I was in my third year at Howard University when I had an unusual opportunity to travel to Southeast Asia. One of my stops was in the Philippines — an archipelagic country, a big word for a nation of islands, in this case about 7600 islands or so. Two things among other insights have stayed with me. One was Corregidor. It was the gateway island that controlled entry into Manila Bay, the entry to the island of Luzon which houses the capital city, Manila. With a small group, I descended “The Rock,” as it was called, some 20-odd years after the Japanese surrender. It established for me what the expression “dug in” actually means in war-talk. Observing this place in its dormancy, I could imagine its functionality as an unground city in war. Chroniclers of WWII have said that the Battle for Corregidor rivaled and surpassed the horrors of the infamous war camp Bataan, and we all know the hell that was.

At a later point, I went to the US Military Cemetery in Manila. I had been to cemeteries before, but except for my visits to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington, this seemed different. There was a stillness — not just a solemnity — which silenced my head as I looked over the thousands of white crosses placed just so indicating a body was buried there. In many cases, the body had no name, some mother’s son given to the earth, nameless, gone. It was profoundly sobering.

Changing the focus a bit, on another occasion I went to a piano concert. Now I am not given to concerts in particular, but this one was for a girl who was a prodigy, a genius who was Black. Philippa Schuyler was in concert. Her chosen instrument was the piano which was the original instrument for this magnificent music of which you just now heard a part. Her selected work was all 10 movements of “Pictures in an Exhibition” by

Modest Mussorgsky. The last movement is “The Great Gate of Kiev” which you heard as you were assembling for this talk. Philippa Schuyler died in South Vietnam in the war, one of many. Philippa, a well prepared, multi-lingual, multi-talented woman of genius, was slammed and buffeted by racism. She would never be acknowledged. Even though we never met, I never forgot her.

Envision with me our coming to a large building, the one just up ahead. This imagery may not hold of all this speech, but hang in there with me for now. We won’t go in yet and push open those huge doors. Let’s stop. I want our conversation to be edifying Know now that I don’t have answers; I have ***only perplexities***.

I have been wrestling with how to present this topic of “war” to you in a way that has meaning and leaves you with something on your mind. I have pondered on how to hold this topic steady, to control the narrative, and to be clear in this limited period of time. Let’s see. . . .

Let’s do the numbers as they say on NPR: the first of the World Wars[1] brought us 20 million dead with 21 million more wounded; [2] 110,000 more of them never returned or were MIA.[3] A half-million children became

[1] During the conflict, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire (the Central Powers) fought against Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Romania, Japan and the United States (the Allied Powers).

[2] World War I casualties - Centre européen Robert Schuman. www.centre-robert-schuman.org › userfiles › files › REPE…PDF World War I casualties - Centre européen Robert Schuman

[3] The Lost Doughboys — The Hunt Continues for American … militaryhistorynow.com › 2016/03/09 › the-lost-doughboys.

fatherless in England alone.[4] Then came along the Spanish Lady[5] or the Influenza of 1918. It was so impactful that it is considered ***the reason*** the world war stopped — more soldiers were dying of it than of bullets. Killing between 675,000 to 750,000[6] Americans alone, that pandemic made its *documented presence* in 1918, but it was suspected some time before that date. It killed between 50 to 100 million people world-wide[7] by the time it abated. Then came WWII[8] in less than 20 years with the human count by its conclusion some 6 years later of 50 - 56 million military and civilian fatalities with approximately 19 - 28 million war-related deaths due to disease and famine for a total of about 85 million people.[9] ***Out of the 50 -***

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[4] A lot of children had a tough time during the war as their fathers, brothers and uncles were away serving. Over 500,000 children lost their father in World War One. It was the biggest loss of fathers in modern British history.

Childhood in WW1 - Black Country Living Museum

[5] Its origin was from a tiny, hardscrabble, rural town in Kansas, in Haskill County to be exact 1918 Flu History Documentary, Youtube. And,

The site of origin of the 1918 influenza pandemic and its … www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov › pmc › articles › PMC340389. Jan 20, 2004 — In actuality, by then the county was free of influenza. Haskell County, Kansas, is the first recorded instance anywhere in the world of an outbreak ...
by JM Barry · 2004 · Cited by 122 · Related articles

[6] "Is the World Due for an Influenza Pandemic?" | Mount Sinai ...
www.mountsinai.org/about/newsroom/2019/is-the...

[7] Ibid.

[8] The main combatants were the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) and the Allies (France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, China).Sep 10, 2020.

[9]

World War II casualties - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org › wiki › World_War_II_casualties

56 million deaths, 50 - 55 million were civilians.[10] Sixteen million Germans[11] died with 415,000 MIAs.

Purportedly, there are universal reasons for the initiation of war — the offensive strategies — but they are too numerous to enumerate here with much specificity except to say that they tend to be either culture-bound, primed with stoked anger and/or tied to economic reasons often for private benefit which is cloaked or more concealed.

Military art or science[12] is extensive, but I would submit that it is largely focused on current circumstances: the study of tactics and strategies in the current experience(s), next to nil on history, the manufacturing and use of weaponry, and the disciplining and deployment of the military fighters on all three spaces — land, sea, and air — to secure objectives operating within whatever standards exist or are enforceable by their commanders.

Reading about some of the world’s implacable problems, I wrestled with various phrasing, “to win the hearts and minds of people.”[13] I

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[10]

World War II was the deadliest military conflict in history. An estimated total of 70–85 million people perished, or about 3% of the 1940 world population (est. 2.3 billion).
World War II casualties - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org › wiki › World_War_II_casualties

[11] Fourteen million were killed internally: 6 million Jews, the then Jehovah Witnesses, handicapped, homosexuals, mentally challenged, political enemies and people that get on the Nazi’s nerves. The rest maybe attributable to those Germans killed in their displacement from occupied territories at the end of the war.

[12] Military art is a field of theoretical research and training methodology in military science used in the conduct of military operations on land, in the maritime or air … Military art (military science) - Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Military_art_(military_science)

[13] “How does a conquering army overcome resistance from the local population? For the United States, the answer has often taken the form of the somewhat nebulous concept of “winning hearts and minds.” . . .Essentially, the United States tried to convince the native population that they have been liberated and that their quality of life has been improved by a benevolent American invasion.” “Winning Hearts and Minds” - The Long History of a Failed ...www.warhistoryonline.com › instant-articles › winning-… Oct 3, 2018

wondered how this made any kind of sense? And, if so, to whom? The military was obliterating the people and their land — blowing up the ground and grinding the people to dust. What minds were they going to win? How was that supposed to happen? You can still hear that kind of thinking right up to today’s American presence in Afghanistan and Syria. And, another expression, “a war to end all wars.”[14] Nonsensical and superficial, if hopeful.

That a people had the right to choose their own government, I had been taught that this was an axiom of American foreign policy. It certainly was hammered home in my public school education. Then I read about the “Banana Republics” and American foreign policies in South America with the training of their military at the U.S. Army School of the Americas in Atlanta, Georgia. That taught me foursquare that the right to chose one’s own style and kind of government independent of any major power is not operative nor has it ever been likely the case since the founding of this republic. That certainly came home in the Vietnam War where America dropped more bombs in little Vietnam and its neighboring countries than in all of WWII.[15] Even with all of that, how can you kill an idea as fundamental as independence?

That said, it should be clear that what is publicly spoken, is far from the whole picture. Is this duplicity at its height? Probably. Most certainly, it is the fact that policy is complicated by the winding of private — generally

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[14] Woodrow Wilson’s World War of 1914–1918. Originally idealistic, it is now mainly used sardonically. The war to end war - Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org › wiki › The_war_to_end_war

[15] A visual record of the largest aerial bombardment in history
Between 1965 and 1975, the United States and its allies dropped more than 7.5 million tons of bombs on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—double the amount dropped on Europe and Asia during World War II. Bombing Missions of the Vietnam War - Esri storymaps.esri.com › stories › vietnam-bombing

corporate interests — into national policy and the public is certainly the last to know the real deal. They are not taught or encouraged to look beneath the surface.

How quickly the enemy of yesterday can become the friend of today. Reading about the stranglehold the Third Reicht had on almost all of Western Europe, I was floored by the courage that the Russians exhibited in finally turning back Germany’s eastern advance. Then I wondered how this country and her sister, England, could turn against not only their ally but their essential partner and enter into the so-called “Cold War?” Further, why would the U.S. embrace former Nazis, high and low, and bring them to this country and/or facilitate them going into South America? These were former enemies, dangerous men! Is America not a good friend?

But there’s a little more about which I couldn’t reconcile so just work with me a bit more. The Great Powers ignored the Spanish Civil War[16] that was the precursor to the great conflagration of World War II. [17] Some suggest that if it had been won by the legitimately elected democratic forces, it could have nipped Hitler’s moves in the bud. Weren’t the European communists and socialists the first to signal that Hitler and his cohorts were evil and deadly? Why didn’t the general population heed?

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[16] Excerpt from a speech delivered in 1933, by Major General Smedley Butler, USMC. War is just a racket. A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is … Military Force: United States Marine Corps. Smedley Butler on Interventionism. fas.org › man › smedley.

[17] The Spanish Civil War: A Trial Run for World War II | nationalinterest.org › feature › the-spanish-civil-war-trial- And,

Spanish Civil War: Jul 17, 1936 – Apr 1, 1939 Spanish Civil War - Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Spanish_Civil_War

WWII dates: September 1, 1939 – September 2, 1945. World War II: Summary, Combatants & Facts - HISTORY www.history.com › topics › world-war-ii-history

Why are we still dancing around some of this same thinking in this country in the year 2020?

Hatred — for real or imagined “reasons” — bursts forth when opportunity allows. The psychotics and sociopaths are seemingly always with us, but they need fertile ground on which to grow politicly. Did the United States encourage the importation of significant numbers of these types from Europe in the great westward expansion of this country increasing the already present sense of white domination and nationalism? What accounts for this in real terms? Can information actually sweep away gross, intentioned ignorance?

Why is mankind so unwilling to grow, admit past errors, improve judgment, and make amends where possible and allowed? Surely, we by now, especially in the so-called west, we should realize that all of us are on the same small planet in the solar system and that no one group owns the earth! Why is that a continued fantasy?

I remember talking with the small shopkeepers who occupied every corner in my neighborhood for blocks. I was an inquisitive kid and so I asked them, how did they end up in my part of the city. Who were they with their thick accents, where did they come from? They showed me the tattoos on their forearms, gotten at some place called a concentration camp. I was 5 or 6 years old, maybe a little older. They told me that they were “DPs” displaced persons, people found by the Allies and released after the defeat of Germany. They were everywhere. At the time, in my unsophisticated mind, it was just something I stuck in my memory bank. Later, when reading about the displacement of Native Peoples here in this country, I saw great similarities. Who’s the copy cat? When I read about the Serbs and Croats efforts to vanquish the Moslems in Central Europe,

doesn’t it sounded like a replay of the same kind of machinery and treachery we have seen and heard before?

Somewhere along the line, I came to the recognition that government and private interests work by symbiosis particularly in the area of foreign policy; you might say they are intertwined. The mission and policy outcomes of war have many layers most of which cannot be easily resolved, certainly not publicly. Often the reason for the current war is because of some things/issues/bad blood which occurred in past ones. There’s no finality to the action however intense and singular. Sense and reason are often sacrificed on the altar of bloodlust. The *essence or kernels fundamental to* both the mission and outcome are more soundly found out through diligent research rather than through the blather of politicians. We are still figuring out pieces of the American Revolution much less the hundreds of war situations during and since then.

Now maybe if you understand that, this comment may now resonate: “the first casualty of war is truth.” You are only told what you “need to know” and that is very little. And, *all you really need to know is to how to conform and support the troops* whether in or out of uniform.

Elaborate embellishments cover all of the following : (1) coveted land and resources — almost never stolen people, (2) retribution for some past actions of a prior war as in the debacle of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rub could go back centuries, but it only went to the previous world war — 20 years earlier — for Hitler’s enmity to find harvest; and, (3) finally on my list, displacing current residents — the wrong people in the wrong place at the wrong time, I will let you apply that to situations with which you are familiar.

War’s violence brings about new trauma, new causes for hate because there are new violations. And, war is going to make things right,

yes? No, that is what the propaganda machine spews. The state’s or the empire’s military might has to spin for itself a “believable myth” that not only soldiers will buy, but that the general population will support as well. The more vile or villainous the “causal act or actions,” the stronger the anticipated popular response. But here’s the hitch: ***wars almost never go the way the initiators anticipate*** for a variety of reasons. In protracted wars, privation usually visits the home country in some ways. But most interestingly, the people calling for the war never seem to fight in them. They send somebody else’s sons and now daughters to do their deeds. Indeed, war is an odd affair. Full of moronic behaviors and thoughts to say the least. In the meanwhile, people are dying and all of the attendant destruction is occurring.

Let’s bring this conversation home. Between the jabs from our current political leadership and the internet-trolls combined with what had been underground arch-right menaces, I hear the word “war” frequently. It is bandied about in the media lightly, to my thinking, without real concern or warning.

Wars begin in the hearts and minds of men. It has been a man’s game. For at least the last 2, 000 years, for the want of control of particular resources or people, men have marched, ridden, and since WWII flown hundreds if not thousands of miles to acquire and satisfy the avarice of their leadership. Beneficence is not a common factor in war, so those in the way — women and children, non-combatants all — pay with their lives and means, blatantly a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I have also wondered, have you, has there ever been a day without war anywhere at any time? I would be grateful to know of one.

Here are some thoughts on the world stage: the constant wars in Asia with the growth and contraction of China’s sense of empire; the national expansion in Japan towards a single country and its ravishing and plunder of Manchuria, Korea, and China proper; much earlier the movement of the Mongol khans into Europe who shook the earth with the thundering hoofs of between 130 to 150 thousand men on horseback; the constant wars in Europe as the peevish greed of church and state churned the countrysides from Rome to Scandinavia into battlefields for who would dominate whom in Europe and later, the New World; the subjugation and vanquishing of Native Peoples in the New World; the kidnapping and enslaving of Africans to turn the forested regions of that New World into agricultural gain; the wars about whose god is God and what books and writings about Him were acceptable or not and on and on. . . . These are ***my*** wars that I have wrestled with for this talk.

War’s restlessness is part and parcel of the American tradition, that this country — according to reliable sources has had less than 25 years of so-called “peace” since it began in 1617. And, what is “the peace?” Well, that’s another conversation for another day. The opposite of war is no war, peace is a much greater concept yet to be fully understood or explored.

Established as a colony, and moved on to being a settler state, and later a nation, this country has maintained an on-going war with Native Peoples from the beginning. The level of destruction to them should be obvious when we call out Native American words that mark our rivers, mountains, counties, streets and states in language given by those people but they not around or are no longer here. I mention that the bounty coaxed from the land and its profits have never been shared with the formerly

enslaved population or the mill and factory workers who eked out a living in the industrial transference of raw materials into consumer goods.

Organized labor fought many a bloody battle for what we have come to recognize as the ordinary work week and basic demands for workers’ rights and dignity in the work place. Those unionists faced constant military and para-military might fixed to waylay or obliterate their demands. As a complete absurdity to me is that the police have a union! Do we make a mockery of everything? Is every idea up for sale?

So “war” can and does become internal. We call them by many words, but civil unrest, civil war just about covers it. Organized labor made many missteps regarding race and now it faces a backlash from people who never struggled, and therefore have a loose meaning as to the efforts made. However, for a brief period, at least, they have enjoyed the hard-won benefits of other’s sacrifice.

You can see today what the progeny of the anti-democratic forces are willing to devalue in our fragile democracy as you observe the current struggles at the federal level. Whether you actively admire or are merely passive in your participation in our political process, you have some understanding of those who would throw it all away and what that will mean going forward. They are those who are deranged and ignorant of the basic tenets of right and wrong, justice and injustice, and think they will not have to finally pay the paymaster. Everyone pays the piper one way or another!

As war has maintained itself in many societies across time and space, there seems to always be a level of “professionalism” which persists despite the futility of the war itself. With a seemingly permanent social

status, the persons and actions have found their way into the social structure; it signals permanency in the political agenda going forward.[18]

There are cracks and arrangements in the machinery of war where recognition for sheer survival requires cooperation over conflict. Sometimes that has reached the national and international stage, that is what treaties[19] are all about.

“On 12 June 1941, the representatives of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa as well as representatives of the exiled governments from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Free French, met in London to sign the Declaration of St. James Palace to pledge their solidarity in fighting aggression until victory against the Axis powers was won.”[20] The Declaration proclaimed that “the only true basis of enduring peace is the willing cooperation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security."

WWII finally halted on September 2, 1945. Approximately 6 weeks later on October 24, 1945, 51 countries came together to create the United Nations or the UN. Its purpose was to promote peace and cooperation around the world. The event was to be observed by all member countries.[21] …. We have seen the effort and the evisceration. Yet the U.N.

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[18] The military of the United States is deployed in more than 150 countries around the world, with approximately 165,000 of its active-duty personnel permanently assigned outside the United States and its territories excluding Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

[19] Under international law, a treaty is any legally binding agreement between states (countries). A treaty can be called a Convention, a Protocol, a Pact, an Accord, etc.; it is the content of the agreement, not its name, which makes it a treaty.

International Agreements - PHE.gov
www.phe.gov › law › Pages › Internationa

[20] History of the United Nations | United Nations.www.un.org › model-united-nations › history-united-n...

[21] Saturday, October 24

endures -- there is nothing else to take its place -- and, so does war. Seventy-five years for a very difficult job, happy birthday United Nations, take a bow!

Why does the Republican Party hate the UN? This is what I think. Cutting through the verbiage, this is the bottom line. They conjure up many things, but I think that the corporate partners of the Republican/Federal government structure do not want or ever intend to be held accountable for their operations, overt or covert. And, they certainly have no intention of being held accountable before any world body, particularly one dominated in any form or manner by people of color. Period, the end of discussion! Where are the Democrats on the U.N.? From my observation, the Dems have been milquetoast. There has been no champion for the United Nations in this country for decades. And the failure[22] pay up and bring forward its billion-dollar dues is mind-boggling. I guess they would

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United Nations Day 2020 Saturday, October 24; www.un.org › events › unday

During World War II, the Allies—known formally as the United Nations—adopted as their basic war aims the Four Freedoms freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear, and freedom from want.[15][16] Towards the end of the war, the United Nations Charter was debated, drafted, and ratified to reaffirm "faith in fundamental human rights, and dignity and worth of the human person" and commit all member states to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".[17] When the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany became fully apparent after the war, the consensus within the world community was that the UN Charter did not sufficiently define the rights to which it referred.[18][19] It was deemed necessary to create a universal declaration that specified the rights of individuals so as to give effect to the Charter's provisions on human rights.[20]

www.scribd.com › document › Universal-Declaration-o...

[22] Of the U.S. arrears to the UN totaling over $1.3 billion, $612 million was payable under Helms-Biden. The remaining $700 million resulted from various legislative and policy withholdings.
United States and the United Nations - Wikipedia

rather kill using the military, than spending the funds to diplomatically let the UN do what it needs to do.

The military of the United States is deployed in more than 150 countries around the world, with approximately 165,000 of its active-duty personnel permanently assigned outside the United States and its territories excluding Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

When we come to the 20th century, we come to the marriage of technology and military might that is, in fact, capable of eradicating huge populations in current *and future time*. This echos the warning of Dwight Eisenhower some 50 years ago, “Beware of the military-industrial complex.”[23] The use of depleted uranium in Fallujah[24] (Iraq) and apparently throughout Iraq and the Gulf Wars, not to mention the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has rendered normal childbearing and normal children out of the question for women in those areas.

And, while in the past, somehow human life has endured, that question remains open to shaky speculation as atomic power and its acquisition has unsecured the dominance in international warfare of the super powers and put its access in the hands of interests which function differently who have other bridges to burn. What will the future bring? I do not know. This is our hope.

In closing I give you this most famous quotation from the the Hindu text, the Bhagavad-Gita, which has been quoted by many across time.

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[23] In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.
Eisenhower's farewell address - Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org › wiki ›

[24] “Women Afraid to Have Babies, Call it Ecocide” by Robert C. Koehler, CommonDreams.Org., November 26, 2009

Most recently, however, it is attributed to J. Robert Oppenheimer, Father of the atomic bomb, winner of that bitter race to create and control atomic

energy that the Third Reich was also trying to establish, but here it is: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds”.

Thank you.