Peace & Justice Center Board of Directors.)

Tasha Kramer-Melnick was “immediately captured by the intent to provide holistic definitions for activist-associated terms, all of which are utilized in an array of settings and with largely varying connotations. Though definitions can be limiting, providing explanations for these terms by employing contemporary inclusive vocabulary allows for increased understanding within and between communities.”

Jerry Geier says, “Our Constitution does not mention corporations and it is obvious it is referencing real people only: flesh and blood human beings. It seems to me that the decision to give corporations so-called ‘personhood’ subverts our constitution... The effect is to give more power to a small group of individuals, very similar to the days when only landowners could vote (limiting the power of non-landowners, African Americans, women etc...)”

■ From DJ Hellerman, BCA Curator

“Reference for Radicals is a community-spirited project that continues the long standing tradition of blending visual arts and activism. Art can be a powerful tool for social change, and this project highlights that. We couldn't be happier to partner with the peace and justice center to recognize their work within the community.”

The booklet is available to download free on the Peace & Justice Center's website and also available in hard copy at the Store for \$5 (proceeds go toward supporting our programming).



Drones, continued from page 1

more than 450 drone strikes in the abovementioned countries; “remote” attacks which have taken between 2,500 and 4,000 civilian lives (more than the 900 lives Hitler’s V-1 “flying bomb” took during World War II). This tally will only continue to grow in proportion to the growth of the US drone program. According to *Live Science*, an online news source reporting on the technology sector, “the US Department of Defense (DoD) wants to develop, over the next 25 years, as part of its Unmanned Systems Integrated Roadmap,” drones that are fully capable of “deciding” for themselves how best to complete a preprogrammed mission.

The problem with drones has even grown beyond their use abroad. According to the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA), within the next couple years, 10 states will be “testing sites” for drones. By the end of the decade, the FAA estimates as many as 30,000 drones will be operating in domestic airspace.

Writing for *Truthout*, Kristina Chew explains that the bulk of these drones will not be Predators or any other government-operated long-range crafts, but rather, they’ll be privately owned aircrafts “with potentially commercial and other uses.” At first glance, “commercial use” may seem pretty benign. But let’s not forget that, apropos commercial-use things like smart phones, internet providers, and social networks have played a facilitating role in today’s unprecedented NSA surveillance programs. As Chew aptly points out, citing a report procured by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) last December: “Giving drones more access to our airspace leads us one step closer to a surveillance society in which our every move is monitored, tracked, recorded and scrutinized by the authorities.”

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has made it clear that the legal and constitutional implications of the use of drones for the lethal targeting of terrorists abroad is a serious concern – and so too is their domestic use. The following is an excerpt of Leahy’s, from last March’s hearing on “The Future of Drones in America: Law

Enforcement and Privacy Considerations”:

The use of unmanned aircraft raises serious concerns about the impact on ... privacy rights of American citizens. The Department of Homeland Security, through Customs and Border Protection, already operates modified ... drones to patrol rural parts of our ... borders.... In addition ... law enforcement agencies have begun to explore using drones to assist with operational surveillance. This raises a number of questions. ... When is it appropriate for law enforcement to use a drone, and for what purposes? Under what circumstances should law enforcement be required to ... obtain a search warrant, and what should be done with the data ... collected? And ... should law enforcement be permitted to equip unmanned aircraft

with non-lethal tools such as tear gas or pepper spray?

Even the policy around the use of drones to lethally target terrorists overseas is radically flawed. The use of drones as such inevitably collapses into a veritable paradox. Consider, for example, the 2009 event in which the Taliban took over the Swat Valley in Pakistan. According to an April 16, 2009 *New York Times* article titled “Taliban Exploit Class Rifts to Gain Ground in Pakistan,” Jane Perlez and Pir Zubair Shah wrote that the Taliban engineered “a class revolt that exploits profound fissures between a small group of wealthy landlords and their landless tenants.” They continued:

In Swat ... the Taliban seized control by pushing out about four dozen landlords who held the most power. To do so, the militants organized peasants into armed gangs that became their shock troops ... The Taliban’s ability to exploit class divisions adds a new dimension to

■ Mary Ellen O’Connell

Mary Ellen O’Connell was a speaker at the CODE PINK Drone Conference in November 2013. Kyle Silliman-Smith and Carmen Solari, PJC staff, went to the conference and were so impressed with Ms. O’Connell’s presentation that we asked her to come speak to Vermonters. So many people have invited her to speak in different places that she can’t go everywhere. As an alternative, she is going to make a film of her talk. We plan to present that in February or March, 2014 throughout Vermont and will have the time and places on our website. If you are interested in hosting an event, please contact Kyle at kyle@pjcvt.org.

Ms. O’Connell is Research Professor of International Dispute Resolution at the Kroc Institute. She is also the Robert and Marion Short Professor of Law at Notre Dame, a position which she has held since 2005. O’Connell teaches a graduate-level course on international dispute resolution, advises Kroc graduate students, collaborates with Kroc faculty on research, and contributes to policy studies and public outreach. As an engaged Catholic intellectual, she deepens Kroc’s expertise in Catholic social ethics and theory of justice. She chaired the Use of Force Committee of the International Law Association from 2005 to 2010 and is currently a vice-president of the American Society of International Law. From 1995-1998, Professor O’Connell was a professional military educator for the Department of Defense in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

■ Drone Summit Videos :

1. Dr. Cornel West Remarks at the International Drone Summit (Nov 16, 2013): <http://c-spanvideo.org/program/GlobeP>
2. Panel Presentation on Global Drone Proliferation (Nov 16, 2013): <http://c-spanvideo.org/program/DronesAr>
3. Panel Presentation on the Legal Challenges to Drone Strikes (Nov 16, 2013): <http://c-spanvideo.org/program/DroneStrike>

the insurgency and is raising alarm about the risks to Pakistan, which remains largely feudal.

Here, one should discern the ideological bias in this article in how the writers purport to show how the Taliban's "ability to exploit class divisions" is a tactic to conceal some "true agenda" that lies elsewhere, taking advantage of the plight of the poor so to propound their "religious fundamentalism." But as Slovenian philosopher and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek points out in his book *First as Tragedy then as Farce*, "This distinction between the 'true' agenda and the instrumental manipulation is an externally imposed one: as if the poor landless farmers themselves do not experience their plight in 'fundamentalist religious' terms!"

Moreover, Žižek proposes that one ask the following critical question: "What prevents liberal democrats in Pakistan as well as in the US from similarly 'taking advantage' of the situation and trying to help the landless farmers?"

The logical conclusion one should draw here is that the feudal forces in Pakistan are nonetheless the "natural ally" of liberal democracy! In other words, Pakistan, a country subjected to the deadly use of US drones, is mired in feudalism, an antiquated and oppressive societal arrangement. The Taliban forces, which are the target of the US drone program, are committed to abolishing this feudal system in Pakistan. The complication here is such that the more the US attempts to quell the Taliban's influence in Pakistan, the longer Pakistanis will have to endure the unlivable conditions of feudal arrangements. And the longer Pakistanis have to endure these unlivable feudal conditions, the more the Taliban will continue to influence the region.

All the more reason to continue the drone program, right? Can one not see the problem in all of this? In other words, it's clear that the US drone program has its basis in flawed policy; policy that clearly exacerbates undemocratic conditions under the guise of democracy. ☹

Fair Trade Chocolate Saves Monkeys

By Rachel Siegel

I had the great pleasure of witnessing a pivotal moment in my children's lives at the National Zoo in Washington DC last February.

We had traveled down for my partner Jules's work and timed it so we could go to a large 350.org tar sand oil protest. I thought the protest would have the biggest impact on our kids, but what has stayed with them came from our afternoon at the zoo.

In the monkey house, Gertie and Ira, who were at the time nine and six years old, were greatly entertained by the golden lion tamarins' antics. As we were getting ready to leave these lively monkeys, we saw an information sign next to their display. It showed the region of South America that is home to the tamarins.

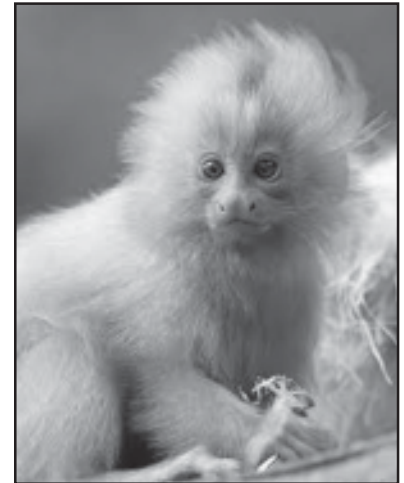
The display also showed the devastation that "sun-drenched" commercial cocoa plantations are causing to the rainforest. There are only 500-1000 golden lion tamarins left in this region. The display said that to protect the habitat and the monkeys, we should purchase only shade-grown chocolate.

My children were shocked. "Buying Hershey's means we're killing the tamarins?!"

They suddenly understood why their father and I are so particular about what we purchase. Our choices actually impact the world.

They have since been on a campaign against commercial chocolate and for fair trade – which they learned is always shade grown. And they understand that *the devastating story of chocolate goes far beyond environmental devastation: child slavery is the norm* for cocoa plantations in West Africa where 70% of the world's cocoa is grown.

A year later they are still educating groups of people – making announcements during school camping trips when making s'mores, offering information sheets and refusing commercial chocolates while trick-or-treating, and selling crafts to raise money for educating others.



Golden Lion Tamarin

They recently brought \$81.75 to donate to the Peace & Justice Center's Cocoa Campaign and are planning to team up with us to go to elementary schools to continue educating people. They hope to lobby local chocolate factories to transition to fair trade chocolate.

I am so excited to have my children really grasp the impact and power of how we use our money. ☹

Local & Fair Trade Chocolate!



Localvores! Vegans! Fair traders! Rejoice! Madeleine Segal's "Udderlessly Divine" vegan chocolate bars are made with organic and fairly-traded Cacao. Chocolate Hollow beans are roasted, winnowed, and refined in small batches right here in Burlington, Vermont. From Schmilck (vegan milk chocolate style) to Hazelnut Crunch, there's sure to be a style to please your sweet tooth or your sweet-heart! Available at the Peace & Justice Store.

**Just in time for
Valentine's Day!**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance with a special tribute to Nelson Mandela

Sunday, January 19, 2014, 3:00pm

1st Unitarian Universalist Society, Burlington
The Greater Burlington Multicultural Center welcomes Sharon Robinson, author and daughter of Jackie Robinson.



Sharon Robinson is the educational consultant for Major League Baseball. She manages *Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life* a baseball-themed national character education curriculum that helps empower students to face obstacles in their lives. The program includes a national essay contest for students in grades 4-9 and throughout MLB's RBI program. Each year, thousands of students write essays about how they use the values demonstrated by Jackie Robinson to overcome their challenges. Essay winners are celebrated in their schools and in Major League ballparks. Since 1997, the program has reached over 22 million students and 2.9 million educators.

Ms. Robinson authored many works of fiction and nonfiction. She has written several widely praised books about her father, baseball legend Jackie Robinson, including *Jackie's Nine: Jackie Robinson's Values to Live By*; *Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America*; *Jackie Robinson: American Hero* (children's biography); and picture books *Testing the Ice*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson and *Jackie's Gift: A True Story of Christmas, Hanukkah*, illustrated by EB Lewis. Sharon's other books include novels: *Safe at Home*, *Slam Dunk!*, and *Under The Same Sun*.

Tickets: The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are required to attend and can be obtained from the Fletcher Free Library, City Market, or here at the Peace & Justice Center. Brought to you by the Greater Burlington Multicultural Resource Center. For more information, call 657-4219.

TPP: A Back Room Deal for the 1%

By *Carmen Solari*

While news outlets are obsessed with reporting on the National Security Administration's tactics, and Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning continue to be the subject of countless news articles, a suspiciously secretive trade agreement, called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), is being negotiated between the US and 11 other countries; Australia, Brunei, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.

So why is this matter not being brought to the public's attention through major news outlets in the same way that the NSA's failures are featured? Perhaps it is because the agreement is heavily vested in corporate interest. Everything



that the public knows about the TPP is due to leaks – the official document is not available to the public and was withheld from members of Congress for five years when it was being negotiated, and now they only have partial access. Here is the kicker: over 600 corporate officials have been given special access to the document. In other words, the representatives we have elected to speak on our behalf are being silenced by 600 corporations whose interest lies not in the welfare of the people, but in the maximization of profit.

Although its creators are referring to the agreement as a free trade agreement, only five of the 29 chapters have to do with trade issues. The remaining 24 articles are concerned with statutes that would protect corporate interests and, in some cases, raise corporations to be

equal to nations in that they could privately avoid domestic laws, acquire land and natural resources without government oversight, claim “intellectual property” like never before, and sue governments for tax payer money. This agreement would affect citizens even more directly too, given the agreement would eliminate the risk and investments of outsourcing labor to low wage countries. The agreement also states that it will waive “Buy America” acquirement policies for all corporations operating in TPP nations. This means not only that even more people will be exploited in dangerous factories overseas, but that more American jobs will be lost.

We know from a chapter that was leaked in 2011 that a large part of the TPP is reminiscent of SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) in that it seeks to redefine rules on intellectual property enforcement. This leaked chapter seeks to extend copyright laws, which would be extremely detrimental to global citizen's freedom of speech, ability to create, diminish our right to privacy, and all in all destroy global internet freedom.

Lastly, the TPP would jack up cost and reduce access to medicines in an effort to please big pharmaceutical companies. We also know from leaked documents that the US Trade Representative is pushing for the TPP to extend pharmaceutical monopoly protections, which would diminish the accessibility of much-needed medicines globally.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a hulking threat to our freedom, health, environment, and autonomy. This article barely scratches the surface in exploring the negative ramifications of the agreement. If you would like to learn more, or get involved in stopping the TPP:

www.citizen.org/TPP
www.codepink4peace.org
www.eff.org/issues/tpp

Together we need to raise our voices against this agreement that is aimed towards restricting our rights and freedom.



Robin's Nest

Fast Track and the TPP: *Time for another battle of Seattle?*

By Robin Lloyd

Remember that extraordinary confrontation in Seattle? When 40,000 protestors, in November of 1999, Occupied the city and brought the World Trade Organization Conference to its knees?

Well, now, another trade battle is brewing. Are we ready?

You've probably heard about it: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), preceded by Fast Track.

Lori Wallach of Public Citizen has a name for the TPP. She calls it "NAFTA on Steroids." And where did the North American Free Trade Agreement get us? Implemented 20 years old by the Clinton administration, a recent report says that NAFTA has led to one million lost US jobs, higher income inequality, a doubling of immigration from Mexico, larger trade deficits with Mexico and Canada, displacement and instability in Mexico, and corporate attacks on environmental laws.

Nevertheless, despite this dismal trade precedent, the Obama administration is putting its big guns behind this new, bigger, BETTER??? Pacific Rim trade agreement.

■ Why should we care?

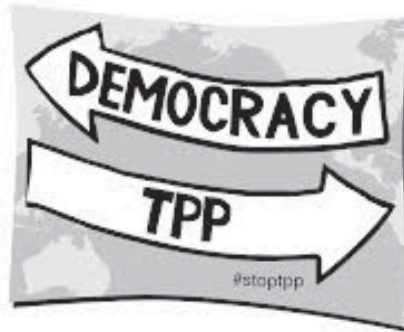
The TPP region is home to 40% of the world's population, produces nearly 60% of global GDP, and includes some of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Including Canada, Mexico, and Japan. Negotiating partners made up 40% of US goods traded in 2012, and the Asia-Pacific economies as a whole made up over 62%. The TPP would be the largest US FTA to date by trade value.

It is, in short, the dream of the 1%. With 600 US corporations as official advisors, this international agreement has been negotiated behind closed doors over the past two years. What would TPP mean for the 99%? Millions more American jobs off-shored, backdoor deregulation for financial firms to wreck the

economy again, floods of unsafe food and products, higher medicine prices, a ban on Buy America policies needed to create green jobs and rebuild our economy, and foreign corporations empowered to attack our environmental and health policies in foreign tribunals.

Obama has invested significant time, effort, and political capital trying to meet a do-or-die, self-imposed 2013 deadline set for the Pacific trade deal – it is, after all, the economic arm of the administration's "pivot" to Asia.


He failed to meet the deadline. 2013 is over. However, the plan is not dead, and the military aspects of the 'pivot' are frightening. High speed military buildups are underway by Japan, the Koreans,




China, Russia, and Indonesia. The biggest buildup of all is by the US: the US military has 400 bases in the Pacific region and according to the International Forum on Globalization, "they're all about controlling the world's last resource bonanza, undersea mining, and land-grabbing schemes to benefit US corporations."

What can we do about this? According to the advocacy groups following this issue, we need to demand rejection of Fast Track. TPP Fast Track procedures allow the White House to submit trade agreements to Congress without giving members of Congress the opportunity to amend the deal. Peter Welch is one of 151

Congresspeople who have signed on to a letter condemning fast track. We should thank him but ask him to be more outspoken on the issue. Bernie has written that "fast track would pave the way for passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership which would force American workers to compete against desperate workers in Vietnam who are paid as little as 28 cents an hour. That would be a disaster. We need to fundamentally re-write our trade policies to make sure that American jobs are no longer our number one export."

Leahy and Sanders were on opposite sides of the issue back in 1998 when Fast Track was last voted on. *Does Leahy continue to support Fast Track? He's not saying. We should all ask him.* 

Comment of Senator Patrick Leahy:

"I've heard from many Vermonters about the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) — especially about the secrecy surrounding the negotiations, and also about the content. I share those concerns about the lack of transparency, and earlier in this process I made that point in a letter to the US Trade Representative. I also believe there has not been adequate congressional involvement in the process, and I am wary about the effects of the TPP on fair labor practices, the quality of imports, human rights standards, intellectual property rights and the environment. I generally support free trade because it benefits Vermont and the country as a whole. As a small state, Vermont increasingly relies on exports to fuel our state's economy. But I want a process that is accessible, particularly to individuals and groups representing organized labor, and I believe that parts of the draft agreement should be made public." 

The PJC acts as an incubator for many activist groups through Allied Membership. Stop the F-35 Coalition is one of those members and their message follows:

Secrets, and how to keep them, while touting “Freedom of Information”

By James Marc Leas

Sometimes defending freedom does not require the use of bombs, rockets, or jet planes. Sometimes defending freedom just requires the Air Force to follow the orders issued by the Secretary of the Air Force and release non-classified publicly-owned information in its possession. Somehow, when it comes to this kind of freedom, the Air Force is missing in action.

Two orders issued by the Secretary of the Air Force beautifully describe how this agency will defend freedom of information. The orders expressly support the public’s right to full information about our government as a key element of a free society. The orders, if implemented, would protect the public from some of the dangers of a secret government.

However, offering beautiful words and supporting an abstract right to information is not enough. What is also needed is actually providing information when requested. This the Air Force is not doing. And it has come up with several nefarious schemes to prevent public access. The dangers of secret government include corruption and undue influence by corporations and by the politicians whose election campaigns those corporations finance.

Our hard earned tax money, our civil liberties, and our democracy are all at risk from a government that keeps its operations secret from the public. Few things serve the public interest more than an open, honest, and transparent government.

One aspect of the danger of secret government – spying on ordinary citizens – was highlighted by the whistle blower, Edward Snowden. Ironically, while the US government has been secretly collecting the private information of American citizens, the Air Force is simultaneously using schemes to block public access to non-classified government-held informa-

tion whose publication could stymie illegal, immoral, or corrupt practices.

One corrupt practice that has been the subject of FOIA requests is the Air Force decision to base F-35A jets in the most heavily populated region of Vermont. As the *Boston Globe* reported last April, Pentagon insiders told a reporter that the process was “fudged.” No independent and impartial investigation was implemented in response to this report. Instead, certain Vermont political figures, including both Senators, the Congressman, the Governor, and the Mayor of Burlington all locked step with each other.

■ The Talk

The two orders related to freedom of information issued by the Secretary of the Air Force beautifully say what ought to be doing. The order entitled, “Freedom of Information Act Program,” dated 21 October 2010 and updated on 24 April 2012, number DOD5400.7-R_AFMAN 33-302 states:

C1.3.1.1. The public has a right to information concerning the activities of its Government. DoD policy is to conduct its activities in an open manner and provide the public with a maximum amount of accurate and timely information concerning its activities, consistent always with the legitimate public and private interests of the American people. A record requested by a member of the public who follows rules established by proper authority in the Department of Defense shall not be withheld in whole or in part unless the record is exempt from mandatory partial or total disclosure under the FOIA. (page 11).

The other order issued by the Secretary of the Air Force gets more specific about what the Air Force will do and what it won’t do. Entitled “Public Affairs Responsibilities and Management,” Air Force Instruction 35-101, dated 18 August

2010, states:

Disinformation, activities to misinform, mislead, cover up, or deny otherwise releasable information, will not be practiced in any PA program (page 7). . . . DoD makes available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and the media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens shall be answered in a timely manner.

In responding to requests, the following guidelines apply:

1.10.1. Information will be fully and readily available, consistent with statutory and regulatory requirements and exemptions. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.

1.10.2. A free flow of general and military information will be made available without censorship or propaganda to the American public and to the men and women of the armed forces and their family members.

1.10.3. Information is not classified or otherwise withheld from disclosure only to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment. (page 9)

■ The Action

In response to several Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests that I submitted, the Air Force implemented four schemes to violate the explicit orders from the Secretary of the Air Force. All of these schemes risk hiding potential corruption. All subordinate citizen rights. All put freedom and democracy at risk.

1. Say no to freedom step 1: “Aggregate:” Aggregate several completely

different and unrelated FOIA requests. Certainly, aggregating related requests makes sense. But aggregating unrelated requests expressly violates the “Freedom of Information Act Program” order issued by the Secretary of the Air Force which states: “Multiple requests involving unrelated matters shall not be aggregated” (page 62). “In no case may Components aggregate multiple requests on unrelated subjects from one requester” (page 80). We shall see in the steps below how aggregating the unrelated requests is a key tactic toward thwarting release of information.

2. Say no to freedom step 2: Oops, now its complex: After aggregating the completely different and unrelated multiple requests, assert that the request is now “complex.” Put the aggregated request in the “complex” track and send a letter to the requester saying the items in the now complex request will be in the queue for many months.

3. Say no to freedom step 3: Impose a giant fee: Wrongly assert that the requester is a commercial entity and assign a huge fee for searching items in this now “complex” request: in this case, a fee of \$741,000 for searching one item. After assigning the \$741,000 fee for searching one member of the now “complex” request, assign an additional huge fee – this one \$855,894 – for searching another member of the “complex” request:

This letter [dated 19 December 2013] is to notify you of an additional search cost estimate in response to FOIA request 2014-00901-F, item 1(d) concerning “communications to and from Lt Col Jim “Juice” Bowen regarding the F-35A strategic basing process for 2012-2013”. The cost estimate for searching for records responsive to this request is

\$855,894 and is based on the number of hours required to search for records. This is our initial estimate for item 1(d) in attached request outline—actual costs may be lower but could also be higher. This is in addition to and separate from the cost estimate in my 16 December 2013 letter which only applied to item 1(b) of attached request outline.

A careful consumer might reasonably question the \$855,894.00 cost estimate for searching for the communications to and from Lt Col Jim “Juice” Bowen. Would not all his electronic communications be found on his own computer, in his email account, or on the portion of the network assigned to him?

4. Say no to freedom step 4: Use aggregating to avoid responding to the simple requests: Omit mention of the simple requests that were aggregated in with others, and don’t respond to the simple requests.

The obstacles presented by the Air Force, including aggregating, huge fees, and non-response to simple requests, each contradict the specific orders issued by the Secretary of the Air Force. In view of the concerted Air Force efforts to violate the clear, specific, and direct orders from the Secretary in order to block release of information, one may wonder whether the Air Force and its friends in high places have something to hide.

The Secretary of the Air Force had it right when he said, “The public has a right to information concerning the activities of its Government.” The public has a right to demand an end to Air Force stonewalling and to demand an immediate release of the requested information. Intense public pressure is needed to pry loose the truth. ☞



Letter

Leahy’s F-35 Spin Machine

On December 3, 2013, following the F-35 decision announcement, the backslapping between Sen. Leahy and his supporters had barely stopped when the spin machine started up.

The first yarn spun was Leahy’s comment that he had spoken with “dozens and dozens and dozens” of F-35 opponents. One of the most shameful aspects of the basing decision process was Leahy’s refusal to meet personally with those who would be impacted, in a dereliction of his responsibilities to Vermonters, despite the US Air Force’s dire predictions of harm to residential neighborhoods. So it comes as a total surprise to me and many others opposed to the basing decision that he has met with “dozens” of us. (Leahy’s office refused a request to confirm names and dates of those meetings.)

The next spin was when Leahy spoke of the proponent’s “grassroots campaign.” But as Kevin Kelley’s reporting revealed, there were huge donations of dollars and great political and business pressure exerted through some of the most powerful private and nonprofit organizations in the state, including the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation. These business interests applied enormous influence to minimize, dismiss and turn the public’s attention away from the environmental damages from the F-35s that have been predicted by the USAF.

Grassroots means “pertaining to the common people, especially as contrasted with the elite.” Surely the pro-F-35 crusade that was bought, paid for, and delivered by the corporate and political interests in our state don’t deserve such a title.

Eileen Andreoli
Winooski VT ☞

Phon-a-thon 2014

The PJC’s Annual Phon-a-thon will take place on February 16 - 18 and March 16 - 18. We’d love to talk with you.....but, we know that finding a convenient time to talk about Peace & Justice Center membership can be difficult for many folks.

We will be calling people who haven’t responded to our Annual Holiday Appeal letter. If you have not renewed your membership and would like to skip our call, please call 863-2345 ext. 1 or clip the membership form on page 12 and send in your renewal today. **We especially invite you to join our growing numbers of monthly donors!** ☞

CALENDAR

January 2014

[15 & 22 & 29] Wednesdays

• 6-7:30pm **Peace is Possible: A 3-session series to inspire hope.** Lively multimedia and interactive sessions with Dr. John Reuwer as he shares his experience with medicine, nonviolent communication and nonviolent action to give hope that we can live more peacefully with ourselves, others, and our enemies. \$20/each, \$50/series. Scholarships available! At the Peace & Justice Center.

[18] Saturday

10am **Veterans for Peace, Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter** meets monthly in Montpelier's Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Usually the third Saturday, but check with President Adrienne Knapp at adriennej@hotmail.com

[19] Sunday

• 3pm **MLK event with speaker Sharon Robinson, daughter of Jackie Robinson.** At the 1st Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington. Free but tickets are required. Tickets available at PJC, Fletcher Library, and City Market. Presented by the Greater Burlington Multicultural Resource Center. 657-4219

[20] Monday

• 7pm **Fed Up VT** meeting at RU12 every Monday. Fed Up VT is a radical grassroots women's rights coalition fighting for economic equality, reproductive rights, and freedom from gender-based violence. fedupvermont@googlegroups.com

[28] Tuesday

• **PJC 35th Anniversary! Members only sale in the Peace & Justice Store. 35% off one day only.**

February 2014

[2] Sunday

• 12-1 **Vets for Peace** live call-in show on Channel 15.

[4] Tuesday

• 6pm: **Peace & Popcorn** at PJC. A casual movie night open to the public. This is a great way for people who are interested in peace, racial justice, the environment, economic justice, international issues, politics, etc. to watch a documentary they normally wouldn't make time for, and to connect with people of similar interests. The best part is, we serve popcorn, and it's free! Good films and good company. All are welcome!

[10] Monday

• 6-8pm **Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel** meeting at PJC.

[13] Thursday

• 5-6:30pm **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

[15] Saturday

• 10am **Veterans for Peace, Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter** meets monthly in Montpelier's Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Usually the third Saturday, but check with President Adrienne Knapp at adriennej@hotmail.com

[16-18] Sunday-Tuesday

• **Peace & Justice Center Phonathon.** We will be calling people who haven't responded to our 2013 Holiday Appeal letter. Send in your donation now to help make our phonathon shorter!

March 2014

[2] Sunday

• 12-1 **Vets for Peace** live call-in show on Channel 15.

[4] Tuesday

• 6pm: **Peace & Popcorn** at PJC. A casual movie night open to the public. This is a great way for people who are interested in peace, racial justice, the environment, economic justice, international issues, politics, etc. to watch a documentary they normally wouldn't make time for, and to connect with people of similar interests. The best part is, we serve popcorn, and it's free! Good films and good company. All are welcome!

[10] Monday

• 6-8pm **Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel** meeting at PJC.

[13] Thursday

• 5-6:30pm **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

[15] Saturday

• 10am **Veterans for Peace, Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter** meets monthly in Montpelier's Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Usually the third Saturday, but check with President Adrienne Knapp at adriennej@hotmail.com

[16-18] Sunday-Tuesday

• **Peace & Justice Center Phonathon.** We will be calling people who haven't responded to our 2013 Holiday Appeal letter. Send in your donation now to help make our phonathon shorter!



Honduras, A Perspective For Change

By Charles Delaney-Megeso

There is a human rights crisis in Honduras that has not been widely reported on in the US. Drug trafficking is rampant and the related violence is dire. US involvement has prolonged and exacerbated the atrocities.

In 2009 a military coup ousted the democratically elected President of Honduras. Like in Egypt, and against our own law, the State Department continues to pour financial aid into the programs our policy maker's desire.

Prior to the coup, a military airport was being commercialized to use with North America through free trade agreements and the Honduran government committed to reigning in the growing DEA program sponsored by our own U.S. tax dollars. Today the U.S. military leases the airbase for up to \$5 million a year and the Honduran military officers assigned to U.S. drug units respond readily to the DEA.

In May 2012, two Honduran citizens, unrelated to drug trafficking were killed by US DEA agents. Through our embassy, the US State Department quashed the investigation and the Honduran government publicly stated that no investigation would be forthcoming. There is no excuse for these deaths and it is horrifying and yet not surprising that they are not being investigating.

The question remaining is how and why we influence foreign policy and US policy to what its impact is on other countries as well as at home.

Beyond a reasonable doubt, the DEA in Honduras has full knowledge of who the drug traffickers are and where they operate. Land titles for agriculture are fabricated and taken from Indigenous People. Agricultural workers are landless serfs working on agri-business plantations. All these people are continually harassed by private security and militia. In 2012, four Honduran Supreme Court Justices were forcibly retired, replaced with others who are reflective of the politics of the Junta involved. No land title cases are being resolved at present.

Last fall, the Alliance for Global Justice, (www.afgj.org); was fully accredited by the Honduran Government to facilitate documentation of human rights abuse and national election observation. AFGJ, which I the chair, worked with the Honduran Solidarity Project, a human rights program. We brought 55 experienced, qualified people to monitor and document the time before, during and after the November 24th, 2013 elections. Five teams were created to cover the different regions of Honduras.

During the period before the election we documented the treatment of farm workers in El Progreso. Recently, the workers, who lived on the farms, started to organize. In response, the owners kicked them off the land. Each day after work they are herded to an area outside town where they are policed by Honduran national police. They live in a rampart constructed and manned by the military and private security.

Rio Blanco is another example of the systemic abuse sustained by Hondurans. A large hydro dam is being built here and four others are being planned throughout the country. For

hundreds of years the indigenous people have lived here. Their leaders have been murdered and the people are being terrorized into leaving their land.

On Election Day, November 24th, 2013, my team covered the Copan Province near Guatemala. We started in the city of Santa Maria which is a little larger than Burlington, VT. Our group covered 15 election precincts and observed procedural problems ranging from unidentified officials to questionable tabulations.

The most dire problem came when we received a phone call at 4pm from three certified election officials in distress. They were in a known drug trafficking no-man's-land. We decided that three of us, an experienced court room reporter, a recent graduate with an International Development Degree, and me, an assistant judge in Vermont, would go to take testimony and support the people. We established a safe place to conduct interviews. Each individual had three separate interviews to document their experiences. The three interviews were almost identical: Masked paramilitary damaged their vehicles, threatened bodily harm, and held other election people at gun point. Then the voting precinct had been rifled through and technological ballots destroyed. They never opened for the election. A Honduran army officer arrived, commanded that their election credentials are returned and that they may leave. They received phone calls by the para-military threatening them not to talk with others about this incident.

This information was compiled into a report that was sent to our Vermont Congressional Delegation. Senator Leahy, former Chair of the Foreign Appropriations Committee has this report and has not issued a response. Today he chairs the senate judiciary, overseeing our federal mandates.

Why is our tax money being spent on these endeavors? The US State Department is entrenched in 20 to 40 years of cold war and antiquated policies which do not serve our needs today. Would not our tax revenue be better spent internally and through humanitarian aid?

What we are doing at home is not what our foreign policy does abroad. Security without reason causes foreign mistrust and retaliation. America is still a great nation and our government policies can change for a better world.

Charles Delaney-Megeso is a member of Nulhegan-Coosek, Vermont State recognized Tribe; Indigenous Representative United Nations Indigenous Permanent Forum; Former State Chair Vermont Commission Native American Affairs (VCNAA); Chair for the Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ); Assistant Judge of Chittenden County Vermont. ☪

60 Lake Street #1C
Burlington, VT 05401-4417

peace & justice center

Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BURLINGTON, VT
PERMIT NO. 145

Donate online at www.pjcvr.org

good things for good causes! | peace & justice store

The Peace & Justice Store
Cordially invites you to Our
Valentine's Day Sale!!
Enjoy 10% off
This Valentine's Day fall in LOVE with FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED
Visit your Vermont source for LOCAL, FAIR TRADE, and GREEN AMERICA products.
Improving Lives, Protecting the Planet, Quality Products. Come share the love with your sweetheart!
Come Shop February 1st thru February 14th to receive 10% off your purchase!

peace & justice center
research • policy • action
Hours:
Mon - Sat: 10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Sunday: Closed

Like us on Facebook!
QR code

GET THE NEWS!

YES! I would like to join the peace and justice community and receive a **free subscription** to *peace & justice news*.

I wish to make a contribution.

- \$35 individual membership
- \$60 family membership
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- \$15 fixed income
- other _____

Make tax-deductible checks payable and mail to:
peace & justice center
60 Lake St #1C, Burlington, VT 05401

Name(s): _____
Address: _____
Town: _____
State/zip: _____
Telephone: _____
E-mail: _____

I want to volunteer; please contact me.

