

# Readers write in about the US bombings in Sudan and Afghanistan

28 August 1998

*Replies to the letters published below were written by David North, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (US), for the World Socialist Web Site.*

I found your article interesting but I ask you one question. Why should the US sit back and not react to these countries that blow up our embassies and attack our citizens? Are we not allowed to protect ourselves? If we did not have a strong military to protect ourselves what do you think would happen to the US?

Sincerely,  
KB

Dear KB:

First of all, the Clinton administration did not claim that either Sudan or Afghanistan were involved in the bombings of the US embassies in Africa. It has not even attempted to present any evidence that Osama bin Laden--the new bogeyman of the US media--has been acting in behalf of these two countries. But aside from these not unimportant facts, there is a far larger and more fundamental issue. The US military does not protect the American people as a whole--what you refer to as 'ourselves'--but the corporate and financial elite that constitutes the ruling class of the United States. It is, in the final analysis, a powerful and brutal instrument for realizing the political and economic interests of this elite.

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To the editor:

My question to you, the editor, is: are your sources reputable? We live in a world of conspiracy and cover-ups. Not only in the US but throughout the world. Did you ever consider the option that you may not have been told the correct story? Isn't it a conceivable notion that there are issues of national security? Don't get me wrong, I don't believe in the senseless killing of innocent people either, it is inhumane. I feel that maybe you, the editor, should consider and conceptualize the possibility that there are underlying reasons for actions that the US, takes, and they do not have to justify their actions to you. My comments by no means are meant to attack you, they are simply my viewpoint on the issues at hand.

Sincerely,  
RJH

Dear RJH:

Your letter expresses a rather strange conception of democracy. How do you square your belief that the government need not justify its actions with the democratic vision articulated by Lincoln--that is, of government 'of the people, for the people, by the people'? The fact that the government cannot explain its actions without telling lies signifies that its policies do not serve the real interests of the great mass of the people. Indeed, what is euphemistically called 'national security' is really the key political and financial interests of the major banks and corporations.

Our exposure of the claims made by the Clinton administration to support its bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan are based on an objective evaluation of facts and have been vindicated by subsequent reports in the international press.

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Sir,

I read with great interest your article regarding the US missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan. As with any piece of material, I agreed with some of it, disagreed with other parts, and learned. In particular I found your reliance on sources important in backing your statements.

However, with regards to the CNN story on the use of nerve gas in Laos as part of Operation Tailwind, I believe you made your decision and then picked the fact that fit it. With numerous collaborative sources as documented over the past two months plus, it is clear that CNN erred in presenting that story. The authors of that story simply made a mistake and carried along with it despite much evidence to the contrary.

I understand that your web site is coming from the standpoint of supporting the socialist cause, however, it does little to simply skip over the fact that CNN, from top to bottom (except for the author of the piece who stands by it alone) has accepted the fact of the stories inaccuracy. To present the revoking of CNN support to that story as somehow related to Pentagon pressure on CNN producers is irresponsible, wrong, and does a disservice to the otherwise strong writing displayed in your site. CNN, in a rare maneuver, admitted they had been mistaken.

Respectfully,  
MC

Dear MC:

We stand by our defense of the CNN reporters who performed a valuable public service by uncovering facts that raised extremely serious questions about Operation Tailwind. The critical report that was used by CNN's corporate management to get rid of the reporters did not claim that the story was a fabrication. The author of that report, Floyd Abrams, actually wrote: 'The broadcast was prepared after exhaustive research, was rooted in considerable supportive data, and reflected the deeply held beliefs of the CNN journalists who prepared it ... we do not believe it can reasonably be suggested that any of the information on which the broadcast was based was fabricated or nonexistent.' Why then was the Tailwind story retracted and the reporters fired? Because CNN, under intense political pressure, imposed an entirely new and unheard of standard for investigative journalism. It declared that the reporters did not prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt. Whoever said they had? And how could they? What they did was present disturbing evidence of government crimes that deserved further investigation. Instead, the reporters were fired. To be quite blunt, the CNN reporters presented a far better case in support of their allegations than the US government has in justifying its bombings of Afghanistan and the Sudan.

We urge you to review the articles that we wrote on the CNN-Tailwind incident, in particular 'CNN Withdraws Report on Use of Nerve Gas in Vietnam War,' which can be located at <http://www.wsws.org/news/1998/july1998/cnn-j03.html>

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To the editor:

Your article on US foreign policy could not have been said better.

Thank you.

KG

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Great article! Noam Chomsky would be proud. Nice to find a 'real' article with the first good explanation I have seen for this madness. I'm glad I found your web site (article linked from Yahoo headlines).

P

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Thank you for the well-written, well-thought-out response to 'Operation Infinite Reach'. This is unfortunately for me the first sober news report I've read on the web regarding these events. Does the US have to justify its actions to any one? Will the corporate media always applaud gratefully to blowing people up?

Will the reactionary forces of finance capital continue to control US policies even as new generations take the places of those who pass?

It's hard to feel like we have no control over our military. Do we have carte blanche to invade or just bomb whomever we please? I don't want to pay taxes for this stuff, at all!

Do I have any recourse?

Thanks again for the clear-minded reporting.

BA

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To the editor,

I read your article 'What are the real reasons for the US missile strikes?' that is linked on Yahoo's World News U.S. Missile Strikes page. How difficult it is to find realistic descriptions of what is going on these days. There is some criticism of Clinton's actions, but your article got right to the point in a comprehensive manner.

Thanx,

EJ

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Thank you for printing the real story of USA bombing. I would like to read what we can do in protest. Is this political machine bigger than us and is there any hope?

Thanks.

Barbara

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Dear Sir,

Is it correct to attack the factory in Sudan?

Because even though it may be nerve gas factory, there are number of factories, of such type in the USA, i.e., lots of pharma. companies. Prominent example is Union Carbide, the gas leak tragedy in India, Bhopal.

It was nothing but a trial taken for production of poisonous gas.

Whole world, basically Third World, has to come together to fight out USA's autocracy.

V

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See also:

Security Council rejects appeal from Sudan over US missile attack

[29 August 1998]

'Nerve gas factory' claim exposed as hoax: What are the real reasons for the US missile strikes?

[26 August 1998]



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