

# History is great fun to rehearse - what does it do for us today?

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## Summary

In response to the excellent "**Empire as a Way of Life**" series of essays and the unfortunate impotency of ALL erudite scholarship in the proverbial 'dissent space' that has achieved absolutely zero efficacy in any of its attempts to halt the crimes of "empire". Instead of continuing on with business as usual - perhaps it's time to do a postmortem - as engineers and rational thinking peoples - to figure out why our anemic protests and repeated rehearsals of profound works of history haven't worked to prevent new similar future history from being constructed in new epochs as new faits accomplis, and which are subsequently only lamented and rehearsed with renewed zeal by a new generation. How to achieve better than zero efficacy in changing this cycle of impotency in the face of persistent empires and state-fascism in one guise or another? [An earlier version of this spontaneous rant-like essay appeared [here](#).]

I used to enjoy reading such essays, exposes, and could easily consume endless hours devouring Chomsky's and other 'historians' brilliant analytical studies. I used to be under the impression that *'those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it'* - and fearing such calumny upon myself, especially the profound curse of Elie Wiesel "**and I still curse the killers, their accomplices, the indifferent spectators who knew and kept silent**" - I wanted to be an 'informed' plebeian.

So how many such history and current affairs books lineup a typical bookshelf in any good bookstore? Last time, I tried counting it in Barnes and Noble - which is a major bookstore chain

in the United States - I gave up after 30, and there were plenty more, spilling into history, biography, political science, and religion sections.

How many peoples have marched in protest? On February 15 and 16 2003, the eve of Iraq War, some say 10 million! And what did that accomplish? Iraq today lies in ruin, B and B reelected, and another war on Iran appears to be imminent - this time with Nuclear Weapons!

So while the erudite scholars go on profoundly quoting Noam Chomsky and NSC memorandum 68, and helping sell more of his books full of the same platitudes of '*rogue state*' this and that, when it comes to 911, all of the chief 'dissenting priests' rushed to magically accept the testimony of the same '*rogue state*' in whom all seem to have magically acquired a new found trust! But wait - if one is still alive in 50 years and new NSC memorandum 911 will be made (or leaked) public, more history books, more accolades on erudite exposés, and more money in the bank!

So you attract all these idealist young men and women of conscience who are greatly disturbed by the indefensible, and get them to hear more lectures on history and sociology, chant some slogans, everyone is pleased that they accomplished something venting their frustrations and their conscience, and then they go home and its business as usual. What is the efficacy of all this 'dissent'?

Please see [this blog entry](#) by Muna Hamzeh, a Palestinian-American journalist, of a recent loss of a mother shot 6 times in cold blood before her family - anyone of you dissenting priests suffered any of that? How peaceful are our lives and how easy is it to attend all these protest marches as the supposed 'conscionable peoples' that lead to precisely zero efficacy except perhaps some small weight loss on the treadmill!

I take the liberty of including below a brief comment that I sent to the publisher of John Pilger's article on 'Attack on Iran' and it entirely sums up the problem with well intentioned peoples who think less than strategically - how can one ever combat the likes of 'Zbigniew Brzezinski', 'George Kennan', and 'Paul Wolfowitz' by ad nauseum rehearsing the history of their 'accomplishments' in the safety of ones' ivory towers of academe and conference halls, and then doing absolutely nothing with it contemporaneously to prevent new faits accomplis? Even more disturbing is that for some distinguished 'dissenting priests', their life-long labor of 'Moral-Activism' selectively changes its color from idealism to "*impracticality*", and becomes indistinguishable from facile excuses for not applying the lessons of history that they have themselves taught and written about, to unraveling contemporary crimes! The perfect example of this is the shocking and disconcerting realization for me regarding my own mentor, "*arguably the most important Intellectual alive*" according to the New York Times, in relation to Israel-Palestine which I straightforwardly challenge him on in this essay "[The endless trail of red herrings](#)", and in relation to 911 which I ponder upon in much consternation in a footnote (number 11) in [Chapter-2](#) of my book "[Prisoners of the Cave](#)".

And the unfortunate sad part of it all? I, like all other well intentioned conscionable peoples in

the world, am just as powerless, just as impotent, just as wordy, just as comfortable in my life, and just as clueless on how to create more than zero efficacy in our Moral-Activism! **Unless one can stop the attack on Iran with efficacy greater than zero** - go home boys and girls (you and I both)! It seems that we have been cleverly primed in our 'dissent' in the modernity du jour to ensure that there are few positive end-results of our vigorous exercise on the treadmills of mindless unfocused protests that are ultimately *"inimical to imperial mobilization"*!

This Machiavellianly orchestrated game of the 'Hectoring Hegemons' is for men and women who play long-term on the strategic 'Grand Chessboard' - in blood - not for 'mickey mouse' protesters and our 'dissenting priests' rehearsing histories post faits accomplis with an attendant flock in wondrous rapture at our own 'amazing courage' of 'standing up to power' on a 'feel-good ego trip' to a good nights sleep in the safety of our homes!

---- begin letter for John Pilger (slightly edited for syntax from the one actually emailed) ---

From: Project Humanbeingsfirst.org

Subject: Comment for John Pilger's article - "[Iran: the war ahead](#)"

To: [comments@newstatesman.co.uk](mailto:comments@newstatesman.co.uk)

[Dear editor - I would like to offer this as comment to Pilger's article, which was also published on the UK Indymedia with a different more telling title. Perhaps you can forward it to John Pilger directly if you are unable to accept it for any reason. Thanks.]

*"[The next Imperial Genocide: Iran may be the greatest crisis of modern times](#)"* - and more heart wrenching titles like these - to what efficacy? Exactly ZERO?

As an engineer looking at the problem space and attempting to get a handle on what leads to zero efficacy in the dissent of conscionable peoples, tells me that the 'highest order bits' of the problem-domain are not being addressed, and that one needs to 'fresh think' the solution space.

**"Looking from the side"** it was then, **"looking from the side"** it is today - and separated by all the reports on the **"banality of evil"** - to what avail? More 'mere words' doesn't seem like the solution.

Efficacious solution-space can only exist in strategic thinking the dissent modalities in the same intellectual space which seeds this 'imperial genocide', and which can also seed its converse with greater than zero efficacy. See more 'mere words' on this mode of thinking in this "[Open Letter to Amnesty International](#)".

And more 'mere words' in '[another powerless book](#)':

*'Where are the "Zbigniew Brzezinskis" and the "George Kennans" of peace and justice in the world? [...] I believe that future rests in the hands of the ordinary people of the world as injustice can never become a fait accompli. Its eventual global redressing will happen, whether by hook or by crook, by a people unwilling to continue to endure the poverty, misery, depleted uranium, and imperial subjugation amidst the luxury and freedom of the privileged few. Before the world is pushed into that corner where the "fight or flight" response is the only response left, where death becomes the preferred option to economic slavery and humiliations and the world is mercilessly thrust into a global chaos by suicide bombers and popular uprisings, those with vision and wealth must step forward to counter the forces of exploitation, corporate greed, and imperial conquest by studying the methods and techniques of the antagonists, and effectively countering them in an ongoing and perpetual game of chess on the "Grand Chessboard". '*

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The author, an ordinary researcher and writer on contemporary geopolitics, a minor justice activist, grew up in Pakistan, studied EECS at MIT, engineered for a while in high-tech Silicon Valley (patents [here](#)), and retired early to pursue other responsible interests. His maiden 2003 book was rejected by six publishers and can be read on the web at <http://PrisonersoftheCave.org>. He may be reached at <http://Humanbeingsfirst.org>.

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