

The
Myth
Of the
**Innocent
Civilian**

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Foreword

So much in life is a matter of degrees. Responsibility is measured in degrees, using elements such as awareness, sympathy, negligence, support, and involvement. Without an honest appraisal of responsibility there can be no legitimate determination of guilt -- nor of innocence.

Who is *responsible* for the behavior of a group? After all, a group is a mere idea -- an "artificial entity" or "legal fiction", if you will. Unable to *do* anything, how can a group be *responsible* for anything? Yet groups offer advantages and benefits that "nonmembers" cannot achieve, including immunity -- "plausible deniability", arms-length *innocence*.

Religion and politics are uncomfortable topics. What makes people "uncomfortable"? Fear? Of what? The unknown? Embarrassment or rejection? Guilt? Whatever the cause, fear shuts down communication and generates hostility. Fear of the message has often resulted in the death of the messenger.

These brief pages contain only my opinions, some of which are no doubt flawed and some of which will be found to be offensive -- even by friends and family. To include thousands of words of "evidence" would be pointless. After all, "a picture is worth a thousand words," and the images that formed *my* opinions are all around. If even a few readers turn their attention to these images and decide to take responsibility for what they see, then this effort will have been worthwhile.

If you discover that the organization for which you work is directly and significantly involved with illegal or immoral activity, how are you personally affected? Do you have legal or moral obligations?

Certainly, if you *believe* that your work product is contributing to illegal or immoral activity, you might do something like:

1. Confront the people responsible,
2. Inform the authorities of illegal activity,
3. Quit your job,
4. Provide physical, economic or legal aid to the parties injured by your company.

These choices are not easy or painless. One may suffer economically, socially, emotionally and in other ways when taking a stand for legal *or* moral principles. Failure to act, however, can have consequences -- both legal and moral.

Legally, if you *know* that your own work is directly connected with illegal activities of your company, then you could be charged as an "accessory". Moral responsibility, on the other hand, is more complex and personal. It depends upon your belief system, personal convictions and conscience.

At least in the long run, the moral consequences of inaction *could* turn out to be even more serious than any legal consequences. In some belief systems, for example, one is "damned" when "stopped from spiritual progress". It is difficult to imagine anyone arguing that failure to resist evil is a mark of spiritual progress. There *are* those who see "salvation" and behavior as largely unrelated. For others morality appears to be little more than a psychic pacifier, discarded at the first cramp of conscience. Such people will find the myth of the innocent civilian difficult to discard.

What if you become aware that *your* government, supported by *your* tax payments, is involved in unjustified, immoral and possibly even illegal activities? How are *you* affected? Does a citizen have any legal or moral duty with respect to the behavior of the government? What is that duty? Is there a point at which an average citizen might reasonably be considered an "accessory" to the specific crimes of the government?

When it is clear that certain government actions are illegal or immoral, a citizen might:

1. Voice opposition to family, friends or public groups,

2. Demand that elected officials put an end to the offenses,
3. Organize public protest or resistance,
4. Withdraw support; cease all tax payments if possible,
5. Engage in civil disobedience such as attempting to physically obstruct the wrongdoing,
6. Provide physical, economic or legal assistance to those being wronged,
7. Engage in physical violence to stop the wrongdoing.

What happens when the *first* three choices above do not work and the illegal or immoral activity of government continues or even increases? The *last* four choices above are apt to be viewed by government as "crimes against the state" -- including but not limited to "tax evasion", "impeding or obstructing public officers in the performance of their duties", "insurrection", "treason", and even "terrorism". People of conscience reach a grim and profound crossroads in their existence when they are forced to conclude that "the system" is broken, that the government is out of control and that its net effect is immoral and evil. There is an old saying: "It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong." Placing oneself in harm's way, so to speak, is no trivial matter. Any issue or cause certainly must rise to the highest level of moral or spiritual significance in order to justify the sacrificing of one's own life and the pain and disruption that may come into the lives of loved ones.

Openly making oneself an enemy or "criminal" in the eyes of any government has proven to be, at least in mortal terms, a very unhealthy choice in most cases. Apparently, not many people are equipped to live with such danger. Most will continue "working within the system", long after it has become clear the system is hopelessly corrupt. They continue to employ the same tactics over and over with little or no success, each time expecting a different outcome, each time telling themselves they are "making progress"; they are "good citizens". They come up with an endless stream of little lies, rationalizations, excuses... for the government, for their own ignorance and their blind support of that which they *know* they do not understand -- and don't *want* to understand. Finally, "even if it *is* evil, it's certainly not *their* fault." All of this nonsense is done out of fear, isn't it? Can there be any other reason? And what are those fears? Financial loss, personal discomfort, social embarrassment? Possible imprisonment or death? Whatever the reasons for this behavior, the outcome is the same: namely, centuries of atrocities committed against the human family by governments as a direct result of the action or inaction of the citizens of those governments.

Throughout history large numbers of people have continued to profess a belief in some form of "eternal life", holding that the strength of their moral convictions in mortality is an indicator of their eternal destiny. As a measure of moral conviction, refusal to stand in the way of the immoral, evil behavior of one's own government cannot bode well for one's "eternal destiny".

Do citizens have a moral responsibility to pay attention? To be informed? To act? At what point do citizens become accomplices to the illegal or immoral actions of their government?

Do the following sentiments absolve citizens from any responsibility for the actions of their government?

1. "The President says this is in the national interest, and, according to the latest polls, the American people agree."
2. "You can't fight City Hall. There's no point in sticking your neck out."
3. "We have elections. I vote. What the government does after that is out of my control."

Do the moral sanctions so sanctimoniously applied at war crimes trials apply only to the losers? Or do they eventually catch up with tyrants and hypocrites as well?

The Creator gave his children ears to hear, eyes to see and minds to reason. How long can a people fail to recognize that which sounds, looks, and figures to be gross evil? How much smoke would have to be in the atmosphere before people could be considered irresponsible for not finding and putting out the fire?

Whether confiscated or donated, if the fruits of their labors build the economic engine that powers their government, can a people expect to be held completely blameless for the offenses of their government, particularly those trespasses against foreign societies and cultures?

Which people should be held most accountable for the behavior of their government, those ruled by totalitarian regimes or those in democratic societies who claim they can change the policies of their government at the ballot box?

Religions and governments are probably the two largest artificial entities organized by human beings. Why is it that large-scale violence always seems to involve these two entities? It seems that fear is the glue that holds these huge artificial entities in place. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" would largely eliminate violence, fear, religion and government. No wonder Christ was hated by the political Establishment of His day. Would Christ's first instinct be to hunt down Islamic "terrorists" and kill them? Personally I think He might be more likely to suggest they bring Mohammed along and have a friendly chat about staying out of each other's hair. Who is threatened by the idea that Mohammed and Christ might actually be able to work out *their* differences without having their followers blow each other up? Religions and governments, that's who!

Many religions secure their grip on their followers by instilling profound fear. It can be fear of "going to Hell", fear of "annihilation", fear of being "banished from the presence of God", fear of "never seeing your loved ones again", or any number of other frightful fates. People buying into such terrible psychological blackmail are prone to "losing their faith" if they discover the "keepers of the faith" are self-serving liars and cowards. It occurs to me that Christ *never* made peace with the Pharisees.

The credibility of much of the religious Establishment rests upon its most sincere followers remaining blissfully ignorant of the nature of politics, and ignorant of the nature of big business (banking, energy, weapons, etc.). The corrupt and hypocritical among the rank and file in the religious community will never spill the beans, and for the same reason. Their piety is propped up by "plausible deniability", just like the ministers and just like the vast majority of politicians: "I had no idea, had no responsibility to know and no access to the information!" -- all lies, of course.

The Constitution simply states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." "Shall *make no law*"! What does Congress fail to understand about the clear language "make no law"? Yet through tax code regulations the government makes political expression and activism "off-limits" in America's churches. Why? Could this be an attempt to reduce the chance that religious people might discover and contemplate the gigantic disconnect between their spiritual values and the behavior of their government.

Scathing public denunciations of political/religious leaders were arguably the most immediate reason for Christ's crucifixion. The United States *plays God*, deciding who is "evil" -- mostly the enemies of "Big Oil". Not a single mainstream church speaks up or has the courage to risk its tax-exempt status by organizing any resistance to this evil.

What is an "innocent civilian"?

According to Webster's Dictionary a *civilian* is "any person not an active member of the armed forces or of an official force having police power." Cambridge Dictionaries Online says one is *innocent* if "not guilty of a particular crime ..." and goes on to say "An innocent person is someone who is not involved with any military group or war in a particular harmful situation." As a sample of common usage under this definition Cambridge offers the statement, "Thousands of innocent **civilians** were killed in the conflict." Government and media routinely use the expression "innocent civilians" in this manner.

It does make sense, of course, that one "not guilty of a particular crime" would be "innocent"; however, to go on in the same definition and state that "not (being) involved with any military group or war" is another

indicator of "innocence" draws into the definition a subject that really does not seem to belong. If what a military group is doing does not make *the soldiers* guilty of anything, how could a civilian's involvement with or support of his military cause him to lose his *innocent* status? Is it a crime to kill your enemy when "out of uniform", but not when "in uniform"? Along the same lines, is the one pulling the trigger in a war any more responsible for the killing than the one building, selling or buying the rifle? If there are rules that answer these questions, who makes up these rules? And who appointed the rule makers?

Consider the following list of people and see if you can easily and comfortably decide who is involved and who is not:

1. A soldier firing at the enemy,
2. A radioman calling in air support for troops in battle,
3. A fighter pilot shooting rockets at the enemy,
4. A jet mechanic servicing the jet fighter,
5. A truck driver delivering jet fighter fuel to the airbase,
6. A caterer selling sandwiches to the pilots at the airbase,
7. A factory worker producing boots for soldiers in the field,
8. A cement worker building the airfield at the Air Force base,
9. A welder in a factory building planes that will bomb the enemy,
10. A patriotic taxpayer contributing to the government so it can purchase weapons,
11. An apathetic dolt, lacking the foggiest idea who his government is killing, but favoring a military strike to keep gas prices down,
12. The soldier's mother who sends him cookies to cheer him up,
13. The child who asks God to help his daddy kill the enemy.

So, where did you draw the line? Who is "involved"? Who is "innocent"?

Webster's definition of "civilian" clearly relies upon the terms "armed forces" and "official force having police power". Who decides what constitutes an "armed force" or, for that matter, what is "official"? It certainly appears that such decisions are made by self-serving people in positions of power -- people who dictate rules and labels to simultaneously advantage themselves and smear any who may oppose them. King George of England, for example, considered the Colonial Minutemen in the woods and the new "U.S. Army" in the field to be nothing more than British subjects (civilians) *guilty* of insurrection and treason -- well, at least until the Americans administered a final humiliating defeat to his "official armed forces".

During the Viet Nam War America's "official armed forces" found themselves in King George's shoes. American troops faced the awful task of deciding which *children* were tossing grenades and which were just playing stickball. "Involved" meant trying to kill you. Wait until you were sure and you might be dead; kill before you were sure and spend the rest of your life hating yourself. Putting men in that environment with a vague mission and unclear purpose is a prescription for insanity.

This subject matter is understandably most difficult for military veterans, their families and others who have been deeply committed to serving their country. Those who have fought, been wounded or lost friends in battle may find any questions about the legitimacy of their cause to be emotionally intolerable.

Emotions, however understandable, simply do not change reality. What if your government sends you halfway around the world to kill *other people's* friends and family, and it turns out that most or all of the exercise is based upon lies? What if you kill all those people only to find out later that your cause is politically dishonest, legally indefensible and morally wrong? Does your emotional investment in these horrible events change the facts of the matter? Many Viet Nam veterans had their post-war trauma exacerbated by horrible uncertainty or guilt about their participation in the war, as well as extreme anger over what they found out later about the circumstances and conduct of that war. Can it ever be right to take out your grief or anger upon people who may have not been your *real* enemy in the first place? Is "patriotism" truly about supporting the *current government* in your country regardless of how corrupt it

may be? Is it "patriotic" to defend corrupted principles and selfish, dishonest policies? Is patriotism defensible in a morally bankrupt society?

There is a Power in the world today perhaps unimagined even in the days of Rome or Alexander the Great. Though largely unrecognized, the base of this power resides in a smoke and mirrors, debt-based money system that has been foisted upon the entire world, resulting in a consolidation of resource ownership surely unparalleled in recorded history. This, in turn, is facilitated by terrifying military might in the hands of a relatively few rulers -- a military might against which the vast majority of the people of the world stands helpless. Literally billions of people in the world see the very purposes of their lives being thwarted by the takeover of their lands and culture by what *they view* as "The Great Satan" -- a power that *refuses* to leave them alone. How different is this from the sentiments that spawned the American Revolution?

If powerful forces based in one's *own* country are offending and enraging people of other lands, what is one's moral duty? Can one behave morally and *ignore* the situation? Condone it? Actively support it? ... and then fly into a rage against the victims of that violence when, after decades of abuse, they finally have had enough and decide to strike back? What if one's *own experience* has repeatedly demonstrated that the most powerful institutions in one's own nation are utterly self-serving, dishonest and predatory? What is the moral justification for condemning one's neighbors without first rooting out the evil from one's own house and forcing the facts out into the open? Blood may be thicker than water; but it most assuredly is not thicker than Truth.

Courage, valor and heroism have no doubt been displayed on *both* sides of every battle that was ever fought. Was the Viet Cong soldier who risked his life to drag his buddy back into his foxhole any less brave than the American soldier who did the same thing? Should the Viet Cong veteran walking around on one leg today in Viet Nam be viewed as any less the hero than his counterpart here in America?

War is an invention of governments and economic special interests. Throughout recorded history all ruling entities (prophets, emperors, kings, councils, ministers, you name it) have used fear to guarantee the support of the people -- fear of economic or physical violence from other groups of people. Often the danger *is* real -- not because the people themselves have had any particular disagreement, but because self-serving sociopaths have convinced the ignorant masses on one or both sides that ill will or evil intent exists on the other side. Most often the only ill will or evil intent is that of the greedy rulers and business entities that covet ownership or control of the assets of the other side. After a couple of bloody conflicts it is easy for rulers to perpetuate distrust and hatred between societies that were duped into it in the first place, but may hold grudges for centuries after bloody conflicts.

Every war seems to be precipitated by a set of circumstances that almost seem absurd, given the extent of death and suffering that follows. Historians (who get published) appear to marvel at this, too; but most seem to just accept it as if there is no explanation. Who dares to question how such absurdly insignificant circumstances erupt into mass violence and the death of millions? Who dares to note which people or entities have exploited, manipulated or even precipitated these circumstances?

"Follow the money," so the saying goes. Who owned and/or financed the munitions factories that made war possible in the Twentieth Century? What were their personal and political connections? Does anyone seriously think that Hitler rose to power in a vacuum? Who bankrolled his rise to power? What were their *names*? Why are so few writers willing to name them? Why are their names not in the textbooks of our schoolchildren?

Does anyone think a bunch of penniless Russian potato farmers overthrew the Czar in 1917? What are the names of the human beings who authorized foreign economic support for the Bolsheviks? Does no one know? Or are historians afraid to say? What was the agenda of the specific people who saw to it that the Bolsheviks had the resources to topple the Russian government? What organizations did they work for? Are these organizations still around? If they are still around, what is *their* agenda today? Sure, the Czar may have been a monster; but what was the Soviet regime that replaced him? How many Russians died from 1917 to 1945 in the conflicts started and promoted by *governments*? Nearly 100 million? Of which

Stalin alone may have murdered some 30 million? Did outside financial interests prop up the infant Soviet regime? Did those same financial interests pull the plug on the Soviet "experiment" some 80 years later when it had served its purpose and was no longer needed? What multinational bankers and industrialists had intimate dealings with the Soviets and the entire "Red Block" from 1917 into the late 1980's? Why? Is there a reason we shouldn't know? Or shouldn't care?

Where do illiterate Moslem fanatics in a barren country with little indoor plumbing get modern weapons of war sufficient to actually do battle with the Russian Army -- and then a few years later with American and British forces? Who -- specifically -- is providing them with the arms? Where are they coming up with the money to buy these arms? Do you know? Why don't you know? Why shouldn't your government be able to find out and *let you know*, what with the billions it spends on "intelligence"? Why won't your government tell you any of this? Why isn't *this* information readily available in public school textbooks? Why wouldn't this information be of critical interest to a people who profess to value truth and freedom?

Many people have wrestled with these questions and determined that the answers lie in this one fact: the international banking establishment is made up of the same people who own and/or finance the munitions industry, the oil industry and a gigantic percentage of significant international trade. These lovely people and their families have, down through the centuries, become fabulously wealthy while sending the "common folk" off to slaughter each other in an unending series of wars and other conflicts.

Is there *nothing* the giants of international banking and commerce could have done to bring aggressor nations to their financial knees long before their lunatic "leaders" could invade anyone? Instead, it appears that the giants of international banking and commerce were enriching themselves in countries on all sides -- in the massive economic balloon generated by preparations for war, war itself, and the rebuilding necessitated by the destruction of war. No morals here; just "economic opportunity", thank you.

Coming forward 50 years or so, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that virtually all the so-called Third World Countries that the Western powers find it necessary to invade can barely feed themselves, much less have the technology or financial resources to become a military threat to the West. As for biological or chemical weapons, evidence suggests -- and the American government has as much as admitted it -- that these weapons were acquired from the West in the first place back when they were our "allies" and we were pitting them against some country that was our "enemy" at the time. The roles reverse, all sides are armed to the teeth -- and by whom? Predominantly by Western multinational corporate arms dealers and bankers. This is all "legal" and "in the national interest". It "creates jobs". Is it moral? Are there consequences? If there are consequences, who is accountable?

So, I ask you, who is the enemy? The guy shooting at you -- or the folks who set it all up and lied to you to make you believe that the guy shooting at you is "evil" and wants to "destroy your way of life"? The guy shooting at you probably doesn't have anything against you personally at all. He may be just as much a victim of the lying puppets set up in his own government by the same cabal of international power brokers, financiers and industrialists. But the key question is this: do people have a responsibility to know what's really going on before marching off to kill other human beings? Can *war* ever be justified by the phony, self-serving lies of political and economic interests that people could and *should know* are lying? These selfish, evil interests have a track record *centuries long*.

If you or I or anyone else can be perceived as serving these evil interests, how then could it come as a surprise to be *attacked* by the people who see themselves as victims of that which we support? *The people* need to ask themselves: who is running the show? Who has been setting it up? Who is financing it -- with money created out of thin air?

Who can disrespect or devalue the courage and comradeship of soldiers in battle -- or the love of one's country and traditions. These are some of the noblest attributes human beings can exhibit. But it takes a good deal more courage to take a stand for the truth, even while one's family, friends and countrymen are swept away in a mad, dishonest rush to crucify the very principles for which they wave their flag and sing their anthem. What makes "nationalism" so dangerous is the tendency of people to be selfish, lazy and almost eager to swallow propaganda -- especially when it is "foreign" people who are to be brutalized in the

name of the homeland's "national interests". A nation suffering from narcissistic pride will see the entire human race incinerated before it will ever admit to having been wrong in any of its policies. Does the Creator generally interfere with Natural Law, such as, "what goes around comes around"?

For hundreds of years European nations such as England, France, Spain, Portugal and Holland imposed military and economic rule upon "less advanced" nations around the world. European military forces did the conquering; but what truly secured and maintained the conquest -- for hundreds of years or even to this day -- was the imposition of economic systems. These economic systems installed socio-economic "upper classes" through which the foreign rulers could rule the masses of people and assume ownership and control of all resources.

The model seems to have shifted throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries. It became politically incorrect (and thus costly, dangerous and impractical) for larger, "modern" nations to openly conquer and openly rule "colonies" (foreign countries and peoples). For centuries the rich and powerful largely selected, controlled or manipulated the entities *common people* accepted as their "rulers" or "governments". However, in the era of Huxley and Orwell people need to *believe* they are free -- that is, "electing" their own "leaders"; after all, the most productive slave is the one who believes he is free and calling the shots, so to speak. The new model says that the citizen is "served and protected by government" and "working for himself". And the experience of the 20th Century did prove one thing: people are capable of watching the government seize half the fruits of their labor and *not* see this as slavery! Thus, "Socialism" and "Fascism" are trotted off to the dustbin of "failed social experiments" and "Democracy" and "The Free Market Economy" have emerged as "The New World Order".

All the while Multinational Corporate Capitalism has been quietly supplanting the "colonial/imperialistic" functions once openly served by "heads of state". Know anyone living in Eastern Europe? South America? Southeast Asia? Ask them how many of the bureaucratic names and faces changed as their nations converted to the "Free Market Economy". Sure, some new business entities arrived on the scene; some new "corporate representatives"; some bureaucracies renamed. Be that as it may, have the "ruling classes" really changed all that much? Is a decidedly *different* group of people reaping the "profits" in the "new system"? If not, why not?

Students of American history are aware that the Constitution for the United States of America imposes a requirement upon the federal government to guarantee to the states a "republican form of government" -- as opposed to a "democratic" form of government. The processes by which representatives to the government are elected might be viewed as "democratic", but the form of government itself was to be one of laws and was absolutely never intended to be run by "the will of the majority".

Without laws to protect the minority from the majority, liberty would continually be at the whim of those who best control public perception. Thus, "democracy" is and always was a sham form of government touted by those with the power to manipulate public perception and thus the vote and ultimately public policy.

Similarly, "free market economy" is nothing more than the economic equivalent of "Come into my parlor, said the spider to the fly." International banking and multinational corporate interests invade and conquer in subtle ways that are as efficient and effective as any armed forces ever devised by man. In a short few years, effective ownership of an entire country can be transferred permanently and irrevocably out of the hands of its inhabitants and into the hands of foreigners who may freely rape the land, the economy and the people and then dump them on the trash heap of history once they have extracted all the available wealth in resources and human capital. Most importantly, once this type of socio-economic take-over is complete, the only possible way for the natives to restore their culture -- and whatever "ownership" they may have previously enjoyed -- is some type of violence or alliance with some other foreign power that appears to oppose the interests currently in control of their land. Typically violence is not a viable option against an occupying force that is technologically superior and has bought off or seduced whatever "upper classes" may exist in the country.

Economically enslaving a people is bad enough, but Western interests, by their nature cannot be satisfied with this. Profits are far more spectacular if the cultural and religious values of any "newly opened market economy" can be quickly modernized (i.e., replaced) with Western "values". People who view Western culture as "immoral" or "decadent" certainly will not consume Western goods and services at a rate conducive to "maximum profits". So, by both subtle and overt means, any religious or cultural values inconsistent with the Western lifestyle must be discredited and eventually eradicated. Of course, during this process "Multiculturalism" will be the by-word, and Western leaders will fall all over themselves pretending to "value" the music and dance and dress of the "native peoples". However, there will be no mention whatsoever of their moral or spiritual values, the part of their culture that would most likely cause them to reject Western "values" and lifestyle.

It is difficult to know what Westerners are really thinking about these issues. A variety of special interests in the "Western Democracies/Free Market Economies" make a huge fuss over helping the so-called "Third World". Yet their lifestyles, opinion polls and voting habits send an entirely different message: they want their governments to guarantee their economic comfort and safety, period. It is important to them that the government concoct some bag of wind that justifies what "must be done" "in the national interest" so the killing, raping and enslaving of foreign lands and peoples will not offend their delicate, "democratic" sensibilities.

At least in America it would appear that an appallingly small percentage of the people pay any attention to the behavior of their government in the first place. Those who pretend to such knowledge primarily wrangle over whether we should blow up the "bad guys" this month or wait until "our goals and exit strategy are clearly defined." The "bad guys", of course, are usually brown-skinned folks in countries most Americans never visit and may know nothing about -- other than what their own government/media cabal has spoon-fed them. It is the rare American who dares to speak out "in polite company" about the atrocities conducted around the world by American military, intelligence and corporate interests. But then how *does* one speak out without the facts? And how does one acquire the facts necessary for an informed decision when so much information is distorted or suppressed by an image-obsessed, self-serving American Media?

It is in this context that the expression "innocent civilian" becomes very curious, indeed.

Clever rulers and disingenuous politicians throughout history have used catch phrases and slogans to manipulate the minds and hearts of the people over whom they have power and influence. Image-laden words and phrases can be used in honest ways, to be sure, but what if the user is merely parroting the *creator* of the phrase, usually the Media or the government? Has the *user* of the catch phrase taken responsibility for:

- 1) acquiring facts,
- 2) making moral decisions,
- 3) considering the need for action and personal risk.

Simply jump onboard the politically correct catch phrase for the issue at hand. "Well, *everyone knows* the 'terrorists' killed thousands of 'innocent civilians' and are attempting to produce 'weapons of mass destruction' and are part of the 'axis of evil' which is 'threatening American interests' ... blah, blah, blah!" No, everyone does *not* know these things; the very one uttering the sentence, in fact, *does not know!* That is precisely the point. Promoting catch phrases is the stock in trade of those who would manipulate the public mind.

In many countries around the world people struggle just to survive economically. I even know a few people in America who believe *they too* are struggling to survive -- economically and in other ways. I know it may come as a shock to the American "elite", but people in other countries, even the "Third World" (the "other side of the tracks"), have eyes and ears and instincts and opinions and sources of information -- both honest and dishonest. They are *not all* servile morons. Occasionally, they can connect the dots. Sure,

they have a load of propaganda (ours and theirs) to sift through, but increasing numbers of them are beginning to develop an opinion about just who is behind all the chaos. After all, there is only one "Superpower" left standing, right? There is *really* only one nation going around the world inventing reasons to blow up anyone opposing its agenda.

I suspect the eerie similarity between the "British Empire" and the "New World Order" has not escaped all of them. Millions, maybe billions of them have had about enough. They have been known to actually use their new-found "democracy" to vote in regimes decidedly unfriendly to "American interests" -- despite the best efforts of GE, GM, ADM or the CIA. Some have even resorted to violence against "American interests" (the ultimate, ambiguous catch phrase). Anyone with the audacity to use violence against the "interests" of the United States is, of course, immediately labeled a "terrorist"; only the United States is morally justified to fly over other countries and drop computer guided bombs from ten miles up in the dark of night on a people who may or may not have indoor plumbing.

Once "American interests" have a financial stake in a foreign land, they will go to *any* lengths to protect their gains -- no matter how ill-gotten they may be. Enter the power brokers of United States government, corporate lobbies, the "corporate shareholder" -- the actual "interests" of the United States -- and, ultimately, the American military.

For a very long time, at least in Western cultures, there was a sort of gentlemen's agreement amongst leaders of nation-states on the matter of war. Nations put together "armed forces" -- armies, navies, air forces, etc. -- that go out onto the field of battle and fight it out. Theoretically the "winner" gets to impose its will on the "loser" -- kill all who resist, enslave the best physical specimens, drink all the spirits, rape the women, and cart off anything of value to their homeland. Great species, Homo Sapiens!

Something happened in the middle of the 20th Century that radically altered the gentlemen's agreement: the development of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles -- that is to say, the "Cold War". The catch phrase "Cold War", of course, came from the idea that this was not a "shooting war" -- a situation for which we were to be somehow "grateful". Instead, it was a titanic struggle between two military giants who could not afford to make it a "hot war" because the weapons were just a bit too hot and would quite literally melt both sides back to the Stone Age. Nevertheless, each side would devote a third to a half of its domestic product to producing a mammoth military infrastructure, including weapons everyone knew could never be used, all the while bestowing unspeakable riches on the owners and financiers of the "military/industrial complex" (a catch phrase not the least bit devoid of reality). Somewhere in this surreal period of human history, Joseph Heller wrote *Catch-22*. I haven't decided whether he was a prophet or a mere historian; whichever, he was a genius.

Another effect of the "Cold War" was to literally freeze out all countries and cultures that were not either in the "nuclear club" or allied with the eventual "winner" of the Cold War -- the United States. To be sure, the Cold War had its frightening prospects and risky moments; but some people wonder if much of the hoopla was merely a cover for the real battle, the ultimate goal -- socio-economic and political domination of the world by Western Multi-National Corporate Capitalism -- guaranteed, of course, by the American military "protecting American Interests".

Most people see a difference between shareholders of a corporation and citizens of a country. Shareholders invest their money *voluntarily* and, in exchange for a potential return on investment, assume a degree of risk, correct? On the other hand, good citizens "pay their fair share" for services and protections that are *guaranteed*, correct? Corporate shareholders have a responsibility to investigate the products, services and management of any corporation before investing in it, correct? Thus, if the corporation fails and the investor loses his money, he has no one to blame but himself, correct? On the other hand, based upon abundant historical evidence, American citizens have *never* had any reason to question or doubt the integrity and motives of their elected officials and bureaucrats in general, correct?

All good citizens are understandably shocked and appalled on those *rare* occasions when government is found to be spending their hard-earned tax dollars wastefully or dishonestly, correct? Thus, citizens should

certainly never be held responsible for the *tiny* number of occasions on which their government may have trampled someone's rights -- or overthrown a foreign government here or there, correct?

A "nation", a "government" or a "corporation" is nothing more than a "legal fiction" -- a name for nobody. There is no such thing in reality -- only *people* acting and using the nation or government or corporation as the excuse for their behavior. These legal fictions or "artificial entities" are designed by men who wish to act in a grandiose fashion and totally escape personal responsibility for their acts. Hiding behind the façade of an artificial entity, people will do things they would never have the nerve to do on their own. Less "sophisticated" people -- the kind of people typically found in "Third World" countries -- are not so easily deceived by this. They do not see corporations or governments or armies; they see men and women. And they see where they come from ... and what their society is like ... and what they act like when they come and do their "business". They experience some treatment at the hands of *people* -- not artificial entities like corporations, governments or armies. After a while, they have had enough. They are not so deluded as to believe they can attack a "legal fiction", especially one that is believed in by people who drop computer-guided bombs from ten miles in the sky. They see only *people* -- people who have abused them and must be stopped. They will attack the *people* -- one way or another, even if it costs them their mortal lives. They have a stronger belief in their immortal lives; a much more vibrant belief than most of the people who invade their homelands in the name of nobody.

The late Twentieth Century witnessed the undeniable victory of Western Capitalism over Communist Socialism, or so it would appear. One must go back to the old British Empire -- or even the Roman Empire -- to find anything to compare to the political and economic domination of the world by the United States and Western multi-national corporate interests. It is even more remarkable that, aside from a few skirmishes here and there, this domination has come about (thus far) without the use of the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons manufactured, deployed and stockpiled by several nations. Did it, however, come about without the coercive influence of military force? Is there a relationship between Western multi-national corporate capitalism and the American military?

What does the President of the United States mean when he speaks of "our national interests"? When this catch phrase is used, there are rarely *if ever* any specifics offered that would allow a listener to understand what is meant. If people press for details they may be told that the details cannot be revealed in the interest of "national security". (More outright evil may have been hidden from view by *that* abominable catch phrase than any other in American history.) What does that mean? All too often the subject matter and circumstances will support no other conclusion than that the government (or someone whose interests the government is protecting) simply does not want you to know or understand what is really happening.

The Western economic empire has been and continues to be protected -- even guaranteed -- by Western (predominantly American) military muscle -- including massive, clandestine, so-called "Black-Ops" programs that are almost entirely hidden from the American people, but of which the foreign press and people of other countries around the world are only too aware. Americans have been told by their government and Media for decades that the United States is the most generous, benevolent nation in history. Predictably, speaking of American *domination* seems absurd to most Americans. However, one need only pay attention to the foreign press to learn that the rest of the world is either populated by ingrates -- or the typical American has a terrible perception problem.

Economic conquest through the "International Monetary Fund" and the "World Bank" has worked just fine, thank you. The surest way to conquer a country -- and have it *stay* conquered -- is to destroy its monetary system by introducing the same fraudulent, debt-based money created out of thin air and used by the Western Multi-National Corporate bankers. The result, especially in smaller, undeveloped countries is the rapid transfer of property and business ownership into the hands of the Multi-National bankers and those natives who cooperate with them in imposing the IMF/World Bank system on their outsmarted, out-spent and out-gunned countrymen. "Uncooperative" regimes have time and again succumbed to clandestine operations wherein CIA or other "black ops" have destabilized or overthrown governments to ensure "democratic" policies favorable to "U.S. interests" -- all without the application of any apparent military

force. There is no need to cite chapter and verse here, for heaven's sake. These things are readily known to anyone paying even a modicum of attention.

The Communist side of the nuclear monopoly really never had the economic resources to compete. Other than what it could hang on to through brute force and geographic proximity, the Communist block had little with which to appeal to the peoples of the so-called Third World. Here and there an ideologue such as Castro in Cuba or Ho Chi Minh in North Viet Nam would rally a people against the "evils of capitalism". But they may have been missing the big picture entirely -- or even been working another side of the same agenda. Who knows? During most of the Cold War "developing nations" thought "developing" meant lusting after the "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous"; it certainly never meant "Let's Murder Mickey Mouse!" The promoters of Communism were almost unbelievably naïve -- or perhaps co-opted all along, who knows? They never had a prayer. Western carpetbaggers have had the Third World sewed up and signed up for decades. Western influences appear to have had the final say in both Third World politics and finances for most of the Twentieth Century.

Case in point: does anyone seriously think the NATO governments (and banks) "forgave" Japan and Germany and put them "back on their feet" financially out of the goodness of their hearts? To assume such is to postulate that governments and banks have hearts -- or, even more absurd, that they were acting out the Christian kindness in the hearts of the people of the NATO nations. The "money" to rebuild the original "Axis of Evil" came out of the same thin air as that which financed the "World Wars" of the Twentieth Century. More significantly, this "money" was transfused into the defeated nations' economies, leaving them defeated in ways the average citizen would scarcely recognize, much less understand.

Foreign lands may be conquered by different methods and in different stages -- militarily, economically, culturally. Cultural conquest can be the natural result of a people embracing a more appealing set of ideals. This may involve little or no violence, and may be a good or bad thing, of course, depending upon your point of view -- and whether your beliefs and principles are coming into or going out of fashion. Fabian Socialists, for example, are a notably patient bunch who, while not averse to military and economic violence, are quite content to pursue over many generations their quest for a complete cultural conquest of original American ideals. But cultural conquest is far too tedious and time-consuming to satisfy the greedy egomaniacs who think in military or corporate terms.

Economic conquest or control of any country by corporate interests must be enforced or guaranteed at some level by the threat of military violence. One could even make a case that America herself is little more than a nation of tax slaves to a corporate interest known as the "United States of America"; and that, along with massive disinformation, ignorance and apathy, it is, after all, the American military that enforces this sad reality upon its own people. What else could explain a people who fancy themselves as "free", yet allow half of what they do everyday to be taxed away in one form or other?

Compared to economic conquest, actual military conquest is crude, expensive and far more risky for would-be Imperialists. When a military force conquers a foreign land, enslaves its people and suppresses its culture, resentment and hatred percolate for generations. Invaders always face the prospect of being violently overthrown and tossed out.

How do people *really* know what is behind a war? Does anyone believe a government will tell the truth about what is precipitating a war? History does not support such a belief, does it? Does the Media have the courage to tell the truth, or even to dig for the truth when it is politically dangerous? Time and again, years after people have stopped caring what took place or why, "new information" surfaces that completely changes the reality upon which people based their opinions and decisions *when it really mattered*. Does the Media ever express regret that they "got it wrong"? Has the Media *ever* admitted "getting it wrong"?

Major wars -- "world" wars -- cannot happen without the blessing of the only people having the political influence and financial resources to make it happen. These people usually come from long lines of "movers and shakers", sometimes referred to in conspiracy circles as "the Elite". They may or may not be government leaders. They are not typically stupid or reckless people, or they would not be able to hold

onto the wealth and power they possess. These people understand that war itself (win or lose) can be immensely profitable in the short term, even if a bit risky. The chief benefit and goal of war is to crush one's economic competition, expand one's sphere of influence and install oneself as the "lender of last resort" (or only resort) to winners and losers alike -- all of whom will need financing to rebuild after the devastation of military conflict. This is the *real* "Organized Crime Family", the *real* "Mob".

Most war, as we think of it, is *allowed* to unfold to gain an economic advantage. That type of war can be managed within "reasonable" limits. The conduct and outcome of such "wars" can be negotiated in a relatively "civil" manner because the folks behind the scenes, although willing to risk a great deal, are usually not crazy. They carefully calculate the odds at each critical juncture. They have no qualms about "thinning out the population", but serious qualms when it comes to wiping themselves out economically. They "know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em", so to speak. We're not talking about politicians and generals here, but rather those who buy and sell, make and break the politicians and generals.

When violence erupts over principles and defense of a belief system or way of life, "civilized" conduct and negotiated outcomes are far less likely. Some people believe that their Creator gave them a responsibility to resist evil, even if they have virtually no chance militarily, economically -- or even in the marketplace of ideas. One of the greatest dangers to mankind in the 21st Century is the disregard of and, indeed, contempt for such peoples on the part of Western Multinational Corporate Capitalism and the governments whose military establishments "protect its interests".

In their day-to-day lives, in their immediate physical environment, most Americans have no discernable enemies. It is always *possible* that there could be governments and other organizations that pose a genuine physical threat to the American people. However, it is virtually impossible for *the people* to know this for themselves. They *must* depend almost entirely upon information provided by government and the mainstream Media. In all of human behavior, what can be more serious than supporting acts of violence against people in faraway places? Or, for that matter, *at home*! Is there not a profound, *moral* responsibility to be *absolutely sure* of both the accuracy and urgency of the situation before perpetrating acts of death and destruction upon other human beings? How difficult does this become when one is at the mercy of sources of information that *cannot* be verified? What if those sources have lied to you at other times and on other issues, and *you know it*? What if both intuition and available facts tell you that your government has not only been lying to you, but may have been involved in creating the very danger it now says will require the use of violence? Is it morally justifiable to support your government's acts of violence against people *anywhere* when: 1) you are *not* in immediate physical danger, 2) you *feel strongly* that you cannot trust your government and 3) you have no way to *verify* the information the government is providing as its excuse for violence?

Throughout the history of so-called "civilized" societies, rulers, governments and "official" information sources have provided "innocent civilians" with patriotic, heart-swelling, tear-jerking pretexts for hating, and killing and conquering "the enemy". It is appalling how easily government and the Media manage to convince a majority of the people that such and such a country or such and such a people constitute some kind of dire threat to "national security" or "the national interests" and must be attacked. People buy into this, ... or go along with it, ... or ignore it -- even when they themselves can not verify one shred of evidence to confirm the government's claims.

Does ignorance equate to innocence? Should "civilians" be considered "innocent" because of their ignorance of what happened, what's happening, and what's going to happen? There is an interesting little problem with the word "ignorance". Ignorance is a condition; the word is the noun form of the verb "ignore" which Webster's New World Dictionary defines as follows:

"...1. To disregard *deliberately*; pay no attention to; *refuse* to consider ..." [italics added].

Somewhere along the line, "popular" usage decided to stop treating ignorance as a *willful* condition. A society's language evolves based upon its mutually influencing values, attitudes and behaviors, does it not? What are some of the values, attitudes and behaviors in Western society that minimize or eliminate any

sense of responsibility? ... Hedonism? Materialism? Narcissism? Hypocrisy? Certainly all of these. But *moral relativism* has to be Number One: "No one is responsible for their behavior; a perfectly good 'reason' exists for everything people do, and, if there is any 'responsibility', it falls upon society as a whole -- or some dark 'archetype' that only science may one day harness by unraveling the human genome ... blah, blah, blah." Bottom line: "There is no such thing as responsibility," and an *ignorant* civilian is, therefore, an *innocent* civilian.

If ignorance is to be considered willful, then "ignorance of the law is no excuse," indeed. If ignorance is, indeed, an innocent condition, then ignorance of the law is the *ultimate* excuse. If law is too vague, convoluted, voluminous or deceptive to even be *knowable*, then weak people will scurry around pretending to obey it; average people will ignore it; brave people will resist it; great people will attack it.

When government is drumming up support for campaigns of violence, it typically spreads information that will alarm people so they will support the government. Typically people have little choice but to accept the government's word, even when the information makes no sense or is hard to believe. Keep in mind, most people are already somewhat intimidated by *their own* government. In an atmosphere of uncertainty and alleged threats, average people just cave in and, not only condone, but enthusiastically support violence by their government against whomever their government proclaims to be the "bad guys". Only *brave* people will resist the will of a lying, threatening government. *Great* people who resist mad or evil government have a fair chance of being murdered by that government -- if it is not overthrown.

To commit or support actual violence against other people based solely upon vague fears or unproved suspicions that they *could* or *might* be a threat would seem to be the very definition of paranoia. If those fears or suspicions are based upon unverifiable information from sources *known to be suspect*, then involvement in or support of such violence would seem irresponsible and unprincipled at best -- cowardly and faithless, perhaps. How "Christian" is a society that is willing to bomb women and children of another culture on the pretext that their leaders *may* pose a threat, when that very pretext is being supplied by known liars who have provable conflicts of interest? Who is an "innocent civilian" in such a society?

History is replete with "events" that started this war and that war; most are simplistic lies. The real reasons bankers started cranking out the money so Hitler, Mussolini, Tojo, Churchill and Roosevelt could build millions of bombs and planes and tanks and guns will likely never be published by any "respectable" publishing house -- at least not for the next century or so. Meanwhile, the public is simply and plainly brainwashed. They are "fighting for their country" -- without the slightest clue as to why. But they are "innocent", these civilians.

As the Cold War largely froze out the Third World from any hope of competing economically or militarily with the West -- and as Western banking interests were rapidly and rather secretively completing a virtual economic conquest of the rest of the World (including the soon to be former Soviet Union) -- a bizarre, dehumanizing phenomenon was beginning to occur on a regular basis. Beginning with the Viet Nam War, entire populations have been able to relax in the comfort and safety of their own homes and watch their warriors bomb and kill and capture their enemies. Video footage of war is most often supremely sanitized, sparing the viewer such gut-wrenching realities as the smell of burning flesh or the screams of the dying. After all, why should "innocent civilians" have to taste what their military is dishing out to their enemies.

The talking heads on TV have clearly laid out the case against the enemies of the people, have they not? Anyone who pays careful attention to Media news reports can cite chapter and verse about the evil deeds of "the enemy". The Media fill the public consciousness with all manner of palpable government lies about casualty figures, the "dastardly deeds of the enemy and the "humanitarian risks and heroism" of "our forces". No one objects to the lies and the propaganda; to do so is "unpatriotic". In "time of war", you are "either with us or against us". "Axis of Evil"? ... How about "Syntaxis of Evil"?

According to most governments, it is in extremely poor taste to kill "innocent civilians". After all, they are "non-combatants" and not "fair game" -- well, that is, unless *our* military leaders decide it is necessary to

blow up an entire city or other target in which "innocent civilians" are magically transformed into "collateral damage".

Looking for religious references for this subject? Try the Old Testament. As far as I can tell, the God of the Old Testament made no allowances for "innocent civilians". As the story goes, he granted to his "Chosen People" title to certain possessions and lands then inhabited by other groups of people who were "not chosen" -- people with different beliefs and customs not acceptable to the God of the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament was apparently not a big fan of "Multiculturalism". So, through his prophets the God of the Old Testament instructed his Chosen People to invade the lands he gave to them and kill everything in sight -- men, women, children, the elderly, the lame, pregnant women, retarded people, their pets and even livestock. No Geneva Convention with this God -- no "innocent civilians".

Of course, then (Thank Heaven!) along comes the God of the New Testament and commands His followers to love their enemies and "do good to them who spitefully use you" -- in other words, treat *everyone* as an "innocent civilian". Talk about "turning over a new leaf!" At one point He did say something to His disciples about "taking up a sword"; but it's not entirely clear to me what Christ would have had to say about the decisions to firebomb Dresden and nuke Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- murdering several hundred thousand "innocent civilians" -- all theoretically "children of God", created in His image. It's not entirely clear to me what Christ would have to say about any number of things done by Western, "Christian" nations.

America's version of the War with Japan, for example, says that Japan staged a "surprise attack" on the "day that will live in infamy." A substantial body of evidence indicates that this is an American myth -- in fact, an outright lie; that, in fact, Multi-National Corporate Capitalism and American military interventionism put Japan in a position in the Far East where a military confrontation with America was inevitable; that, in fact, many American leaders and political insiders knew perfectly well that they had called Japan's bluff both economically and militarily in the Far East; that, in fact, some kind of military strike by Japan was a certainty; that, in fact, Roosevelt himself had advance knowledge of the strike against Pearl Harbor and suppressed the information, knowing that public outrage over the attack would propel the United States into World War II. If *you* find these assertions offensive and obnoxious, so do I; but if *you* cannot offer any research that disproves them, then I can only rely upon my own research that leaves the foregoing conclusions quite unavoidable.

Sure, there is an abundance of conspiracy theories on almost any topic -- especially those involving power, politics or money. Conspiracy theories, however, are a lot like "official government explanations": the spokesman always has a reason why *you* can't see the evidence. This makes finding the truth a tedious, if not impossible task. However, sifting through the vast array of reports, allegations and theories from individual people as well as organizations around the world, one truth becomes inescapable: government lies and most of the people in positions of power in government are either in denial, are willfully ignorant or are outright evil. How's *that* for a conspiracy theory? Why such an outrageous statement? Because many or most conspiracy theories could be put to rest in a flash if government were willing to tell the truth and be forthcoming with the public. It is not. Time and again it hides behind a wall of arrogant denials, outright lies and even brazen refusal to answer at all. One wonders if government actually relies upon (maybe even concocts and promotes) so-called "conspiracy theories" in order to confuse people, create a sense of befuddlement amidst the public and enhance what pitiful credibility it does have.

The lies go in literally every direction, and are confirmed and protected by virtually all those on whom Western society heaps its praise and honors. After many years and thousands of hours of research, I can only conclude that the "Western Democracies", the pillars of Multi-National Corporate Capitalism, are moral and spiritual dunghills. They are neither praiseworthy nor honorable, being run by hypocrites and murderers -- some of the most self-serving madmen and cowardly terrorists on the planet. There are tens of millions of decent, caring "civilians" in America alone who continue to be brainwashed and befuddled. They love their families, their children, their friends and neighbors. They have no conscious desire to go to war with *anyone*! There are billions of such people around the world, all of whom share the same tragic fate -- to be brainwashed, befuddled, terrorized and manipulated by evil rulers, governments and institutions run by egomaniacs and sociopaths. Yet, can all these kind, decent human beings (these

"civilians") really be innocent and bear no responsibility for the crimes perpetrated against their very selves by the fictions known as "government" that they themselves have allowed, have built and funded, have encouraged and tolerated?

Tens of millions of Americans attend and belong to churches. In order for members to "write off" contributions on their income tax returns, virtually every church in America is licensed under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). Said licensing includes strict regulation and prohibition of certain subjects that churches will avoid if they wish to maintain their licensing. "The Faithful" seem to believe that God has nothing to say about politics -- or, if He does, He is perfectly willing to shut up about it so His *sheep* don't lose their tax deductions. What kind of God are we dealing with here?

Ministers and leaders of these "churches" have a variety of mind-numbing explanations for the befuddling Jekyll and Hyde Judeo-Christian Tradition that has ostensibly "guided" American morals since Colonial days. Ministers may not mow as much hay as politicians during times of war; but they aren't far behind. Ministers will go on and on about how "war is not the answer" and "the heart of man must be changed"; but there are few, if any, ministers who will pass to their congregations *any* information that would place the blame for international strife equally, if not squarely on their own government -- or, perish the thought, on themselves. My country, right or wrong; my church, right or wrong; my paycheck, right or wrong; my tax deduction, right or wrong. "Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight," ... oh, that is, unless *our* economy needs their oil, or their leaders are resisting the "free market economy" (in other words, won't let our banks run their country). Then, of course, these people are no longer "precious in His sight", but "pretty much in our way". Bring home the missionaries and send in the cruise missiles! These poor, ignorant heathens have suddenly transformed themselves into *dangerous* terrorists who must be hunted down and killed to "protect freedom". "Jesus loves the little children"; on the other hand, if our government decides to kill several hundred thousand of them to "teach their leader a lesson", ... well, God has commanded us to "obey those in 'authority' over us", so "Onward Christian Soldiers!" "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition!" Oh, and remember to *not* talk about any of this in church; we don't want to jeopardize our tax deductions!

Some of the early Colonists who brought the "Gospel" of Christ to America, then proceeded to live by the Law of the Jungle, behaving far more like the "Chosen" of the God of the Old Testament than disciples of the God of the New Testament. In addition to reviling and persecuting *each other* over vague doctrinal issues that *reasonable* people could agree to disagree over, they had a rather un-Christ-like habit of getting rid of people who made them uncomfortable by accusing them of being "witches" and burning them at the stake. Some early Americans had the twisted idea that "Liberty" gave them the right to go where other people were already living, murder them, steal their land and then justify their pillage by pronouncing the "innocent civilians" to be "spiritually inferior" "savages". They introduced the American Indian to the Golden Rule of Multi-National Corporate Capitalism: "If you can't compete, you die," and proceeded to treat them about as well as the buffalo -- skinning them and leaving their carcasses to rot on the plains. American pioneers had "innocent civilian" casualties; *not so* the American Indians. Their women, children, elderly, lame, blind, retarded, infants, you name it, all "deserved to die" because they wanted to be free, wanted to be left alone, and were unwilling to play ball with "Western Multi-National Corporate Capitalism" -- or the New World Order which then went under the name "Colonialism". Ministers' explanations notwithstanding, I'll need to hear what Christ thinks about all this out of his own mouth, before I can even begin to reconcile it with His spiritual teachings. Christ taught, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." I don't recall any caveats like "unless your neighbor gets in the way of economic expansion."

The closer to home the more the expression "innocent civilian" drips with emotionally charged images and irresistible presumptions. It is more than a euphemism. It is, at times, an outright lie -- the ultimate palliative for fear and superstition, an excuse for hatred and violence. *Our* civilians are "innocent"; *theirs* are "collateral damage".

"We" can bomb the infrastructure of a Third World "enemy" into the dark ages, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of *children*, and *never* see the expression "innocent civilians" in our government's press releases. The Secretary of State of the United States of America can go on national TV and, when

confronted with statistics of the deaths of tens of thousands of children as a direct result of the American bombing and embargo of Iraq, make the shocking statement, "It was worth it!" Not only is there no meaningful outcry from the American people over this despicable situation, if one believes the polls, Americans can hardly wait for us to go over there and bomb them some more -- because ... "Duh! Dubya says Iraq supports terrorism!"

"Our" corporations can conspire with ruthless dictators to steal the resources and perpetuate the poverty of people we will never see face to face; yet the "soldiers" of the Multi-National Corporate Capitalists, the corporate "employees", retain the untouchable status of "innocent civilian". Language is both shield and sword. It can be used to hide behind; and it can be used to paint one's victims in whatever light justifies their slaughter.

Human beings have a tendency to group together in various artificial constructs, including families, churches, towns, corporations, nations, etc. Artificial entities develop their own "interests". Historically, in any association of people, one or a few will be decidedly smarter, stronger and more aggressive. By one means or other such folks always wind up running the show. The masses tolerate being ruled in varying degrees and styles. Some are quite content to be subservient "subjects", as long as their existence is not too miserable. In fact, a vast number of human beings have passed their existence in this life quite content to toil and even die for a ruler accepted as superior, benevolent and even Divine.

Other people apparently need to believe they are "free" and can choose or replace their leaders, thus compelling the "strong and aggressive" amongst them to subordinate their selfish interests to the interests of those who have "chosen" or "elected" them to lead. While that may actually work in small settings where people really know each other and can keep track of who's doing what, there is abundant evidence that so-called "democracy" on any larger scale is little more than a fraud perpetrated by con men and tolerated by fools.

Even the Republic, wherein public servants are bound by oath to stay within the bounds of the written law, finds its agenda taken over by the strong and aggressive when its mechanisms become unwieldy and its people inattentive.

Perhaps without exception in human history, power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely -- or so the saying goes. Over time the folks who run things big and small (a multi-national corporation or a small business; an empire or a village) have a tendency to get increasingly greedy, conniving and ruthless. Leaders have a tendency to use the labors of the rest of the group -- with or without its knowledge -- to pursue ends that many of the people might find reprehensible, if they knew the details.

Who is responsible when an association of people engages in behavior that is viewed as wrong, unwanted or harmful by another association of people? Corporations battle it out in court. Nation-states have wars. What can a *culture* be expected to do when it determines that it is being economically, politically, socially, morally and spiritually subjugated, even annihilated? What if that culture reaches the terrifying conclusion that at least a billion people are shoveling coal into the engine of a military/industrial machine that has bought off their leaders as well as the upper classes of their societies, and is steamrolling their culture into oblivion? What if they see themselves as having zero chance of competing, compromising or even communicating with this machine? What if that culture concludes that the people fueling the machine are, for the most part, self-absorbed ignoramuses whose past includes the slaughter of the American Indian culture and more recently the only recorded use of weapons of mass destruction against a foreign people. What if that culture concludes that attempts to awaken the people of this society to the corruption of its leadership have proven utterly futile? How desperate do you suppose *you* would be if you saw your culture's chances of survival as slim to none? Would you be inclined to view the citizens fueling the military/industrial machine destroying your culture as "innocent civilians"? They won't listen; they ridicule you when you try to reason with them. They only want to have their government shut you up -- or bomb you into the Dark Ages, so they can have a clear conscience and cheap gasoline with which to make their next trip to Disneyland. "Innocent civilians", indeed!

There are, perhaps, several million Americans of conscience who do not see Islam as the only culture described above.

"Innocent" has a wonderful ring to it, evoking images of young children frolicking at play, pretending to kill each other, but guilty of nothing because they cannot possibly understand the significance of what they are acting out.

One hears the expression "a guilt-ridden society". Is America a guilt-ridden society? Perhaps. Generations of young people have rebelled against alleged "guilt-trips" and have tossed out their parents' values. Generations of parents have felt guilty for doing such a lousy job of passing their values on to their children. From their point of view, some critics see guilt as the dirty little secret of organized religion. Organized religion, of course, sees lack of guilt as the damning flaw of liberal, New Age philosophy. Liberals accuse Conservatives of peddling guilt based on bigoted, narrow-minded religious notions; while Conservatives accuse Liberals of peddling guilt based upon a naïve, phony socialist agenda. This battle is nothing more than an impotent, academic exercise in name-calling -- two spoiled brats yanking on opposite ends of a toy until it is torn apart and useless to anyone. In the real world where government drops bombs and makes deals with murderers, both Liberals and Conservatives take no responsibility for the behavior of their government. Both eagerly embrace the same "innocent civilian" status.

While the definition of "guilt" may be left to philosophers to debate, one thing appears certain: people do not *want* to feel guilty. In the Judeo-Christian tradition people may have graduated from being "guilt-ridden" to being "guilt averse" -- just like when one is exposed to too much of something and becomes *allergic* to it. This may explain the appeal and power of the word "innocent". One who is "guilt-averse" will understandably crave feeling "innocent". When such people are told they are innocent, they will zealously embrace the notion without ever even asking, "Innocent of what?" "Innocent civilians" are innocent of ...? Does it really matter, as long as they are "innocent"?

Guilt has a great deal to do with opinions: in matters of conscience, one's own opinion; in matters of emotion, the opinion of loved ones; in matters of law, the opinion of the court. When it comes to "absolute" right and wrong, the Creator's opinion would appear to be the only one that counts, and most of us will just have to wait until we're dead to be "absolutely" sure about that.

Karl Marx apparently believed religion to be the opiate of the people. To a guilt-averse people, *feeling justified* may be the most powerful opiate. This may explain government propaganda, especially in "times of war". Anything as amorphous and hysterical as a "War on Terror" needs lots of "innocent civilians". But more than that, it needs *ignorant* civilians.

Virtually any time there is violence anywhere in the world, government and Media trot out the expression "innocent civilians" to describe the folks they want to cozy up to -- the folks they want to "sell protection" to. In a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle ways, government and Media are constantly reminding people that they are *threatened, vulnerable and innocent* -- and that government is their only hope for peace and safety. Convinced that they are threatened and vulnerable, most people will readily accept an offer of protection from any powerful entity in their lives -- especially one that is reassuring them of their *innocence*. Set up in this way, "citizens" will be inclined to condone and support actions by their government that they themselves would have neither the audacity nor the stomach to carry out.

Wars and other acts of organized violence by governments can only occur because people lend their support to these governments. A "government" is a legal fiction; it is only an idea, a plan, a purpose. People fill every position in every government on earth. People fill every rank in every branch of the military of every nation. "Civilians" supply the goods and services without which no government or military could exist or function at all. For centuries kings, emperors and dictators, as well as elected leaders have built armies from treasuries filled by the taxes paid over by people. Whether paid willingly, begrudgingly, ignorantly or fearfully, taxes are paid over by people who have chosen to do so.

Coerced or not, every human being has a *choice* whether to participate in or support the actions of their government and its military. People may recognize government propaganda for what it is and dismiss it out of hand. However, at a minimum they surely know that their government is using military weaponry against people half way around the world for reasons that are unclear, inconsistent -- and don't pass the smell test. Is it unreasonable to expect "taxpayers" to notice that today's "enemy" is none other than our ally from a few years ago -- the folks we sold all the arms to, so they could do battle with the "enemy" who is today our "ally"? Do the people *funding* the madness have *zero* responsibility for it?

Few people are ever involved in the actual creation of their government. The vast majority are born into a society that already has an existing form of government. Whatever system they grow up in becomes accepted as the status quo. It may be liked or disliked, but the vast majority of people just accept what they inherit in the way of government. Does that absolve them of responsibility for the actions of their government? Do people have a responsibility to dig out the truth about what their government is doing with the vast wealth it confiscates from the people? Or is it morally defensible for people to have a "my country, right or wrong" attitude, and assume that whatever the government does with the money is all right, as long as the nation's economy is good?

The same can be said about any artificial entity whether it be a government, an army, a corporation, an association, a fraternity or even a church. Can it be *morally* acceptable to ignore the behavior and effects of any entity supported by the fruits of one's labor?

The idea that only combatants are fair game in a war is just a lot of silly poppycock promulgated by people who benefit from the existing "rules of war". If an artificial entity is sending combatants to enslave you or destroy your way of life, then everyone who works for or supports that artificial entity in any way is fair game. How can it be any other way?

Throughout recorded history, and for largely dishonest and selfish reasons, ruling classes (elected or not) have sent young people off to kill and be killed. People have always had the *choice* to refuse to kill each other -- especially for the trumped up, dishonest reasons offered by their "leaders". People have the choice to demand answers, but, tragically, in most cases they just swallow their leaders lies and march off to kill each other. Even more tragically, government "leaders" not only lie about the circumstances of war, but it is all too often their own selfish, evil agenda that has precipitated the war in the first place.

Does ignorance equate to innocence? What responsibility do people have to verify what their government is telling them? What if the government has lied to the people and convinced them to support and/or participate in a campaign of violence against people in a foreign country? Does *no guilt* attach to the citizen or soldier when the need for that violence has been misrepresented or even fabricated? Are citizens completely unaccountable for the unnecessary and unjustified killing of human beings, just because they were "doing their patriotic duty"?

Who are the "innocent civilians"? Were the tens of thousands of German civilians murdered in the despicable carpet bombing of Dresden "innocent"? *Relatively*, perhaps, but only when compared to the monsters who incinerated them. Their Creator may inquire as to what they could or should have done to stop the madman running the German government. Were the elderly, women and children turned to ashes at Hiroshima "innocent"? *Perhaps*. But again, only when compared to the monsters who turned them into the ultimate "cannon fodder" in order to show the Russians that *we had the bomb!* The Creator *may* ask some of these poor, charred innocents *why they allowed* their Emperor to bully neighboring countries, to murder and to steal, and ultimately embroil the Japanese people in a hopeless, bloody contest with Western Multi-National Corporate Capitalism.

For many decades huge multinational corporate interests have been literally taking over small countries through bribes and political intrigue. It is not uncommon for these multinational corporations to buy up or acquire control over literally everything of value in a small country. Part of the process involves buying off the relatively small "upper class", and solidifying its control, thus leaving the "have-nots" or lower classes in a somewhat hopeless condition of economic servitude. This is all legal, and is most often accomplished

without the use of any overt military action or "war". Yet it is obvious that the people in such countries could easily view these foreign corporations as an invading, mortal enemy. How would *you* view a foreign corporation that came into your homeland, allied itself with an existing, corrupt ruling class, monopolized virtually your entire economy, and, to top it off, promoted the decay of your culture, values and religion. I believe there will be millions of patriotic Americans whose first mental images here will *not* be of Arab countries or *South America*.

If you are, say, a native Nicaraguan and cannot find a job or feed your family because you have been blacklisted by your totalitarian government and its buddies at whatever Western Multi-National Corporation is handing out the bribes that week, would you be inclined to view the accountants and other staff members back at the home office, say in New York, as "innocent civilians"? Remember, there is no way to attack an artificial entity. There is, in fact, no such thing as a corporation, much less a "multinational corporation". The only *tangible* thing to attack is buildings; and the buildings are filled with "innocent civilians". But buildings don't *do anything*. Buildings don't hand out bribes. Buildings don't buy up your country's resources and put your small independent business "out of business". Buildings don't tell you that the land your ancestors have owned and farmed for generations is no longer yours and that you must work at slave wages for them because they are the "legal owners". Buildings don't seduce your young people with behaviors and fashions that are destructive to your values and your culture.

People work in the buildings of these gigantic corporations -- *foreign* people ... people eager to receive the lavish salaries and benefits doled out by the corporation, but not the least bit interested in how the corporation can afford to pay them such "wonderful wages", or what the corporation might be doing to people thousands of miles away in order to be so "successful". Are the janitors and bookkeepers and secretaries and pilots and managers of these artificial entities "innocent civilians"?

Are the people in a small country who tolerate corrupt government "innocent civilians"? Have they any responsibility for allowing corrupt government leaders to be bribed and controlled by multinational corporate interests? Have these people no responsibility at all for their own plight? On which side of the "innocent/guilty" scales should we put such attributes as laziness, ignorance, apathy, cowardice or lack of principle? Who is ready to play God? Which God? The one of the Old Testament? Or the one of the New Testament?

Questioning the motives and honesty of the government is not well received by many Americans who consider themselves patriotic. Those who have spent years of their lives in service to their country -- members of the armed forces, retired veterans, and especially anyone who has been wounded or lost friends or relatives in war -- are understandably put off or even outraged by these kinds of questions. Yet these are the very people who *should* be the most interested and willing to do whatever it takes to find answers. While understandable, it is tragic when these people react with closed minds and a "Kill the messenger" mind set. "My country, right or wrong" was never a funny cliché; it was and is the height of moral cowardice.

There are a number of Americans who know a good deal about corrupt behavior by the United States government at home and abroad over a span of many decades. They can cite chapter and verse about the atrocities perpetrated against the people of foreign countries (as well as against Americans themselves) by the "New World Order" crowd, the World Bank, the IMF and Western Multi-National Corporate Capitalism. Yet some of these people are the first to advocate violence against foreign people whose only offense may be that some "terrorists" have been hiding out in their country. This is perplexing behavior on the part of people who should understand the motives of foreign "terrorists" far better than average Americans who know absolutely nothing except what is spoon-fed them by the talking heads on Establishment owned and controlled Media.

How can the symbolism of the attacks of September 11, 2001 be so lost on people? What was attacked? *Buildings*. The World Trade Center and the Pentagon -- the ultimate symbols of multinational corporate capitalism and its enforcer, the American military. The U.S. government loudly and immediately asserted that these horrific attacks occurred because the terrorists hate the American *people* and their freedom. But,

I ask you, if the terrorists simply hate Americans and their freedom, then why not wait until January 1 and crash the four hijacked planes into as many football stadiums? Such a strategy might have killed 100 times as many of the "hated" Americans. But this is not what happened at all. Instead, the targets seem to have been selected for their symbolic value -- with the "death-toll" being an almost incidental consideration.

When human beings lose loved ones, especially due to violence, there is no way to minimize the tragic loss and emotional suffering. Tens of thousands of Americans suffered deep emotional losses and scars as a result of the traumatic events of September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington, D.C. Many of these people are so filled with hatred for the perpetrators of these horrific acts, that their minds are understandably, but *dangerously* closed on the subject. There is no time for anything but vengeance and no patience for anyone who has doubts. They are looking for someone to lynch, and the "bad guys" are in their sights. The government "didn't see them coming", but somehow managed to finger them all within hours of the tragedy -- names, addresses, pictures, life histories, connections to the "Axis of Evil", the whole ball of wax, ready-made for a lynch-mob! Inconsistencies and questions surrounding the events of 9/11 and the so-called "War on Terror" are abundant ... and troubling. Never mind. Americans are far too busy waving the flag to ask serious, intelligent questions. Too many labels have been pulled over their eyes.

It is said that there is "nothing like the fury of a woman scorned". I beg to differ. There is nothing like the self-righteous wrath of "innocent victims" -- especially when canonized and "justified" by their government, their Media and tens of millions of their countrymen. They are "innocent", and somehow their suffering takes that innocence to extraordinary levels of sanctity that "justify" the most unsanctified attitudes and behaviors imaginable. They have been told whom to hate. The "bad guys" are (as usual) *"over there"*. And "we" are going to show "them". We are going to "hunt them down" and kill them... and the horse they rode in on... and anyone who may have fed them a hot meal along the way, just for good measure. "Innocent civilians", of course, will not notice (or likely care) that "them" will change from week to week. "Them" is whomever the U.S. government fingers as "terrorist of the week": this week Afghanistan; next week Iraq; then Iran; then North Korea; then, who knows? Montana?

Tragically, the American people may deserve to be hated -- not for their freedom, but for breeding, feeding and turning loose the biggest, meanest dog on the block. Americans originally acquired this big dog (the Federal government and its military) in order to protect themselves and their property from potential intruders. However, over the last 200 years this dog has grown into a monster that has laid claim to virtually the entire yard and half the neighborhood. Americans appear to simultaneously love and fear their "pet protector". Average Americans spend more time working to support it than working to support themselves. They seem to have no will to chain up this dog, even when neighbors complain bitterly about the dog's trespassing, damaging their property and upsetting their personal affairs.

What are the neighbors to do? They can see that this big mean dog has turned its masters into its slaves and is eating its owner out of house and home. They have watched this big mean dog stage phony fights with other neighborhood dogs, just to drum up support for better food, higher fences at home and more permission to prowl in the dark. The neighbors ask each other, "How can the owners of this big mean dog be so rude as to let it roam around our neighborhood, making a mess of our property? After all, most of them claim to believe in a God that teaches 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'" Peace-loving neighbors want to feel sorry for the poor owners of this big mean dog; but, after all, the owners brought the dog into the neighborhood. *They* feed it and then turn it loose to roam the neighborhood. They even make deals with some of the landlords, making it "legal" for this big mean dog to stay in certain neighbors' yards even when the people do not want it there -- even when its behavior is offensive and destructive of their customs. Some of the neighbors have strong religious objections to dog crap in their yards. Is this so difficult to understand? What is left for these people to do but launch some kind of attack to get the attention of those who are housing and feeding this big mean dog?

When thinking of the dog's owners and handlers, words that come to mind are "irresponsible", "selfish", and "bullies". Thinking of the neighbors, the only word that comes to mind is "justified".

If you are *feeding* the dog, please don't fall for the myth that you are innocent. Speaking of feeding the dog, when was the last time you stopped to figure out how much of *your paycheck* winds up in the dog's food bowl each week? Let's see: income tax, Social Security tax, property tax, sales tax, excise taxes, state and local taxes, licenses, fees. Are you walking the dog, or is the dog walking you? Is this dog protecting you? Or does he *own* you?

How many Americans have any idea what their big mean dog has been up to in the neighborhood while they have been asleep? How many Americans understand or even care about the anger felt by many of their neighbors?

Certainly the "upper classes" of many Third World nations have eagerly embraced "Western values". But at what price?

Apparently there are still quite a few people in this world who would rather die than become corporate serfs policed by the Western military and forced to watch their cultural heritage sink into the cesspool of Western "values". Contrary to the ignorant, arrogant beliefs of many Americans, there are plenty of "have-nots" in this world who have *no interest* in what Americans "have". Until Western governments, banks and corporations stop trying to cram it down their throats, those who "have not" the capabilities to wage war on our terms, will wage it on their own terms -- which probably includes blowing up "innocent civilians".

Shall we then blow up *their* "innocent civilians"? Blow up *suspected* terrorists? Terrorist "sympathizers"? "Potential" terrorists? The "self-employed"?

Lest we turn the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave into a paranoid Nazi nuthouse, what we must blow up is this *myth of the innocent civilian*.

~ End ~

**For comments and discussion see:
www.mythoftheinnocentcivilian.com**

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