

War Crimes of UK-US State Terrorism

Contributed by Gideon Polya
Saturday, 17 December 2005

Nobel Laureate Pinter Condemns War Crimes of UK-US State Terrorism

The 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature was recently awarded to the great British playwright Harold Pinter. His best-known plays include *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*, *Old Times*, *No Man's Land* and *Betrayal*. Harold Pinter did not attend the official award ceremony due to poor health but provided his Nobel Prize acceptance speech by videotape for the ceremony held on 8 December 2005.

Political Views, Background: See Pinter Lecture Video

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In his address, Harold Pinter lambasted US President George Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, accusing them of war crimes in Iraq. After detailing the horrendous cost of decades of violent US interventions in Central and South America, Harold Pinter described the invasion of Iraq as "an act of blatant state terrorism" and called for the arraignment of Bush and Blair before the International Criminal Court, declaring: "How many people do you have to kill before you qualify as a mass murderer and a war criminal? One hundred thousand? More than enough, I would have thought" (for Harold Pinter's acceptance speech entitled "Art, Truth and Politics", see: here).

Other prominent writers have come to the same conclusion. Thus the recent World Tribunal on Iraq (spokesperson the brilliant humanitarian writer Arundhati Roy) also charged the UK-US-led Coalition with war crimes over Iraq (see: here). Indeed in October 2004, having already written to the 2 dozen top Law Officers of Australia, I personally wrote to the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requesting that the Australian Government and its Coalition allies be charged with war crimes over the illegal invasion of Iraq and the horrendous post-invasion mass mortality (see: here).

While being committed to peace, science and humanity, I am very nervous about the current civil liberties and free speech environment in Australia (a view shared with lawyers, judges and legal organizations across Australia). Indeed submission #84 from an academic linguist about proposed draconian "Sedition Laws" to a recent Australian Senate Committee Inquiry (see: here) quoted my recent Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio National nation-wide broadcast (see: here) in citing me (together with Professors Noam Chomsky and Walden Bello and mainstream humanist and anti-war cartoonist Michael Leunig of "The Age" newspaper) as violating the proposed laws. I appreciate inclusion in such great company but have a very real sense of threat because these free speech-constraining laws have now been essentially passed by the Australian Federal Parliament. However the LATEST appalling UNICEF data on under-5 infant mortality in Occupied Iraq and Afghanistan (scrupulously NON-REPORTED by mainstream Anglo-American media) reinforce the URGENT IMPERATIVE for scientists and others to INFORM people and governments about man-made avoidable mass mortality – in good faith and in the interests of peace, justice and humanity.

Recently enacted, draconian Australia laws constrain free speech and other basic human rights set out in international conventions. Accordingly, I feel it necessary at this point to explicitly state the following obvious position common to all peace-loving humanitarians – I regard violence, war and terrorism as utterly inhumane and abhorrent.

The widely-quoted Roberts et al. estimate of "100,000" post-invasion excess deaths in Iraq (The Lancet, November 2004) is clearly an UNDER-ESTIMATE from their own data and also according to the latest UNICEF data on post-invasion UNDER-5 INFANT DEATHS (12 December 2005; see: here): in 2004 the under-5 infant mortality was 122,000 in Occupied Iraq, 359,000 in Occupied Afghanistan and 1,000 in the occupying country Australia (noting that in 2004 the populations of these countries were 28.1 million, 28.6 million and 19.9 million, respectively). This data indicates an Iraqi post-invasion UNDER-5 INFANT MORTALITY of over 0.3 MILLION - currently about 122,000 such deaths per year or 334 DAILY (i.e. exceeding the death toll from the 9/11 WTC atrocity EVERY 9 DAYS). About 90% of these deaths have been AVOIDABLE.

Data on post-invasion avoidable mortality (excess mortality) of people IN ALL AGE GROUPS in Iraq and other Western-occupied countries is available from the UN Population Division. As a responsible citizen committed to peace and humanity, I recently reported the following key mortality statistics to the Australian Senate Committee investigating legislative responses to overseas terrorist atrocities (see submission #112:): the post-invasion avoidable mortality

(excess mortality) in the Occupied Palestinian, Iraqi and Afghan Territories now totals about 0.3, 0.5 and 1.6 million, respectively, while the corresponding post-invasion under-5 infant mortality now totals 0.2, 0.3 and 1.4 million, respectively. Most of these deaths were NON-VIOLENT – thus Iraq Body Count (see:here) currently estimates that 27,000-31,000 Iraqis have been killed VIOLENTLY post-invasion (out of 0.5 million post-invasion avoidable deaths). UK-US state terrorism – what supporters Bush and Blair describe as “democratic imperialism” but which others have described as “democratic tyranny” or “democratic Nazism” - has come at a horrendous human cost, with an under-5 infant mortality now totalling about 0.5 MILLION EACH YEAR in the Occupied Iraqi and Afghan Territories

Whether a person dies VIOLENTLY (e.g. from bombs or bullets) or NON-VIOLENTLY (e.g. from deprivation- or malnourishment-related causes) the end result is the same and the culpability the same. The Ruler is responsible for the Ruled. Thus the Geneva Conventions (1949) demand that the occupiers of a country do EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER to preserve the health and life of subject civilians (see Articles 55 and 56:). Some of the key passages are set out below:

“Article 55. To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate ...

Article 56. To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring and maintaining , with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, the medical and hospital establishments and services, public health and hygiene in the occupied territory, with particular reference to the adoption and application of the prophylactic and preventive measures necessary to combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics. Medical personnel of all categories shall be allowed to carry out their duties ...”

The above data clearly indicate that the members of the US-led Coalition are complicit in passive genocide, mass murder and egregious war crimes in Iraq. Accordingly, they should be indicted before the International Criminal Court – arraigned, tried and punished. Peace is the only way but we are OBLIGED to inform others about man-made mass mortality of fellow human beings - silence kills and silence is complicity. We cannot walk by on the other side.

1957 Nobel Laureate for Literature, Albert Camus, in an essay entitled Neither Victims nor Executioners (1946) clearly enunciated this humane, “the pen is mightier than the sword” moral imperative:

“Over the expanse of five continents throughout the coming years an endless struggle is going to be pursued between violence and friendly persuasion, a struggle in which, granted, the former has a thousand times the chances of success than that of the latter. But I have always held that, if he who bases his hopes on human nature is a fool, he who gives up in the face of circumstances is a coward. And henceforth, the only honorable course will be to stake everything on a formidable gamble: that words are more powerful than munitions.”

2005 Nobel Laureate for Literature, Harold Pinter, in his Nobel Prize acceptance address (8 December 2005; see : here) also movingly stated our obligation to define the truth of our world: “ I believe that despite the enormous odds which exist, unflinching, unswerving, fierce intellectual determination, as citizens, to define the real truth of our lives and our societies is a crucial obligation which devolves upon us all. It is in fact mandatory. If such a determination is not embodied in our political vision we have no hope of restoring what is so nearly lost to us – the dignity of man.”

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Dr Gideon Polya, a contributing editor to MWC News Magazine, published some 130 works in a 4 decade scientific career, most recently a huge pharmacological reference text "Biochemical Targets of Plant Bioactive Compounds" (CRC Press/Taylor & Francis, New York & London, 2003), and is currently writing a book on global mortality ---

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