More letters on the tsunami disaster

11 January 2005

The following is a selection of letters to the World Socialist Web Site *on the tsunami disaster.*

On "Powell declares tsunami aid part of global war on terror: Imperialism in Samaritan's clothing"

If one were to go to the www.costofwar.com site, not only would one see a second-by-second account update of just how much the war in Iraq is costing (one billion dollars per week, according to estimates from Congressional appropriations), one would also see how those billions of dollars could have been spent differently.

For example, as of this second, on January 5, 2005, the overall cost of the war is $148,641,572,050 and counting. However, were the money spent differently: 2,575,718 new American school teachers could have been hired (presumably quite a bit more in Third World countries where the salaries are much less); 19,685,664 children could have attended Head Start; 7,205,100 scholarships could have been provided to students attending four-year public universities; 1,338,245 additional housing units could have been built; every child in the world could receive basic immunization for 49 years; global anti-hunger programs could be fully-funded for six years; global AIDS programs could be fully funded for 14 years.

Of course all these numbers are going up as I write this letter, the overall cost of the war increasing by about $1,500 per second.

Which brings us to George Bush's personal donation to the tsunami relief fund, $10,000, an amount equivalent to approximately 6.5 seconds of Iraqi war funding. I imagine it took George Bush a few seconds to write the check. Did he weep while writing it? It was reported that he wept when the first US soldier was killed in Afghanistan.

I'm reminded of a line in the movie *Casablanca*. Paul Henried, the Resistance leader, says to the Nazi officer: "If you kill me, hundreds will take my place. Not even Nazis can kill that fast." Of course that line was written many years ago, wasn't it? When, back then, at least it was a "fair fight" between military rivals, most of the deaths being that of soldiers. Now, it would seem, the dead can't be either killed fast enough (Iraq) or paid off fast enough (the tsunami victims).

Ever in denial, US citizens should know that the $350 million the US has decided to give to tsunami relief agencies (shamed upward from an original figure of $15 million) represents less than half a week of Iraq war funding. The *World Socialist Web Site* is one of the few organizations with the simple decency to say such things.

Having lived in America all my life, I'm deeply ashamed of what the rest of the world thinks of the US. The tsunami tragedy and the US response to it make me even more ashamed.

I wonder: Will a copy of the $10,000 personal check George Bush made out to the tsunami victims go into his presidential library? Will Bill [Clinton] and John [Kerry] and Jimmy [Carter] be there to pat him on the back when his library is dedicated? Will Jimmy promise not to mention the miserliness of the check if George promises not to mention the Mujahedin?

Though I'm not aware of Adolph Hitler ever having written a charitable check, I do know he loved dogs.

TF
Florida
6 January 2005

I might like to add to this article that I also think that if there had not been wealthy G-7 nations' tourist deaths, there might not have been such an outpouring of concern either. With over 400,000 under-five child deaths in US-occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, and millions of AIDS deaths in Africa, not to mention starvation in the millions in other places—all due to humanity—why the sudden world grief over a tsunami (where believers ought to realize this was an act of God and the dead are now supposedly with their creator)?

I am skeptical of any elite-inspired "aid." It's simply not in their nature unless there's something to be gained by it—and as pointed out in this article, there certainly is. The power of the manipulated media is starkly obvious here as the Wal-Mart shoppers have had a moment of eye-popping reality thrown in their faces daily and it has resulted in the deafening sound of jingling coins being given to various worthy charities helping the victims. But are the Iraqi children no less dead? Wise of our Mr. Bush to keep those grisly eye-popping pictures off reality TV less the brain-washed public actually develop a functioning conscience, (which however briefly, was recently awakened and

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therefore is still intact.) You can't grieve over what you don't know (or acknowledge). Conscience is the last thing the elite wants unleashed in an uncontrolled manner because socialism demands its use and a socialist tsunami around the world would be their worst disaster.

SN

7 January 2005

Apparently the US government knew about the imminent disaster but purposefully failed to give adequate warning. Why? They wanted to remake the image of the US military from a brutal machine of torture and destruction into a humanitarian one. They saw this as the perfect opportunity, just like the 9/11 disaster. Details are in this article: http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO412C.html

CI

8 January 2005

Mr. Van Auken, This is it. As far as I am concerned, this is your most powerful piece ever! It shook me. You are so on point, so clear. Who cannot *understand* this? The way you slowly turn the reader around and take us back to Iraq: "What of the horror of the Iraqi families who heard the roar of ceaseless US aerial bombardment and the thunder of cannon barrages for days before American tanks finished laying waste to their city? Does Colin Powell try to imagine what went through their minds? How many of their lives were snuffed out is something that neither the US government nor the US mass media even bothers to consider." I have to tell you man, it brought tears to my eyes, and you know why? I stopped reading, and let my mind *imagine* that horror, as C-130 Deathships roast the ground beneath my children; DU rounds turning my country forever into a radioactive prison; cluster bombs ripping families to shreds. Yes, I let my mind go there. It is a very painful thought.

DP

7 January 2005

Cleveland, Ohio

I have read your article on "imperialism in Samaritan's clothing" with keen interest. It is very well-written, and convincingly argued. I agree with all your major points there. I just have one point to bring to your attention for the sake of factual basis of your argument. You are mentioning about the study by *Lancet* and take the casualty figures provided by that study as your fact. I recognize the bravery of the investigators who carried out the *Lancet* survey on the ground, and support the call for larger and more authoritative investigations with the full support of the coalition and other official bodies. The *Lancet* study's headline figure of "100,000" excess deaths is a probabilistic projection from a small number of reported deaths—most of them from aerial weaponry—in a sample of 988 households to the entire Iraqi population. Despite the *Lancet* website's front-page headline "100,000 excess civilian deaths after Iraq invasion," the authors clearly state that "many" of the dead in their sample may have been combatants, not civilians.

Bülent Gökay, project consultant of The Iraq Body Count Project

6 January 2005

On "The Asian tsunami: why there were no warnings"

Peter, I have just finished listening to your presentation on "Democracy Now" and was wondering why you and others haven't mentioned the fact that the entire surface of the globe is under constant scrutiny from military surveillance satellites. At least this is what a swag of intelligence analysts theorize is the case. These devices and their collection agencies would have identified the earthquake and the resultant tsunami instantaneously. Is it possible that the lives of several hundred thousand people were sacrificed in order to protect the integrity of this network? At least ask the question of politicians and get them to deny this is the case, if they will. That way at least we will have for posterity their lies on tape. In any case it would be extremely interesting to see their response to the question.

SO

January 5

I read your latest article and heard your interview on "Democracy Now." It was an outstanding article, lucidly written and makes starkly clear the desperate plight of the poorest of poor living on the rim of the Bay of Bengal in South Asia. The article is much needed slap in the face of the governments of the affected countries, something they seriously ought to read and presently act on.

TS

5 January 2005

On "South Asia disaster appeal: White House tries to cover up Bush's moment of truth"

I think there may be another factor very few mention regarding the increase in "aid" to the Indonesians: those "brown people" live above OIL. I think it's more like: "Hey we threw some money at you, now give us your oil."

GW

5 January 2005

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