

III-30. War Promises Meaning to the Otherwise Meaningless Lives

It appears far easier to remain true to war than to other means of conflict resolution. Does it work? One thing is clear: Only the dead have seen end of war and others live rest of their lives. This is not an original observation, nor the first voice of conscience. Physical and psychological scars haunt the survivors touched by war. With ever-increasing ferocity and potency as means of destruction through wars, religions and state try to legitimize each other.

Historically, premise of war to end all wars remains invalid. Such man-made upheavals are continuing thread of European way of life for at least last three millennia. Killing and chilling effects of war do not resolve a conflict. It was never an option but a necessity. That is the tragedy of wars to resolve conflict. If no-war is not realistic, war is also not a realistic option for getting-over-there.

Doubt is labeled as apostasy in wars presumably waged to resolve conflicts. Clouding issues with smoke and mirrors, fog, lies, concoctions, and flimsy excuses are the mainstay of wars. Language and sensitivity fall victim to propaganda. The survivors are left with the task of dealing with and speaking the unspeakable. In the end, only insidious self-doubt is aided by war. How to be faithful to which that seems so fundamentally contradictory? Voices of conscience (Tolstoy, Shaw, Kafka, Borges, Levi, Gandhi) offer alternatives to come to grip with contradictory and chaotic aspects of human behaviors.

Wars at best postpone the day of reckoning by invoking authority. Wars encourage secrecy that destroys reason that thrives on plurality of thought in an open environment. Submission by violent methods does little to bring the warring parties to the table with equitable, fair and rational options. At best, violent means of conflict resolution are like overstretched rubber bands: Excesses over-compensate excesses as one does not use the same courts and rules to judge oneself as others.

Mass-destruction and mass-deception

In 1903 Rutherford and Soddy estimated that the energy released from radioactive decay might be thousands to million times more than the energy from the same amount of dynamite. Rutherford surmised *some fool might blow up the universe unaware*. To which Soddy remarked *the man who put his hand on the lever by which the parsimonious nature regulates so jealously the output of this store of energy would possess a weapon by which he could destroy the earth if he chooses*. The rest is the history of this marriage of power and fools. Dynamics of this relationship continues to dominate the contemporary international politics.

Title of this chapter is my understanding of wars that continues into the next. A thought provoking book on the subject is by Chris Hedges (2002): *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (Public Affairs, New York. 2002, pp. 211). Another book of interest is *On the Natural History of Destruction* by W. G. Sebald (1996) and translated from German by A. Bell (Random House, 2003). Deeper analysis of the rise and falls of empires by Kannedy (1987) is still a classic that traces the transition from overt imperialism to strategies for the economic controls by the European powers.

Strength of the narrative by Hedges is that it shows that irrespective of time and place there is much in common in all wars. He has articulated what people go through in wars and conflicts that have wrought unprecedented misery upon the countless millions during the last century alone. Wars continue to do so long after wars are over. As a correspondent Hedges has covered numerous violent conflicts. His perspective comes from first hand experience at the frontline. He also has sensitivity to look into it the day-after when the media reporters have moved on to other assignments. Dimensions of misery caused by wars are virtually incomprehensible to those who have not been there. And certainly numbed bodies, senses and mind of those who have been there is of little help: Nothing matches the real thing, not even the aftermath.

To put it bluntly, while few are celebrated in miles of tended graves, during the last century alone hundreds of millions of soldiers and innocents have ended up as fertilizers. Outcome of war benefits those who manage to stay at the frays of the game of the hunter in pursuit of the hunted. The beneficiaries of wars are crooks, despots, and scoundrels with corrupt motives for empowerment. The deprived and depraved opportunists see that war gives a better chance to better themselves by hook or crook. So much for the meaning in the lives of those who conduct wars.

Could it be that misery of being at the brink of death is the only way to bring meaning to life? Do people look for something incomprehensible to believe in? Such matters of pep-talk by the cheer-leader may possibly have an appeal to those with otherwise meaningless lives.

Hedges' hypothesis is that people become faithful to which provides meaning. Motivated by a call for repentance, his focus is on the not so uncommon perception that war unleashes a force

that turns populations into canon-fodder for self-destruction. Do we long for carnage and destruction? A suggestion is offered in the book (p. 3): The enduring attraction of war is that *even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapid ness of much of our lives become apparent... And war is an enticing elixir. It gives us resolve, a cause. It allows us to be noble.* Is it the kind of ethos and pathos that permeates epic tragedies like Iliad, Ramayan or Mahabharat? In my own being, I have not felt a need to experience this kind of *high*.

Is the perception of such *high* instilled for social indoctrination? However, if not before, to most people the *high* seems very stupid once the *rush* is gone. A soldier write: *I went up to the post hoping for some action. But to have a shell land right on top of where you are, with the splinters flying, it scares shit out of you. Once you have been under fire, you never want it again.* Another stationed at this post at 22000 feet between the Himalayan mountain range was not talking about the physical beauty of the terrain as he sums up: *This is the most depraved thing I have ever seen. I don't know if this is war. But it is definitely hell.*

By some reckoning during the last 5000 years of the human history, there have been less than 30 days of no-war anywhere on the Earth. Yet, horrors of wars are beyond the experience of most people. As glorified and sanitized in the media, war is entertainment to numb human psyche. Even the non-fiction of the filtered narratives of conflicts and sanitized images of the ghastliness depict little of what really goes on. It is usually about what the victors want you to know. The overall desensitizing effect of such methods and means is not very different than those

of the graphic violence (Western, arcade games, X-rated fiction) that serves gore in the guise of fiction.

Cheer-leaders build on inadequacies. They thrive on barrage of moderately conflicting inputs. Most people can hardly recognize the underlying contradictions. Possibly for such reasons in times of malaise and desperation, war is a potent distraction that could possibly give a hope of renewal. At least that is the pitch that has been exploited by war-mongers of all stripes. All wars, with possible exception of the truly internal civil uprising and strife, seem to build on this false sense of a higher purpose coupled to the second-order pride in those who have little else to look forward to.

McCarthyism. These hearings by US senators were carried out in the climate of belligerent accusations and intimidations without any basis in fact. No one McCarthy summoned went to jail – even the few who were convicted won on appeal. But the probes ruined lives and careers with intimidation and unproven hints of taints.

Destruction of honest inquiry. Waging war on other people is often paddled as a necessary part of survival, security, and way of life. It is couched as a game, campaign, model, or ideal. Doing-the-job, as in dropping or loading the bombs, becomes the sole measure of the individual responsibility. With such rationalizations making the bombs does not appear much different than making toys or at least the toy guns. Myths are paddled by second rate intellectual inputs to find ways to justify pillage, loot, burn, rape, and replace. Irrespective of the time and place, the devil seems to reappear and strike the unsuspecting.

What gets people hooked on to it? What is the cost of this addiction to war? May be because many people do not come to realize how exciting life is unless confronted with imminent death. In the end, real casualty of war is integrity, common sense, objectivity, moderation, independence of minds, and whatever meaningful existed before.

For most people war is mere spectacle - a kind of virtual reality in which lies of spies, spooks and sneaky guys do the smoke and mirror tricks. In real life we ask our 8th graders to be objective. Yet in this virtual environment we tolerate cheerleaders built up as oxymoron of *tolerant bigot* or *intelligent hawk*. Intelligence for war is not about openness. How can there be intellectual openness if there is mindless conviction of faith?

War-mongers rely on rationalizations without accountability to whip up hysteria from white lies. For example, US senate overwhelmingly gave war powers to President Johnson who concocted the lie about the Gulf of Tonkins incidence. The incidence never happened, not even anything close to it. Exactly the same hysteria was whipped up thirty years later words of mass deception by Bush-Powell-Rice machine for the putative weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as a pretext for preemptive strike. No such evidence was found, not even close. Yet the lie was used to slaughter and displace millions more. In fact, willful lies are a common denominator to the excuses used to perpetuate wars. At this gut-level wars are motivated by desires for empowerment and economic subjugation to pass on the cost of an unsustainable way of life. Unfortunately, many wish to be persuaded by make-belief of a higher purpose.

Do the leaders know this? Certainly yes, that is why they lie. It is often difficult to tell when they are not being wishful-liars. No body lies all the time. If they did, nobody will ever

believe them. Purpose of lies and fog of disinformation is to keep you guessing with a modicum of credibility. After all, believers believe because they want a chance to believe. Such *reasons* are invented as the talking heads (church, politicians, experts) create a consensus with buzzwords and astroturf. Content and critical evaluation is certainly not a part of equations to perpetuate the myths. The strategy is to destroy thought or even the context.

War suspends thought, especially self-critical thought. In such environment one fact appears as good as the next. Models of polarized dialectic and rhetoric for modern wars follow from might-is-right, and not the other way. Never-ending conflicts are motivated by thinly veiled self-interests and devious means of economic empowerment.

To further their cause, democratic states as well as the criminals and despots adhere to the fascistic fundamentalism of moral certitude of the agents of God. Even at the dawn of the 21st century we hear from the American president: *We go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world.* This is in the long tradition of pronouncements of evil empire, axis of evil, threats to freedom, manifest destiny and whatever else can be made to stick for the moment without regard to the facts or the consequences. With such words of mass deception are created messages, alliances, and axes of deception. Worse perpetrators tend to be those with enough weapons of mass destruction and arsenals to incinerate the globe tens of thousands of times over. **Prosecution of war entails willful lying.** At a subtle but insidious level self-doubt is aided by monstrosity of war. With the loss of eloquence, augments and plurality of thought language is reduced to cliché that blatantly challenge the innate sense of fairness. Machiavellians appear pale in comparison to plotters of modern warfare. Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* appears rational in

comparison when he says: *All my means are sane, my motive and my object mad.*

Legitimacy of wars is always concocted. Proselytizing, whether for faith or war, is meant to rob critical faculties of individuals and societies. Such activities have had long standing synergy. The blame-game starts by demonizing the other side. Ones own inadequacies are dismissed with platitudes of patriotism, appeals to racial superiority, and tribal DNA. More recent excuses are built in the name of international order, security, and way-of-life.

Secrecy and propaganda undermine the transparency of all processes. While hiding the self-interest, myths of *just and noble causes* are skillfully perpetuated to recruit cannon fodder. As self-aggrandizing gets upper hand in the propaganda machine, casualties of war are reason, truth, order, young, poor, culture, principles and institutions that safe-guard plurality of thought and action. To be convincing the process must start at the highest level and then chimed by all those who have been bought and wish to be counted. The cultural cloud and fog of secrecy envelops as the *coalition of the willing* with astroturf of the supplanted locals is backed by conspiracy of silence. Under these conditions, duped media has little staying power on real issues. People have short memories, at least so are they made to believe.

While hiding deeper interests and real motives, skill of plotting a modern war lies in building on the selective use of the world order to undermine the efficacy of the collective thought processes, control mechanisms, and shared values. Such moves are intrinsic in the rejection of the Kyoto accords, the International court, undermining the United Nations processes, and effective disassociation of the flow of capital from the flow of goods, resources and labor in the international trade.

First offence calls for secrecy, shock and awe. Invaders are emboldened as they sense that they are unaccountable. It is more so as the histories are written and rewritten by victors. As the history of US suggests that even the most benevolent revisions do not undo the damage. Soul searching rarely influences behaviors of the future decision-makers. If politically expedient they might issue apologies. Yet the injustices by the victors are never corrected. As far as the cultures are concerned, once created, the rabbit-fences rarely go down.

Premeditated genocide: Just punishment and just war

Leaders, planner, plotters, and bullies often justify, or at least disguise, war as just cause and just punishment. In all such cases who is punished and who benefits is shrouded by message control. Even the precision guided ten-ton (20,000 pound) bombs hardly ever hit the leader wining and dining in their nuclear proof bunkers. Consider the carnage of bombing on the civilians.

Ponder what it means to have an entire city with all its buildings, trees, inhabitants, domestic pets, fixtures, and fittings destroyed. The remains of human beings are everywhere. Flies swarm around them, the floors and steps of cellar are thick with slippery finger-length maggots. Rats and flies rule the city. The few eyewitness accounts are ghastly, but not complete. In the midst of rubble, out of sheer panic, the population tries to carry on as if nothing has happened. No wonder survivors find difficult to talk about it.

Nothing is more sickening than watching human lives get snuffed out. War is not swatting a passive fly on a wall. It is never as easy, neat or clean as portrayed in movies. While showing depravity, what the media fails to show is that bravery lies in finding solutions to conflict. Killing contradicts the instinctive *where there is love there is life*. Even putting ones own

life on line is like finding meaning for life through death. For such reasons some people find it exciting when lives are on the line. They invent reasons for wars - to pitch people against people by putting lives of some above those of others. Even their publicly stated reasons appear insignificant if cool heads were to prevail. This will happen more quickly if only the opposing leader were to meet face to face, even with guns in their hands.

Technology of warfare has evolved to overcome instincts that occasionally poke through indoctrination. A mechanized chain of command turns cowards into killing machines. Bombing is a game without eye-contact. Consider the indifference of a bomber who said: *I had no idea who was there, who they were targeting. But I knew it was important, so we went and did our job.* In this particular case in Afghanistan the mission was not accomplished although scores died as collateral damage.

Methods of modern warfare dehumanize all sides into such robots. For such purposes reality is portrayed as smudges on the computer screen. It is the virtual reality augmented by telescopic-sight of machine guns and myopic visions propped by pep talks. Humans deprived of independence of thought are inhumane and depraved. It is no surprise that soldiers are often drugged during the war and long thereafter.

Destruction and annihilation by markets. There are other ancient ways of dehumanizing people through mayhem and destruction. Methods of rape, loot, and inhumane treatment (water-boarding) remain the order of day. If this is not at the gun-point then it is under the conditions of starvation where people are forced into selling their possessions and bodies. Crusaders and Colonial methods of loot and destruction of cultural icons are slowly transformed into collections in the European museums and a market in ancient artifacts. In fact, wide-spread looting in the

aftermath of the fall of Iraq was justified by a US General as *the right of people*. That is also the purpose of free-markets. The gospel of the merchants is spread through all forms of media to create alien perceptions. It is all for the resource grab.

Conspiracy of silence. War is a cynical act for the economic exploitation. Numbness induced by wars is such that some times it seems better to forget. Others become participants by not confronting the lies. Control of resources drive out what does not serve the new masters. War prays on the self-destructive tendencies of the young who are struggling to find meaning in life and at the same time make ends meet. It creates a mind-set that fails to recognize dangers of pollution, smoking, alcohol, drugs and other self-destructive behaviors. People often want to drop out when things are not going well. War is just another way to do it - but made out to be more socially acceptable.

Patriotic drivel is often used as the justification for killing in war. Justification of wars comes in many shades. Real motives are rarely, if ever, acknowledged. Paddling myths is necessary to entice people into conflicts. It is facilitated by memorized aphorisms and buzzwords that inculcate a feeling of being victim. Pseudo-intellectuals and talking-heads mold the mission into beliefs. Warriors and victims alike treat shame and alienation with silence. Wary of bursting bubble many do not want to hear the truth of war.

I Ain't Gonna Study War No More. It is an essential character of war that they cause irreversible damage and often lead to irreversible actions. Wars are meant to numb thoughts and dull human instincts in order to counteract the basic pattern of human behavior. In such an environment one wishes for the peace of just times. Is this the concern behind the chorus: *I ain't gonna study war*

no more, ain't gonna study war no more, ain't gonna study war no more...

Why do we study war? Virtually all history, at least the way it is taught, relies and credits wars as the turning points for people and nations. It may not be so but it is the common denominator of the perception introduced in the grade school. Is it a useful lesson plan for ways of solving problems and resolving conflicts?

Although it should, history does not entertain doubts. History is not about what happened. The way it is taught and often presented, history is a contrived account to continue to serve the victors. It is the wishful part of what some think we should know. It is for the empowerment of the few. It is a means of subjugation through perpetuated myths. It creates a uniform set of values and standards that can be more easily manipulated. It creates a perception of inevitability of the outcome under the conditions of cloud and fog. It closes mind away from more viable alternatives.

Imperialism. Possession of certitude is hallmark of imperialism. Imperial symbols may change, but the process is about a grip on the means that control existence. Consider their methods and means. Power of the ancient Egyptian (3000 to 1500 BCE) rulers derived from a cozy relationship between the state and those who divined with knowledge. Such priests rarely went out to subjugate others and all the men of Pharaoh were buried with the emperor. The Aryans went on to conquer land in India with *the divine powers vested by horse*. Alexander used similar methods backed with panache for propaganda to show his relationship to the divine. Even at the dawn of 21st century, when things were not going well in Iraq, the invaders spin a tale of bravado from an accidentally upturned military vehicle.

Romans turned peasants into killers with short swords made from steel imported from South India via Assyria. This is the only way they could enjoy colonial wines and loot. As an aside, “*huri*” in Arabic also means raisin. Could it be that visions of everlasting heaven after jihad (holy-war) follow from a product of grape mixed with some sex? The Romans model of imperial government was adopted in 357 AD to shape Imperial Christianity. As a first step the church ordered that all the books that do not jibe with the new objectives should be destroyed. That holy-smoke still clouds visions of many a leaders and followers alike. What remained was sanitized into New Testament commonly known as The Bible. Rule of law and laws to rule have become synonymous instruments of conquest and subjugation.

Shaping perceptions in public domain. Human mind is impressionable. It is essential as a habit for survival. In seeking meaning mind is affected by words. Words of propaganda perpetuate lies and myths. Effectiveness of such means depends on the degree of indifference in the target population. Could this be the reason that we teach history to children? What is common to politics, wars, media coverage, advertising, propaganda, and education? They manufacture consent for aggression and exploitation.

Consider the way ancient Greeks are glamorized. In doing so one could take a reasoned approach. But to mold perceptions of children we take a far more sinister approach analogous to the approach Alexander took to solving the secret of Gordian knot in Phrygia. As the story goes, in a Persian village the yolk was tied to the cart through a knot that no body could untie for centuries. During his campaign to the East Alexander passed by. After failing to untie the knot he cut the knot with his dagger that he kept with him for committing suicide if he fell on the hard times.

The event has become a model for the imperial mind. Many people have taken this approach as a sign of strength. People who cannot solve complex problem are celebrated because they *cut through complex situations*. Even educated-people learn to mimic such value-laden bits of information and anecdotes.

Wars are for control of minds. After destroying the alien and different, and subjugating the rest through mind-control, wars are about controlling perceptions of the *indifferent* or the so called silent majority. Here the end game is to control all the inputs to mind, or at least filter and shroud the inputs into cultural clouds and fog of secrecy.

One loses identity by losing independence of mind. Control of resources follows. It ultimately threatens not just the way of life and sustainability but also the identity that comes from independence of mind. Who are the targets of the opportunists? You and me, and it matters little whether we are on the winning side or not.

Tools of mind control. What makes human most vulnerable is the perception of independence without the ability to sustain independence of thought, reason and action. One succumbs to concocted stories that cannot be affirmed or denied. Although both are lie-boxes supplanted with faith, myths embrace contradictions better than legends. For such audiences, the mass-media provides mindless sound bites of little value. The history books create myths and icons of what it may have been for the purpose of the victors. Through such means wars, state, and religions legitimize each other: *Praise the war and pass the ammunition*. Its goal is to involve everybody in the guilt and the loot. Both do not sound as bad when everybody shares and the blame is passed around as something beyond the individual control and responsibility. As the lesser means do not work, the

indifferent are galvanized by war-cry. In such an environment resort to secrecy is as good as omniscience, and that too not in much different ways.

Media has a long experience of nurturing such a blend. Pseudo-intellectuals inundate the unsuspecting with make-believe and jargons of attitude-adjustment. Their limp articles with flaccid arguments ignore the issues by not even dwelling on the major themes. Teachers chime in to celebrate and sing the sanitized versions of what happened, or even present a 'revisionist' view. Sanitized stories for sanitized homes and minds give appearance of the real time participation.

Vicarious as it may be for the spectator, minute by minute concocted accounts do create a perception of virtual reality of being there. Rooting and sloganeering follows from such experiences. Often the participants made to feel that they are threatened. In such an environment, the propaganda and conflicting inputs make one believe that no-war is utopia. It may be so, but only for the mindless fools who do not want to face the prospect of the real outcome or go through the pain of rational problem-solving.

Open-media spice shelf. Just as it is difficult to see in fog and haze, it is also difficult to see in blinding light. So as to keep people guessing, if not to keep in darkness, the media blitzes rely on pretty much the same spices and herbs in varying combinations. Consider the impact of the invented issues popularized by the public relation campaigns to side-swipe corporate swindles, deception, hidden wars, invisible wars, use of depleted uranium bombs, spin-doctoring, manufactured consent, and claims of weapons of mass destruction perpetuated by words of mass deception. By the same token the grass-root support is concocted to hide whatever else may be underneath.

Message-Boxes and pack-of-lies. Repeated words invent swift answers for shock and awe. Opinion makers use pack of repeated words to pretend objectivity to ignore and deny unpleasant facts of reality. Of course one can become hero by admitting mistake as omission even if it is so. Devices of damage-control provide people with something to talk about rather than to converse and inform about what happened. Like articulations of a mentally-challenged such talks go in circles. Watch a leader who has difficulty going beyond dribble of few memorized lines of buzz-words. They tend to drift into the same set of words. Instead of making a cogent argument, why do they repeat the same words no matter what the question is? Boxes of meaningless terms, if not the outright lies, are designed by the paid opinion-makers. They invoke negative evidence. Denials rely on implications that follow from images that draw from presumptions and biases. They exasperate people into submission to the authority-knows-best. Is it that simple?

Significant war footage aired by media is often pre-screened and authorized by the watch-dogs. Such devices project appearance of a consistent story. They rely on the short memory of people to deny culpability, credibility and accountability. Consider the claims of *weapons of mass-destruction* by one US president, or *I did not have sex with that woman* by another. There is no focus because there is nothing to focus on. The objective of staying in the box is to fixate, shift-down, or drown the discussion. Once the lie-box is hammered in, contradictions appear to be outside the box.

At least superficially one can not prove that bad media coverage, or for that matter belief in a non-existent omniscience, causes damage to individuals. It gives livelihood to many who introduce credibility. There is no requirement that such opinion

makers should not have such a blatant conflict of interest in grinding their ideological axe.

Recently in Vancouver I encountered a high-end art dealer. The statue in question belonged to a culture she knew little about. She tried to hide her ignorance in about a dozen different ways: first by sticking to the memorized words, then referring to the wrong period and culture, and then playing the blame game under the guise that the potential buyers are not well informed therefore it is not necessary to have correct information! The approach is not much different than a recent pronouncement from the US State Department: *They are a bunch of liars. We've dealt with ZZZ (it does not really matter – take your pick) enough to know bluster and lying with confidence are a part of the way they negotiate.*" He was doing the same to sell this message.

Fog of combat. Lies and spies perpetuate myths through propaganda to discredit and misinform. Urban legends are created for the political assaults on the moderate elements of the society. Control becomes the watchword in such an environment as most succumb through conspiracy of silence.

As is the case with most lies, in the end populations become victim of their own propaganda. It is far more dangerous than the friendly fire in combat. As words appeal to biases, most people become prisoners of words just as people fall in trap of judging others based on their appearances, clothes and title. People give up when faced with varying (conflicting if not contradictory) explanation. Self-reliance is replaced by the hope that may be somebody out there understands or at least knows what they are doing. In such environment it is often difficult to appreciate that not all ideas are created equal. Weighing evidence and the contributing factors to sort out a complex situation requires patience to collect and deal with information.

Institutions to safeguard the society are the real casualties of war. Independence of the community is often at stake in war. It includes cultural context to all the internal controls which are intricately tied to the economic state. Wars are driven by economic considerations, and I am not certain if there were ever of any other kind.

In recent years many a cherished institutions and cultures have become victim of the flow of capital that is outside the controls of any reasonable aspirations of the targeted communities. It is often hand-waved as the collateral damage. In the end, the goal of any war or terrorist act is to destroy will of the people to change their own course. Two thousand years ago this was the reason given by the Romans for their punitive wars: to teach by burning and looting. Crusaders called it divine retribution. Colonials called it civilizing influence on the barbarians. The mindset to perpetuate such myths is not much different than that turned the British traders in India into ruthless autocratic rulers with imperialistic grand designs. Such deceptive practices and devious means still remain the norm for the modern variations of imperialism. The outcome of oil and natural resource concessions in the developing parts of the world is that the locals invariably lose all the local controls. As a result survivors of globalization sell their resources cheap in a contrived free market.

Wars do not necessarily select for the traits most desirable for survival of individuals or the community. Deliberate aggression by a group to control resources of the other invariably leads to mass dislocation or worse. Messianic interests with little scruples exploit, as swindlers with economic self-interest and cunning come to dominate. An inevitable outcome of the wars in

the twentieth century is evolution of over-consuming and unsustainable way of life for a few.

In the end one may wonder: With so much effort, labor, capital, resources and intellect invested in planning and execution of destruction from the just wars, why can we not find a way to a just and more sustainable existence? Have we gone mad? Are we not mad enough at what we see as carnage and mayhem wrought upon by the opportunists? Is there a message here for dealing with omniscience? Alas, solvable problems are not always solved. As wars destroy lives at great cost, medicine struggles to save lives at a fraction of the cost.

Against Gods and Humbug

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