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The US Government's « Internal War » Against American Veterans

Par Joachim Hagopian
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In San Diego a veteran attempted to take his own life inside the VA hospital because his mental health appointments had been repeatedly canceled on him with only a day's notice over the last several years dating back to 2013. In New Jersey after walking nine miles from his home another 51-year old Navy veteran of the first Gulf War set himself on fire in protest directly in front of his New Jersey Veterans Affairs clinic to make his dramatic point that the US fails miserably in taking care of those who sacrifice their lives for their nation's wars. Veterans across the country are making dramatic statements willing to end their life due to their sheer frustration dealing with the largest and thoroughly broken health care system in the United States.

Having one Veterans Affairs Secretary two years ago resign replaced by another – both West Point graduates – still isn't getting the job done. Current Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald, no sooner appointed and on the job out in LA with television cameras rolling talking it up with homeless veterans, he lied claiming he served in the Special Forces. Funny how cadets get through four years at the academy never lying, cheating or stealing, but once they graduate their honor code goes right out the window… like Petraeus who graduated a year behind me lying to the FBI telling them he never violated top secret clearance as CIA director when he'd given his mistress binders chock full of classified material. McDonald graduated two years behind me.

Nearly two years ago the Phoenix Veterans Medical Center came under immediate fire when it was discovered that nearly 40 veterans had died while on a phantom waiting list among 1700 other veterans yet to be electronically scheduled much less ever seen by actual medical staff. A hospital whistleblower contacted the local press to trigger the biggest veterans scandal in history resulting in mounting pressures to fix the grossly incompetent and corrupted system entrusted to care for the medical needs of men and women who served our nation honorably and earned the right to be taken care of by the country they all were willing to die for. Now two years later they are still dying still apparently waiting for medical treatment on still forgotten waiting lists. But today some are choosing to die by choice making their bold yet desperate final statement just to show America that the promises to correct the corrosive system caught not caring for them a couple years ago still doesn't care. This latest incident is the second high profile suicidal act in as many weeks dramatically taking place on VA grounds.

The fiery suicide in front of the New Jersey VA clinic is a flashback to Buddhist monks burning themselves alive in public protest in Vietnam decades ago and more recently in Tibet and India. The public nature of self-immolation creating the ultimate sacrificial

spectacle executed before the world for the expressed purpose of the greater good is reminiscent of the Buddhist monk who in 1963 Saigon doused in gasoline flames protested the brutally oppressive anti-Buddhist policies of the then US puppet government in South Vietnam – the Catholic Diem regime. Within a very short time after that, the same month that the only Catholic president John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, the (Catholic) Saigon government was also overthrown followed within the year by President Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin false flag igniting escalation of the Vietnam War.

Buddhist monks' ancient practice of self-immolation in Southeast Asia quickly spread to America where at least three more US citizens set themselves ablaze, indelibly associating this form of protest against expanding US involvement in the highly unpopular, immoral Vietnam War. Since that 1963 Saigon incident, death by self-immolation is estimated to have occurred more than 1000 times in over three dozen countries.

These two back-to-back veteran suicide incidents at VA hospitals mark the latest high profile casualties in the war against America's veterans. But suicides as a way out of the pain and misery that veterans are suffering is nothing new. Multiple studies over recent years repeatedly show that veterans across our nation are killing themselves in epidemic record numbers. It's been two years now since the VA was caught in the shameful national scandal where veterans seeking medical care were being placed on invisible, off-the-books lists, waiting and dying prior to either being seen by a doctor or waiting a year or longer for claims approval to initiate health services. This presentation examines the ongoing plight of military veterans since those headlines began uncovering the gross improprieties that were being regularly committed not just at the Phoenix Veterans Health Center but systemically in VA hospitals and clinics across the country.

But since the Phoenix VA story broke the end of April 47 months ago, last September the Department of Veterans Affairs became embroiled in yet another scandalous embarrassment when two of its top executives were caught bilking the taxpayers out of close to half million dollars over some highly inflated bogus moving costs. Their tactics were both ruthless and deceitful, forcing two regional directors out of their positions so that they could take over charging the VA Benefits Administration exorbitant relocation costs in the process. The Inspector General even referred the case to the Justice Department for criminal investigation. Their illicit finagling even included shifting to cushier jobs with lesser responsibilities at the same near $200 thousand annual salaries. Working together the duo even made their shady moves after the VA scandal had burst onto the headlines, apparently oblivious to the fact that the VA would be closely scrutinized and monitored by audits, Congressional oversight, and the IG's office which eventually busted them.

Several years ahead of the two year old scandal, solid proof had begun surfacing that America was failing its former warriors. Based on data compiled from 1986-1997 a groundbreaking 2007 study indicated that veterans were twice as likely to die by suicide as Americans who never served their nation in uniform. A 2010 study showed that women veterans between the ages of 18 and 34 were three times more likely to commit suicide than women at large. Perhaps the sexual assault epidemic in a closed unjust military legal system may have something to do with the high suicide rate of young former female soldiers. These disturbing statistics ushered in the current crises suggesting that military experience itself – putting your life on the line for your country – could be connected to the all too frequent choice to later take your own life. This unsettling trend came at a time when the US was bogged down losing two costly wars simultaneously in Afghanistan and Iraq where 2.7 million troops were deployed and has become the urgent wake-up call for the

Veterans Affairs Department to provide better resources and care in efforts to reverse this growing suicide epidemic.

In response the VA sponsored a 2012 study analyzing death certificates from 21 states from 1999 to 2011 disclosing that the alarming veteran suicide rate was even worse than first thought, revealing up to 22 veterans a day to be committing suicide. That's nearly one every hour both day and night every single day of the year! What surfaced from this shocking news is that no centralized system has even been in place to track veteran suicides. Once the government uses them up as frontline fodder, neither the military nor the feds even bother keeping track of what happens to our former soldiers. Since that revealing 2012 VA study, the VA has apparently not dared to conduct any further research since it undoubtedly would only dig a deeper hole for itself of complete and utter failure to deliver adequate care to its more than 22 million veterans that comprise 13% of all adult Americans.

The VA has a history of covering up the numbers and not taking responsibility for its abject failure. After admitting that 790 veterans under its care committed suicide in 2007, even MSM outlets like *CBS* reviewing public records from 2005 found that 6,256 veterans killed themselves. Reacting to the heat after caught fudging the numbers, from an internal memo written by VA mental health expert Dr. Ira Katz:

Shh! Our suicide prevention coordinators are identifying about 1,000 suicide attempts per month among veterans we see in our medical facilities.

Instead of firing his ass for his feeble cover-up attempt, Katz has been promoted to acting director of mental health operations at the VA headquarters. Katz lied again in an interview with *The Arizona Republic* claiming that while suicides amongst men in the general US population are rising, amongst the veteran population because of his and the VA's great work in progress giving himself a B+, the suicide rate for VA patients is now "stable." Meanwhile, the VA's own national suicide prevention hotline has observed the volume of calls jump 17% from 2009 to 2012, as of June 2012 responding to 17,000 calls per month. From 2011 to 2014 the number of suicides from young male vets who have served in overseas deployments has skyrocketed by 70%. A spokesman for *Vets-Help.org* said that the available death records fail to accurately account for all the veteran suicides, which he estimates to be closer to 30-35 every day.

Using the stress-vulnerability model to understand the many co-occurring factors leading to a decision to end life, genetic predispositions, environmental sociological upbringing and experience within the nature-nurture mixed combo interact with stressful and traumatic events in adulthood, in this case on the battlefield of war that can drive a soldier or veteran shortly after discharge (as many studies show) or decades later in middle or old age to volitionally end life (as still a number of other studies confer, including the VA sponsored 2012 research).

Shortly after the suicide crisis came to light, pro-government rags like the *Washington Post* began running articles pointing out that the average age of veterans killing themselves was closer to 60. The criminal government illegally sending our young men and women to die in oil wars for corporate profit having nothing to do with protecting our so called freedom did its best damage control diffusing the alarming suicide rates by quickly countering with statistics showing that the returning soldiers from the current Middle East wars where soldiers were redeployed on combat tours as many as five times to two concurrent

warfronts were not suiciding nearly as much as either recent veterans never deployed in combat nor near as much as the older vets from the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

A US Army study published in February last year was out to provide the definitive answer to the oft-quoted 22 a day number swirling around Washington and veteran groups alike. So it examined the records of 1.3 million soldiers on active duty in Afghanistan and Iraq and tallied up the suicide deaths of those combat vets discharged from 2001 to 2007 to conclude that between 2001 and 2009 allegedly less than one suicide a day occurred amongst Iraq and Afghanistan deployed veterans. Of course if there ever was an organization that would wish to downplay the "insanity of war equals suicide" equation, it would be the US Army since along with the US government and VA it would have the most to gain from replacing the "22 a day" with a more humane sounding "less than one a day."

The obvious aim is to mislead the public so we don't connect the dots and blame the out of control suicides on our warring government. A carefully coordinated PR agenda made this corrected distinction very explicit, promoted by both Washington and mainstream media to deny that the inhumane and prolonged exposure to war insanity imposed on many of our soldiers has little or nothing to do with the rising suicide rates amongst our veterans. And that's another boldface lie perpetrated against both the American people and especially military veterans used as human fodder for the war profiteering banksters and military security complex to maintain US Empire hegemony at all cost. Proof of this comes in the egregious way the government continues to mistreat and abuse its veterans.

In a recent National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) study released a year ago the fallacious claim that it was the older veterans committing so much suicide that were skewing the results was somewhat refuted in the latest NIMH findings. The results clearly show that the recent younger veterans are also committing suicide at far higher rates than the population at large that never served. But keep in mind that the NIMH like the WHO and CDC are all federal extensions of US Empire racing towards the ruling elite's New World Order and one world government. So the conclusions reached by NIMH would predictably fall short of confirming what most rational thinking human beings already intuitively believe, that regardless of the systematic military brainwashing to turn human beings into unfeeling fighting robotic machines prior to combat deployment, the insanity of especially immoral wars where US soldiers are routinely ordered to commit crimes against humanity makes us very fallible humans inherently vulnerable to war trauma that in turn can cause serious psychological impairment, depression and yes, suicidality.

As an epidemiologist and suicide expert in the NIMH study Michael Schoenbaum explains:

People's natural instinct is to explain military suicide by the 'war-is-hell' theory of the world. But it's more complicated.

Thus the NIMH inexplicably found that the suicide rate for recent veterans who were never combat deployed was a full 16% higher than the recent veterans returning home from multiple combat tours on two warfronts. Of course this result indirectly maintains the "innocence" of the federal government's endless foreign war policy sending US troops around the world in harm's way to fight morally unjustifiable, nonstop imperialistic Empire wars, in effect absolving the warmongering neocon government from accountability in causing the disturbing exponential rise in veteran suicides. Even the NIMH researchers could not explain away this counter-intuitive anomaly.

What we do know from perhaps the most unpopular war in US history and the first actual defeat suffered by US armed forces in Southeast Asia during the 1960's and early 1970's is that 80% of the Vietnam combat veterans 20-25 years after their war experience were still reporting recent Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Thus the debilitating traumatizing effects of war on soldiers as well as civilians tend to permanently leave emotional scars that last a lifetime.

As a case in point, my decorated war hero father who served our nation for 20 years on submarines during the Second World War and Korean War was forced at gunpoint by his superior officers – one a Medal of Honor winner – to machine gun innocent non-Japanese civilian fishing boat families in Pacific waters simply because they were members of the Asian race. Throughout his postwar life even 70 years later he was still suffering from the haunted lingering images and memories of killing defenseless unarmed women and children. This disgraceful, long covered-up racist War Department policy was simply to kill any and all Asians encountered in the Pacific theater seas in order to safeguard the security of all US naval ship locations from being covertly reported to the Japanese military as identified sitting duck targets for subsequent attack. Of course this US policy was no different from the racist practice of singling out only Japanese Americans for labor camp roundups during that same war. Yet no such policy ever existed against German Americans or German fishing boats in North Atlantic waters. But the main point here is my father's enduring PTSD symptoms plagued his conscience and nocturnal sleep with disturbing nightmares throughout his entire life till he died at 100.

If the damage caused by war trauma is commonly a permanent condition inflicted on virtually all war participants, it would also hold that it could easily account for being a contributing causal factor in suicides occurring either one year or 50 years after combat experience. There are numerous studies that contradict the rather strange and questionable US Army and NIMH findings, clearly demonstrating that veterans returning from recent US wars are far more likely to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). As much as 20-30% returning from Mideast wars are estimated to sustain TBI and up to 31% PTSD. Combat vets are more apt to beat their spouses (Vietnam War vets 4.4 times more likely to engage in domestic violence), 62% more likely to end up divorced, suffer from severe drug and alcohol addiction, engage in violent criminal behavior, find themselves unemployed, homeless, in and out of hospitals and/or prisons suffering from a pervasive pattern of self-destructive behavior that too often leads to premature death and suicide than veterans who never saw even a day of combat or fought in any war.

The rate of illicit drug use within the preceding 12 months by Marines that had been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan was about twice the rate of non-deployed Marines (16-18% and 9% respectively). In 2004 near half of veterans in federal prison (46%) were serving time for drug offenses and they were on average given a year longer prison sentence than non-veterans for the exact same crime. With the odds that veterans are twice as likely to become chronically homeless than the non-veteran population, 40% of all homeless men in America are veterans and of those one third are combat vets.

A 2012 study published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* found that PTSD-afflicted combat veterans from recent Middle East wars are more than twice as likely to be arrested for criminal behavior and commit violent crimes as non-combat veterans. Half of Vietnam War veterans with PTSD have been arrested one or more times. And as of 2012 nearly an incredible quarter million aging Vietnam War era veterans were in prison and 17,000 active duty soldiers were either serving time in the brig or awaiting judicial

proceedings. Additionally, a 2009 study of combat Marines suffering from PTSD were six times more likely to be busted for drugs and 11 times more likely to be issued a bad conduct discharge.

Despite their added technical skills, leadership skills, training and experience gained as members of the armed forces, recent veterans across the age spectrum during the post 9/11 era have consistently lagged significantly behind their peer group in employment numbers. At least a 1.5% or higher differential separates fresh out of uniform veterans and their civilian counterparts at every age level. Even after accounting for the expected adjustment period transitioning from the military to civilian life, it's been found that out of a cross-sampling of 4,000 new veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars three years ago, 16% were unemployed. From that jobless group more than one out of three reported being out of work for over a year and nearly one in five for more than two years. So much for adjusting to civilian life.

Reasons for this across-the-boards job disparity between vets and civilians could reflect the widening cultural divide between the 99+% of the US civilian population and the less than one half of 1% in uniform in today's volunteer armed forces. While the overall US population may still be disingenuously paying lip service to the clichéd mantra "support our troops," American employers may be discriminating against hiring veterans fresh out of the military. Another perhaps even more plausible explanation may be that veterans' civilian counterparts applying for the same jobs may hold the competitive edge in attaining a higher level of education.

In any event, on top of all their problems and crosses to bear, veterans are struggling mightily to find work in this post 9/11 world and, especially amongst the male population that already tends to be more traditional and macho, a typical male derives much of his identity from what he does for a living, providing for his family, and if chronically unable to make it in today's increasingly competitive job market, a growing sense of failure, utter powerlessness and deepening depression often lead to suicidality. And especially men experienced in firearms and war violence tend to follow through to finality their suicides in contrast to females who are more apt to use the far less lethal method of drug overdose in their suicide attempts.

Speaking of drugs, another aspect of today's plight of at-risk war veterans is the overuse of addictive Big Pharma medications, be they opioid painkillers, tranquilizers for treating insomnia, anxiety, mental confusion, angry outbursts, hallucinations associated with PTSD or antidepressants for elevating depressed moods or mood stabilizers for erratic unstable moods. The ensuing ravages of snowing under thousands of returning war veterans with combat trauma through overly prescribed pharmacological drugs only worsens their mental stability, social functioning and prognosis. Yet the VA is notorious for overprescribing major psychotropic medications that also too frequently become a lethal cocktail for either accidental overdose or intentional suicide. Then mixing them with alcohol abuse makes for even a deadlier combination. Big Parma drugs merely smother symptoms, never addressing the root cause and too often over-sedating troubled veterans turning them into addicted zombies.

It's been determined that the biggest accidental killer in the US is prescription drug overdose surpassing motor vehicle accidents, particularly amongst the younger age group of white Americans from 25-34 that also happens to be the same age group that's served in recent wars. The death rate by prescription overdose of this group has skyrocketed five

times in just 15 years from 1999 to 2014. An estimated 125 Americans are dying every day from drug overdoses. Servicemen and women injured in wars are treated with heavy doses of opioid pain relievers, the drug most often involved in lethal overdoses. As out of control as the drug overdoses from prescription drugs is amongst the civilian population, veterans are dying at a rate 33% higher rate. The US crime cabal government's illegal heroin smuggling operation out of the world's largest opium producer Afghanistan where US soldiers have been ordered to stand guard over the poppy fields has also directly contributed to the recent surge of OD deaths. But you'll never find out that information watching the network news. A bereaved wife of an Army soldier who had died from a prescription overdose testifying at a House subcommittee hearing stated:

> Keeping our men and women doped up to keep them quiet and happy is not treatment. It is cruelty and torture and in too many cases it's manslaughter.

The bottom line is drugs alone are disastrous. Without extensive conjoint therapy that includes helping veterans build a long-term social support system along with employment assistance and in many cases long-term care, the treatment outcome for huge numbers of our mentally and emotionally wounded veterans will sadly remain very bleak.

As a double whammy, alcohol, nicotine and substance abuse and dependency are extremely common amongst active duty military personnel but even more so amongst returning veterans. Often compounded by co-occurring diagnoses like PTSD or TBI, highly addictive drugs (prescription, over-the-counter or illegal) are frequently misused to self-medicate trauma, grieving and loss, depression, anxiety, anger, boredom, and failure to adjust. And then those veterans who never seek treatment and support or are placed on an indefinite VA hold or given the VA runaround eventually stop making efforts to receive help and fall through the ever-widening cracks of an overburdened, broken system. Obviously those vets are at the gravest risk of self-harm.

In a study conducted five years ago 12-15% of the near 90,000 soldiers screened returning from Iraq were identified as having alcohol problems. Longitudinally from 1980-2005 15-20% of troops were found to be frequent heavy drinkers. More than half (53%) of those recently deployed to Iraq were identified as heavy binge drinkers. More than one in four out of 6,527 soldiers were screened for alcohol misuse and 12% for alcohol related behavioral problems. Those exposed to life-threatening situations and war atrocities scored significantly higher in the survey. Among a smaller sample of male soldiers over 50% smoked tobacco prior to deployment increasing during time in Iraq to near 60%. The increase in smoking for female troops went from over 40 to over 50%. Amongst veterans in 2007 one in four smoked compared to one in five in the civilian population. But for younger vets born between 1975 to 1989, the rate of smokers increased to 37%.

It's also important to be cognizant of who exactly is funding and conducting the research on veterans. Certainly any and all government linked sources would maintain a vested self-interest in producing research outcomes that either minimize or do not negatively reflect or incriminate government policy or policymakers. Most often it's major think tank corporations that draw their primary income source from government contracts such as the Rand Corporation, the MITRE corporation (heavily implicated in geoengineering spraying of toxic heavy metals on vast Western populations weakening and impairing human health), as well as VA and Congressionally funded studies. Thus it's no different from the same corrupt game that Big Pharma engages in when it buys off the FDA to approve untested, harmful

drugs or Monsanto buying research results claiming its GMO's and chemical products are harmless to our health and environment when it's been proven beyond a question of doubt that Big Money like Big Government and Big Media all spew out disinformation and propaganda lies 24/7 to manipulate, brainwash, control and harm us human beings around the world.

Both the Veterans Health Administration and US military have gone to great lengths to purportedly beef up their suicide prevention program initiated in 2007 already a half dozen years into the longest wars in American history. But expanding their program efforts to adequately treat and support soldiers' medical and mental health needs have fallen drastically short of the enormously increasing demands. In all its bumbling failures and shortcomings to correct its identified problems and improve its care and treatment of veterans, not one senior official at Veterans Affairs has been terminated for the gross negligence responsible for thousands of veterans dying while waiting for service. Former acting VA Inspector General Richard Griffin had this to say:

Once someone loses his job or gets criminally charged for doing this, it will no longer be a game. And that will be the shot heard around the system.

On top of all this criminal negligence, veterans are also experiencing a profound sense of betrayal not just from the VA. It's been confirmed that their own government sees them as the new enemy, equating veterans as potential homegrown terrorists. An uncovered 2009 internal Homeland Security document that DHS director Janet Napolitano vigorously defended explicitly targets returning veterans as major national security threats, anticipating that large numbers of veterans growing increasingly angry will vengefully use their military expertise against their federal government especially in response to deep state's rising oppression and tyranny. The nation that sent them into harm's way so the rich can get richer now views its former warriors as the newly identified domestic enemy ready to lead the people's insurgency in efforts to overthrow the current neocon regime entrenched in Washington. Under the label of "radicalized anti-government extremists," the current fascist totalitarian police state oligarchy perceives veteran patriots as its most "clear and present" danger, even more so than the jihadist terrorists the US created and still supports.

When soldiers and former soldiers begin to see how they've been so badly misused and abused by their government and "superior officers," too often ordered to commit war crime atrocities on foreign lands against people and nations that pose no threat to America, this bitter pill of reality becomes too hard to swallow. Vets ultimately realize that the nation they love clearly acts in the interests of a corrupt central banking system, Wall Street corps and the military security complex over the interests of protecting the American people that veterans took sworn oaths to defend. Eventually an existential crisis and cognitive dissonance of immense proportions suddenly or gradually implodes within a veteran to reach this sad and bitter conclusion. Facing the cold hard reality that the nation they nearly died for in the end treats them like shit, coming home suffering from PTSD, TBI and severe depression, when they seek help they run into a brick wall of red tape bureaucracy. The VA is severely shorthanded especially in professional mental health staffing, and unable to meet the overwhelming demand. Thus veterans get lost within a chaotic, inept, CYA culture of corruption, only to learn that the VA system continues to demonstrate it doesn't care. Meanwhile, vets are frequently compounded by a myriad of personal and social problems attempting to make the adjustment to civilian life within a bankrupt economy and too few jobs to offer, so amidst growing alienation and isolation, too many veterans fall through the

cracks concluding that suicide is the most viable and ultimately only option for them.

The fact remains that the feds in power since 9/11 have illegally and treasonously trampled on the US Constitution that they too once took sworn oaths to uphold and have chosen to blatantly violate, relentlessly engaging in a sinister plot to criminalize dissent in America by any means necessary. For defending ourselves, our Constitution and our nation against this growing tyrannical threat and grossest injustice that our Founding Fathers warned us against, we are all now being targeted in their crosshairs. But the entire world long victimized by this powerful elite are fast waking up. We are reaching the tipping point of critical mass when the oppressors can no longer hide from the truth and the karmic accountability that awaits them.

Joachim Hagopian is a West Point graduate and former US Army officer. He has written a manuscript based on his unique military experience entitled "Don't Let The Bastards Getcha Down." It examines and focuses on US international relations, leadership and national security issues. After the military, Joachim earned a master's degree in Clinical Psychology and worked as a licensed therapist in the mental health field with abused youth and adolescents for more than a quarter century. In recent years he has focused on his writing, becoming an alternative media journalist. His blog site is at http://empireexposed.blogspot.co.id/

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