

LAOS: THE BIRTHPLACE OF MODERN U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRET WAR AND A NEW "AHUMAN" AGE
A Powerpoint Presentation by Fred Branfman

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Note: This is largely a transcript of a presentation made on March 14, 2004 in Santa Barbara, though it has been significantly expanded.

1. THE U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH: A GOVERNMENT THAT INCREASINGLY OPERATES IN SECRET

LAOS: BIRTHPLACE OF MODERN U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRET WAR AND A NEW "AHUMAN" AGE

Key U.S. Executive Military, Police and Foreign Policy Agencies:

The President and National Security Council

The Department of Defense

The Pentagon

The National Security Agency

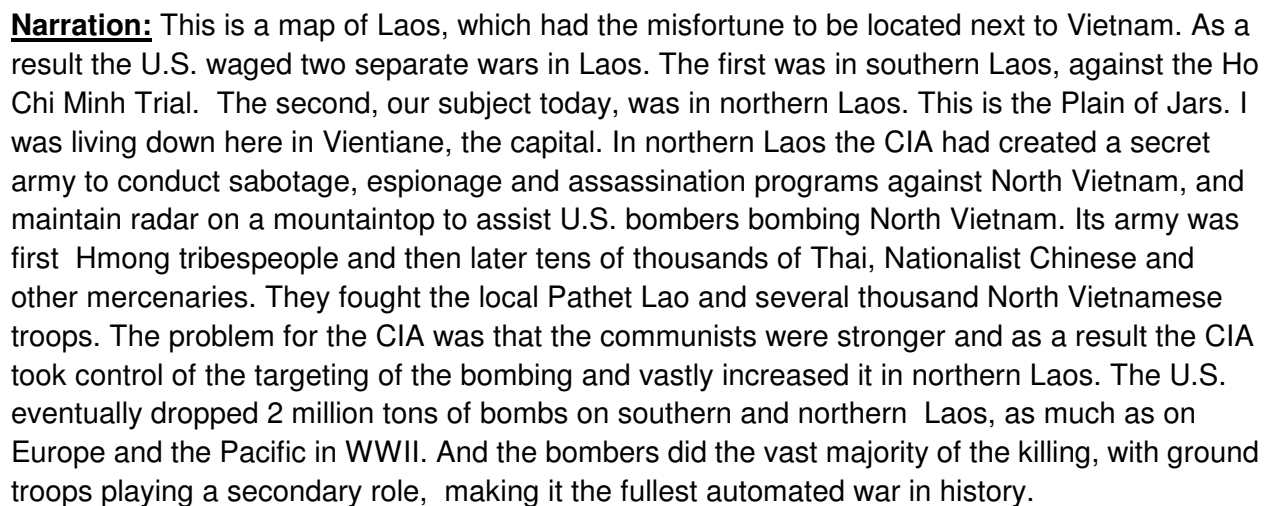
The Central Intelligence Agency

The Department of Homeland Security

The Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Department of State

Narration: The subject of our talk today is 'Laos: The Birthplace of Modern U.S. Executive Secret War and a New "Ahuman" Age'. By 'U.S. Executive' I mean the giant Executive Branch military and police agencies, including the Pentagon, CIA, NSA, FBI and Department of Homeland Security. These agencies constitute the most powerful governing institution in the history of the world, one that largely operates in secret. It is in that sense a "Secret Government". Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel recently announced that they were reducing the U.S. Army to its lowest level since the end of World War II. What he didn't mention was that they've **increased** their spending on secret war, e.g. the global assassination program conducted by drones from the air and Joint Special Operations Command commandoes on the ground, now operating in at least 100 countries. The Founders established a system of checks and balances, so that the legislative and judiciary could limit executive power. After all, they were rebelling against a King. In 1960, President Eisenhower warned that the Executive Branch and the corporations they represent had become a danger to this country. He called it "The Military-Industrial Complex." Today the Executive Branch is far stronger, and what we'll be discussing today are the secret activities of the U.S. Executive Branch, which reached their fullest flowering in the country of Laos when I was living there from 1967-71. Although the Executive justifies its secrecy on the grounds of 'protecting national security,' experts familiar with classified documents like John Kerry and Dan Ellsberg report that far less than 10% would be of any conceivable use to U.S. 'enemies.' The major purpose of Executive secrecy is to keep knowledge of its countless crimes and mistakes, including those jeopardizing national security, from the American people so as to prevent its budgets from being cut.



3. MY BELIEFS ABOUT AMERICA – THEN

CRIME DOESN'T PAY

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

MIGHT DOESN'T MAKE RIGHT

OUR LEADERS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DECENT

AMERICAN LEADERS DESERVE OUR TRUST

AMERICA IS A DEMOCRACY

AMERICA ENJOYS FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

AMERICA IS GUIDED BY THE RULE OF LAW

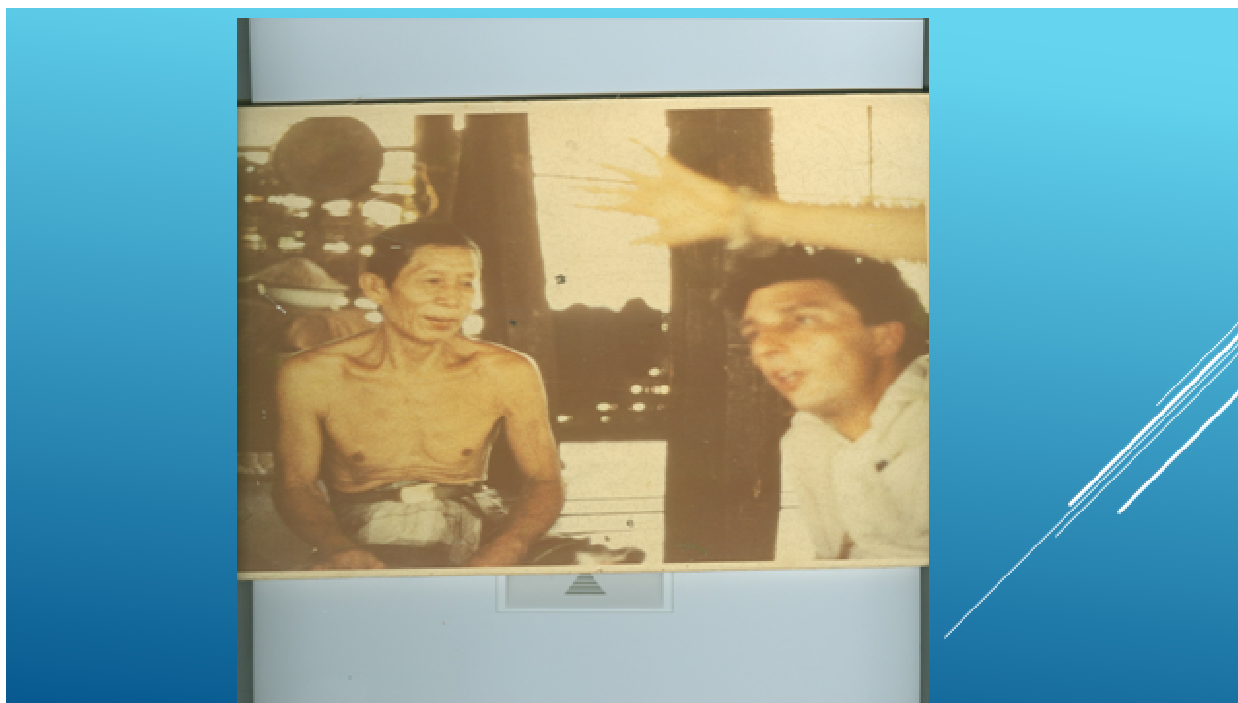
AMERICA IS GOVERNED BY A SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND
BALANCES

AMERICA IS THE GREATEST COUNTRY ON EARTH

Narration: When I came to Laos in 1967 I was about 25 years old, a kid, and I came from Tanzania where I'd been living in a village. And I pretty much ascribed to this basic set of values, though in fact I never really thought about them that much. I would have said yeah, America is a democracy and enjoys freedom of the press, it's guided by the rule of law, we have a system of checks and balances. I was very much against the Vietnam war, but Lyndon Johnson was also trying to create a "Great Society" at home, so I had mixed feelings about him. But I basically subscribed to this set of beliefs, which I'd been taught since birth.

I came to Laos as an educational advisor with a group called International Voluntary Services, and I was assigned housing at the Dong Dok teacher training college about 8 miles outside of the capital. So I drove up on my motorcycle to look at my housing and saw that it was in a kind of American-style apartment complex, a nice apartment, running water, electricity, and all of the other people living there in the apartment house were Americans.

4. THE OLD MAN: PAW THOU DOUANG



Narration: And something inside me said, "you know, you didn't come eight thousand miles to live with Americans. You want to live in a Lao village," which I was kind of used to because I'd been living in a remote village in Tanzania just a few months earlier. So I asked someone where was the nearest Lao village was. And he said well go back the way you came and hang a left and you'll be in Banh Xa Phang Meuk. I did so, turned down a dirt road, and pretty soon I came to a beautiful pagoda on my right, and this man on my left, sort of puttering about, he usually wore just a sarong without a shirt, as in this photo. I asked him if there was a house to rent and he said, "Sure, I have one." So I said "great," and we worked out this deal where I would live in this shack. Next to the shack was his very beautiful Lao house. And Lao houses are on stilts, and the Lao are very human human beings, as we'll discuss, and one feature of their housing is that they had very small private spaces, and a beautiful open veranda. And the floors were made of wood - I used to say you could only get wood like that by it being walked on by bare feet for 50 years. It was just a beautiful, beautiful house. And beautiful, lush vegetation, which smelled wonderfully.

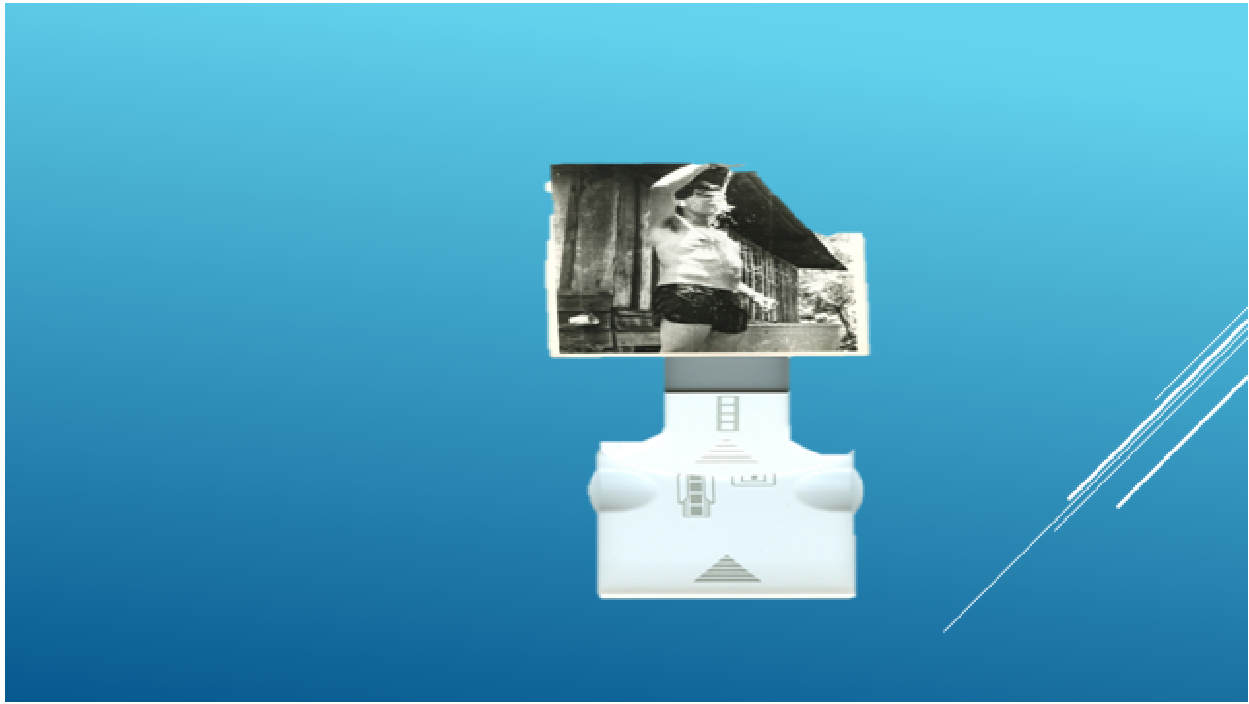
5. I GREW TO LOVE THE VILLAGE AND THE VILLAGERS – IT WAS A KIND OF PARADISE

Narration: I was really happy there for the next two and a half years. It was like being in paradise somehow. And that Old Man, as I used to call him, his actual name was Paw Thou Douang and I became very close friends. I used to eat dinner with him every night. And I grew to love the village and the villagers.

6. THE OLD MAN BECAME A KIND OF SECOND FATHER TO ME



Narration: And this guy, whom I originally saw as just a poor old peasant, came to be somebody that I not only loved but respected as much as anyone I've ever met. He had come from very poor circumstances, but he had built his own house, raised animals, grew rice and vegetables. And he was also a healer. If somebody got sick, he would cook up local herbs for them as medicine. He was also one of the most spiritual people I have ever met. He led the Buddhist laity in that village and many a day, I was right next to the Pagoda, I would wake up to the sound of him and the other villagers chanting, "na mo tasa, bakavato alahato, no mo tasa ..." It was a wonderful way to wake up. Most of people in that village were very lovable. They're very kind, they're cheerful, they look you in the eye, they say what they think. And they're very trustworthy. Whenever I needed to trust someone I was never let down by them. And they're really hard-working. The Old Man was kind of the unofficial leader in the village. He was a very human human being, as I said. Almost every day people were just coming and talking, and you'd hear people talking and laughing almost all day long. This is a picture of my actual mother and father who came to visit me in Laos. And you can see part of my house, it was just a shack. And I loved my own father, he was a very decent guy. But I have to say that I also came to love the Old Man as a kind of second father. I really respected the way he lived his life, and loved his humor, cheerfulness and kindness.

7. THE VILLAGE, 8 MILES OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL, HAD NO RUNNING WATER, TOILETS OR ELECTRICITY

Narration: This photo is meant to convey how poor Laos was. When I first came to Laos I looked it up in the World Almanac to see what the per capita income was and there was only an asterisk. The people didn't have a cash income. This was one of the poorest countries on earth. They were subsistence-level farmers, meaning they had to grow their own food to survive. In this village that I was in, which was only 8 miles from the center of the capital city, there was no running water, there was no electricity, there was no toilet. This shows my shower, from water in a barrel, this is how I took my shower every day.

8. PLAIN OF JARS REFUGEES BROUGHT TO THAT LOUANG PAGODA, SEPTEMBER 1969



Narration: After I had been in this village about two and a half years and I'd learned to speak pretty good Lao and learned to appreciate the Lao people, not only the Old Man but many of the villagers, I happened to be staying downtown with a journalist named Tim Allman. He was a stringer for *The N.Y. Times* and *Time*, and casually over breakfast he said, "Hey, Fred, would you interpret for me, they've just brought a group of refugees from the Plain of Jars down here and they've been living under the communists for the last five years." Now Laos at that point was divided into American zones and communist zones. So my reaction was "Wow! I'll get to learn about what it was like for these people to live under the communists." I mean at that point the Pathet Lao zones were terra incognita. So I rode up on my motorcycle, with Tim on the backseat, and we came to the That Louang Pagoda, which is kind of the national symbol of Laos, its biggest pagoda. There was a kind of prayer shed to the left, in between the pagoda and where the monks are standing in this photo. It was a long low prayer shed with hundreds of refugees just sitting there on the ground, with maybe some clothes and a few piles of household belongings.

I walked up to a man. And at that point the United States government said they'd never dropped a bomb in Laos. Executive Branch officials had testified to Congress and said they weren't bombing. I'd heard rumors of the bombing and read a series of articles in French in *Le Monde* by Jacques Decornoy who had visited Pathet Lao zones and reported extensive bombing, but didn't know anything about it.

9. An "L" In The Dirt The Changed My Life Forever



I started to talk to this man, who was dressed like the man above and I asked him, "Did you ever hear anything about bombing?" He said, "Bombing? We've been bombed for the last five years." And he crouched down and drew in the dirt an "L". At that moment my life changed forever. I was horrified as he drew the "L" to explain how he had been hiding in a cave for the past year and he only had come out at night to try and find some food to feed his family. I interviewed a dozen other refugees and everyone told the same basic story. The bombing had begun in 1964, grown steadily larger and then in the last year it had become so intense that it destroyed every building on the Plain of Jars, it killed and wounded thousands of people, and, in the end, the American Government (the Executive Branch) destroyed a 700 year old civilization. The refugees also said, and this was later confirmed by official reports, that northern Laos is heavily forested, the pilots could not see the communist soldiers from the air who were moving through the forest, which is where the soldiers were so they wouldn't get bombed. They could carry their food on their backs. The only things the pilots could see from the air were villages. And the only people in the villages were children, mothers and old people who couldn't go out and live in and move through the forest. They had to stay near the villages to grow rice – and fathers, parents of a family. And I began to experience multiple levels of horror, not only that day but in the days to come. I went out there almost every day. One level of horror was, "My God! We've been massively bombing Laos for five years! And I'm living in Laos and I didn't even know it, let alone anyone from the world outside! How could they do it? How could they get away with it?"

10. BOY MISSING LEG

Narration: A second level of horror was seeing so many people who had been maimed for life, like this boy with only one leg.

11. THAO VONG, FATHER OF FOUR, BLINDED

Narration: This is Thao Vong, a 38 year old father of four, blinded. Turned him into a helpless dependent. In a subsistence level economy if something like this happens to you, you go from being a father, proud, responsible for feeding his family, to being a helpless cripple.

12. THREE YEAR OLD GIRL BURNED IN BREAST, STOMACH, VAGINA, LATER DIED

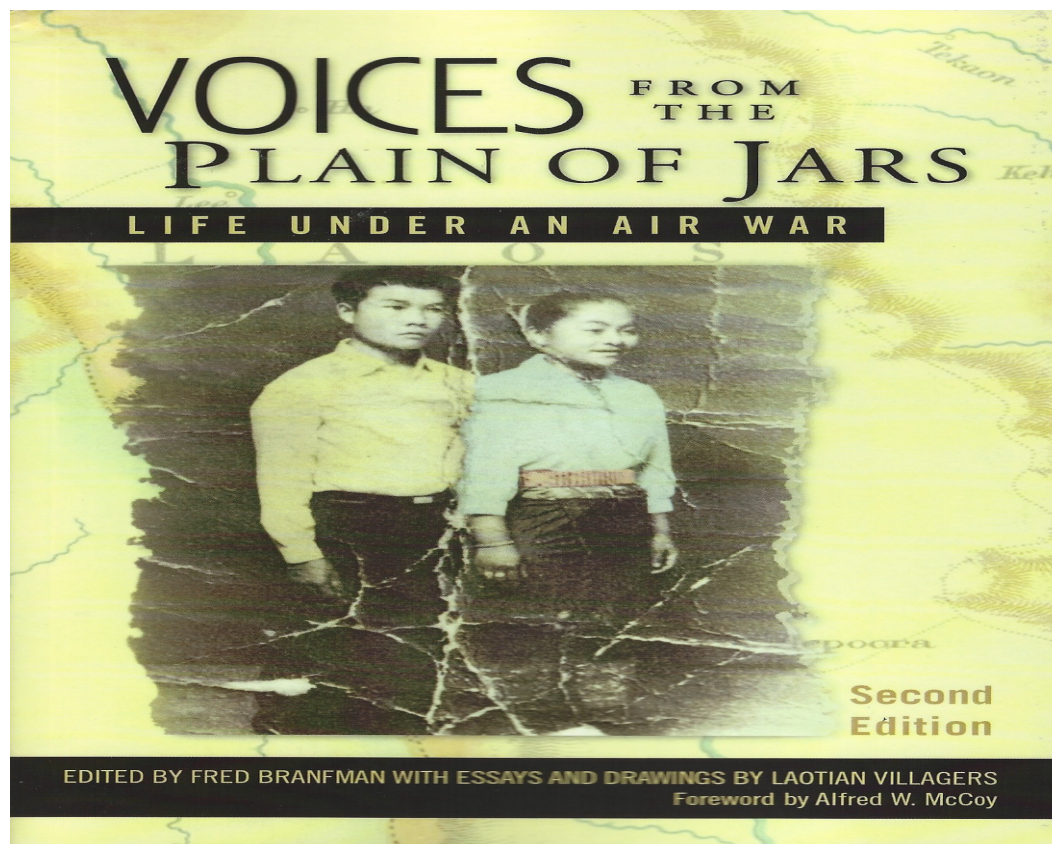
Narration: This is a three year old girl. I took a photo of her and returned a week later to proudly give it to her mother, and her mother came out, haggard and miserable. I gave her the photo and she just sort of looked at it. And I said "What's wrong? She said, "She died yesterday." She had been burned on her breast, stomach and vagina.

13. SAO DOUMMA, WEDDING PHOTO – KILLED IN U.S. BOMBING RAID 7 YEARS LATER

Narration: This is a wedding photo, of Sao Doumma and her husband. She was 18 years old in this photo and was killed in a bombing raid 7 years later. For some reason her sweet, innocent face grabbed my attention, and this photo is actually on the cover of the new edition of our book *Voices From the Plain of Jars*. She somehow came to symbolize for me these Laotian people and what they'd been through. I got married a few years later and we blew this photo up to life-size and began our wedding by saying that we were happy to get married, but we couldn't forget that millions of Indochinese young people like this also wanted to get married, also wanted to have a family, and that they couldn't do so, as they were at that very moment they were hiding from the bombs.

The next level of horror occurred when I realized that for all these people had been through they were the lucky ones. They had escaped, they had survived. At that very moment countless Laotians like Paw Thou were still living under the bombs. There were Laotians, these wonderful people, who were alive today but would die tomorrow. And without any conscious decision on my part I just found myself committing to do whatever I could to try and stop the bombing.

14. SAO DOUMMA & HENRY KISSINGER – BECOMING A MEDIA “FIXER”



Every time I look at Sao Doumma's picture I find myself wondering: what does it tell me about my species and America that a Henry Kissinger is honored into his 90s after murdering this beautiful, innocent young woman in her mid-20s and so many hundreds of thousands of others? Did Sao Doumma not have as much of a right to life as those who so thoughtlessly and cruelly snuffed her out like an insect?

When I had gone out to the camps that first day with Tim Allman, there were other reporters there. One from ABC News, Craig Spence, came up to me and said "Would you be my interpreter tomorrow?" I said, "Sure, yeah." Over time I developed a kind of profession, where American journalists in those days would usually come to Laos for the week, ABC, CBS, NBC. I would always get hired by them as a kind of "media fixer." From their point of view they were getting someone who could set up an interview with the Lao Prime Minister or the Pathet Lao spokesman. From my point of view I would take them out to the camps and try to get the story of the bombing on national television. I also sent the photos above and interview transcripts to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Subcommittee on Refugees.

15. NGEUN COLLECTED REFUGEES' DRAWINGS AND ESSAYS



One day I was talking to one of the refugees with whom I had made friends. In fact I came to consider him the closest friend in my life. His name was Ngeun. One day I said to him "You know, it's a pity these people can't read and write, because if they could they would have a hell of a story to tell." He said, "Hwai! They can read and write better than you can!" I said, "Gee! Do you think we could collect, we could ask them to write down the stories of what it was like to live under and air war? And, oh, maybe we could also get them to do some drawings." He said, "Sure!," and very courageously went out to collect these drawings and essays. They would never have given them to me as an American. He would hide them under his shirt to get them through police checkpoints. They were eventually published in the United States as *Voices From The Plain of Jars*. I didn't realize it at the time, but it turned out that this was the only book to emerge from the Indochina War written by the peasants who comprised 95% of the population, who suffered most but were never heard from. Hundreds of thousands of lives were extinguished and we never knew anything about them in the U.S. And we certainly never heard from them. This book is therefore very important to tell us not only what happened to them on the Plain of Jars. These voices from the Plain of Jars are also the voices from Cambodia, the two million people in Cambodia (living in guerrilla zones) whom the U.S. Executive bombed for four years. These are also the voices from Vietnam, and the voices from Yemen today, the voices from Pakistan today, the voices from North Africa where U.S. assassinations and U.S. drone strikes are killing people today whom we never even know about.

16. DRAWING BY VILLAGER: THREE STAGES OF OUR LIVES



Narration: This is a very interesting drawing. It's actually in three parts. The first part talks about how happy they were. This is a constant theme. These people were subsistence-level farmers. They had nothing. But in every essay they wrote they talked about how happy they were before we bombed them. Because of their **values**. They loved nature, they loved people, they loved their families. And they didn't complain. They didn't want anything from the world outside. Except to be left alone, which was not granted to them. In the second part of the drawing he describes how, as the bombing increased, it was killing more and more people, and they'd put people into boxes, and they'd go bury them. In the third part of the drawing, he described a massive increase in the bombing beginning in 1968. He wrote, 'in the third phase, people died like animals die in the forest because the planes bombed every day. We were afraid and didn't have the courage to do the right thing. Some people were not even buried, they were just dumped in a box and left in the forest.'

"And this really began to particularly interest me, because I kept hearing about this massive increase in bombing at the end of 1968. And it was a real mystery to me, I couldn't understand it. I knew there was no strategic reason for the vast increase in bombing. And I kept wondering why it had happened."

17. DRAWING OF PEOPLE BURIED ALIVE – ONE MAN TRYING TO DIG OUT HIS WIFE AND CHILD

Narration: This is a drawing that describes how people were buried alive in this bombing. And you know, I as a Jew am very sensitive to the Holocaust. And I felt I had walked into Auschwitz in the middle of the war. Because not only did these people die, but they died in the most agonizing way you could imagine. They were buried alive and slowly suffocated, they were burned alive, screaming at the top of their lungs.

This is a drawing of a man frantically trying to dig his wife and child out of the wreckage, as other people's arms and legs protrude out of it.

18. COVER FROM FIRST EDITION OF *VOICES FROM THE PLAIN OF JARS*

Narration: This is the general drawing which we put on the cover of the first edition of *Voices From the Plain of Jars*. I would like read you just two excerpts from longer essays that give you a sense of what these people went through.

19. THIRTY-THREE YEAR OLD FEMALE REFUGEE: "UNTIL THERE WAS ONLY THE RED, RED GROUND"

"A life whose only value was death. I saw this in the village of my birth, as every day and every night the planes came to drop bombs on us. We lived in holes to protect our lives. This kind of bomb would explode in the air and was much more dangerous than other ones. I saw my cousin die in the field of death. My heart was most disturbed and my voice called out loudly as I ran to the houses. Thus, I saw life and death for the people on account of the war of many airplanes in the region of the Plain of Jars. Until there were no houses at all. And the cows and buffalo were dead. Until everything was leveled and you could see only the red, red ground. I think of this time and still I am afraid."
-- 33 Year-old Woman Refugee

Narration: This is by a 33 year-old woman. When she writes of a bomb that "would explode in the air and was much more dangerous than other ones," she is referring to anti-personnel bombs, which we will discuss in a moment.

20. THIRTY YEAR OLD FEMALE REFUGEE: "WHY, THEN, DON'T WE PEOPLE LOVE ONE ANOTHER?"

"When looking at the faces of my children who were losing the so very precious happiness of childhood, as each and every day we would seek escape somewhere in the forest, I would grow increasingly miserable because of the war and hate it more and more. Why then don't we people love one another? Why don't we live together in equality? Why don't we build happiness and progress together? To kill one another like this! Human beings whose parents brought them into the world and carefully raised them with overflowing love despite so many difficulties, these human beings would die from a single blast as explosions burst, lying still without moving again at all. In reality, whatever happens, it is only the innocent who suffer."

- 30 year old woman refugee

Narration: A thirty year old woman refugee wrote this.

21. REFUGEE INTERVIEWED IN 2006: "UNTIL TODAY I HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD THIS""UNTIL TODAY, I STILL HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD THIS"

Woman 1: "There were countless dead bodies of civilians. There were bodies everywhere. On the slopes, the hills. The whole area was plastered with dead bodies. We stepped on them everywhere."

Woman 2: "Although I was still little then I asked myself why the America had come halfway around the planet to bomb us. It was like they had come from a different world. Until today I haven't understood this."

- Plain of Jars refugees, interviewed in The Most Secret Place on Earth video, filmed 2006

Narration: 37 years later we went back to Laos to film a movie called "The Most Secret Place on Earth." It's available on YouTube. We interviewed a number of Plain of Jars refugees who are now older women, they were teenagers back then.

These people didn't know why they were being bombed. I don't know if you've seen the movie "War of the Worlds," where these machines land and just start murdering people. Nobody knows what they are or where they come from. That's what it was like for these people. Not only had they committed no crime against America. Not only did they pose no threat to America. They didn't even know where America was. They suffered these horrible bombings without knowing why or how they were bombed. She still didn't know, 37 years later.

22. ANTI-PERSONNEL BOMBS: 80% OF THE BOMBS DROPPED ON THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAIN

Narration: As you can tell, I had a really emotional reaction to this thing, I really wanted to try and stop it. But I also had a strong intellectual reaction. I can still remember that first day, walking among these people, and just having my mind blown. I mean, where did these planes come from? Who decided to bomb these people? Why did it happen? I had no idea. I set out to try and understand intellectually what this was all about. I had a Peace Corps friend named Charlie who knew some antiwar GIs at Udorn Air Force Base in northeast Thailand. They were antiwar because they were instructed to lie, to say that the planes were bombing Vietnam even though they knew they were bombing Laos.

So I hung out with them for a couple of days and one guy I met was in charge of the ordnance, the bombs. And he told me that 80% of the bombs they dropped on Laos were antipersonnel bombs. And I was out in one of the refugee camps one day and I saw a device being used as a lamp. I purchased it from the refugee and discovered that it was an antipersonnel bomb. I later brought it back to the States and I'm sure that this was the only antipersonnel bomb that was displayed widely to the American people. George McGovern held it up a few days before the 1972 election and the photo ran in newspapers around the nation. It was funny, sometimes I laugh because I remember how I used to go through airports with it. You couldn't do that today.

23. ONE SORTIE = 250,000 PELLETS; 541,738 SORTIES FLOWN OVER LAOS

Narration: What I discovered about these bombs is that they were invented during the Korean War, and their purpose was to stop North Korean and Chinese troops as they were invading American positions. They were what is known as "wide area" ordnance, that is they exploded in the air and one of these bombs had 250 pellets, and one sortie dropped 1,000 bombs and covered an area the size of 4 football fields with 250,000 steel pellets. That was one sortie. And U.S. planes flew over 500,000 sorties in Laos.

The purpose of these antipersonnel bombs was not to kill anybody. It couldn't destroy a tank or an anti-aircraft position. The purpose of the antipersonnel bombs was to maim human beings. Because the notion was that if you could wound somebody instead of killing them it would take another one or two people to take care of them. It was a military weapon, but it was deployed against women and children and old folks on the Plain of Jars and was the main weapon that caused so much destruction."

24. FLECHETTE, GUARDIAN STORY ON PLASTIC PELLETS



Narration: Well, the first antipersonnel bombs had little steel pellets. But they were succeeded by flechettes, which were like arrows meant to do far more damage entering the body than the pellets and also cause damage taking them out. It wasn't enough to simply bomb them with steel pellets. We also used flechettes. There were also reports of the use of plastic pellets, which were invisible to x-rays and could not be removed.

25. FACT SHEET ON ANTI-PERSONNEL BOMBS, DESIGNED TO MAIM NOT MURDER**ANTI-PERSONNEL BOMBS**

Designed to maim not murder human beings

Originally designed to counter human wave military attacks in Korea

80% of the bombs dropped on civilians in Laos were anti-personnel bombs

Each pineapple bomblet contained 250 steel pellets

One aircraft sortie dropped 1,000 bomblets, spewing out 250,000 pellets over an area the size of four football fields.

The U.S. flew 541,738 fighter-bomber sorties in Laos.

Later cluster bombs used flechettes rather than steel pellets, designed to do as much harm when being extracted as when entering the human body.

26. U.S. PILOT, DANANG AIRFORCE BASE: CIVILIANS ARE THE TARGET

PILOT, DANANG AIRFORCE BASE, NOVEMBER, 1970: "I'm as liberal, as much for peace as anyone else. But war is not a pretty thing. In a guerrilla war, the civilians are going to pay a price. War has now progressed to a point where you're going to bomb civilian targets and that's it."

PILOT, DANANG AIRFORCE BASE, NOVEMBER, 1970: "Our 500-pound nape canisters are newer; they have a better dispersal pattern than the older 1,000 pounders."

AF Information officer: "Hey, you're not supposed to talk about the napalm."

Pilot: "No shit. Why not?"

AF Information officer: "Well, you know those college kids, pretty soon they're going to put poor Dow Chemical out of business. You're not supposed to talk about it to the press."

Pilot: "Well, it seems pretty ridiculous to me that people can be so emotional about how you kill people. What's so bad about nape anyway?"

Narration: The second part of my exploration was to try and understand the mentality behind this, starting with the pilots. And I went to Danang Airforce Base in South Vietnam, interviewing the pilots who were bombing Laos.

The pilots I interviewed knew they were bombing civilians. The civilians were not "collateral damage." They were the targets.

The pilots also had great difficulty understanding why anyone would be upset at their use of napalm.

27. U.S. PILOT, DANANG AIRFORCE BASE: GRUNTS ROBBING US OF OUR KILLS. "THE NERVE!"

PILOT, DANANG AIRFORCE BASE, NOVEMBER, 1970:

"One day we went in over a North Vietnamese military camp on top of a mountain. It was right out in the open, so we could see it and everything. We plastered the place, napalm, 500-pounders, the works. I know we had kills; you could see people running all over the place, buildings burning. There was no way for there to be no KIA. But do you know what happened? The grunts came in and reported twenty-five enemy killed by ground fire. All they did was shoot their M-16s into the corpses and then claim they'd killed them. The nerve. Can you imagine?"

Narration: When I was interviewing the pilots I was shocked because they showed almost no emotion. A U.S. pilot in South Vietnam would wake up in the morning, go up for a few hours, drop some bombs. Then he'd be back in time for lunch, maybe take a nap or a swim. Then in the evening he'd go out to the bar to carouse with the prostitutes, who were young Vietnamese women whose homes and villages had been destroyed by the Americans and were forced to come into the city and work as prostitutes for the people who had killed their relatives or fellow villagers in order to support what remained of their families – many of them were quite noble.

But there was a moment when a good deal of emotion was expressed. A pilot said, "one day we went in over a North Vietnamese training camp on top of a mountain. It was right out in the open." Now just for the record, the North Vietnamese didn't build their training camps on top of mountains so the Americans could bomb them. This was obviously a village. The pilot was very agitated at being robbed of his kills. This was the only time he expressed any emotion. There was one pilot, actually there were a few, but one in particular who became a friend of mine, named Randy Floyd, who spoke out against what he had done back in the States. It proved that the pilots, with a little bit of imagination and information, could have found out what they were doing. Most of them of course didn't want to know.

28. SENATOR WILLIAM FULBRIGHT: U.S. SENATE UNAWARE OF EXTENT OF LAOS BOMBING

CHAIRMAN OF THE U.S. SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WILLIAM FULBRIGHT: "I think the surprise that is evidenced by the chairman of the subcommittee and others, that they did not know the extent of this involvement until these hearings, is pretty clear evidence that we were not aware of these activities, although we had had some hearings on it."

Source:"United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, Kingdom of Laos," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, Part 2, October 20, 21, 22, and 28, 1969. p. p. 547.

Narration: In the fall of 1969, one month after I had discovered the bombing, there was a hearing held back in Washington, by Senator William Fulbright, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

So you had the Chair of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee saying he did not know that we were bombing Laos. He also said, "We had hearings on it," which means in previous hearings he was lied to by Executive officials. He was told that we were not bombing Laos.

29. U.S. DEPUTY AMBASSADOR: WE COULDN'T LET THE PLANES STAY THERE WITH NOTHING TO DO
--

Monteagle Stearns, Deputy Chief of Mission, Laos: "Well, we had all those planes sitting around and couldn't just let them stay there with nothing to do."

Source: *"United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, Kingdom of Laos," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, Part 2, October 20, 21, 22, and 28, 1969. p. 484*

Narration: This slide refers to the moment when I finally understood the solution to the mystery I had been wondering about for so long – why they had so increased the bombing of the Plain in late 1968, killing so many people, when there was no strategic reason to do so.

The Deputy U.S. Ambassador explained why to Senator Fulbright. They had temporarily halted the bombing of North Vietnam in November 1968 and they had all these planes sitting there and they couldn't just let sit there with "nothing to do." I regard this as one of the single most important statements to come out of the Indochina war. Because most of the world's and America's history occurred in what we might call an "Age of Inhumanity." People hated their enemies, Germans hated the Jews, we hated the "Japs" in World War II, we hated the "Krauts." Vast sums of money were spent propagandizing against the enemy, turning them into "The Other," as Jung termed it. But in the case of Laos no one had anything against the Lao. This genocidal behavior occurred simply because U.S. leaders did not regard them as human beings. They treated them like insects. They had the planes sitting around and they used them. Just like the NSA has its computers sitting around and you can't just let them sit there. So they start spying on innocent Americans and foreigners. It was this bureaucratic initiative that led me to use the term "ahumanity," or you might call it "non-humanity" instead of inhumanity. And I regard this as almost more frightening than inhumanity because when you don't consider humans as humans there's no restraint on what you can do. And it's also harder to mobilize against. People mobilized against a Hitler because they recognized him as clearly evil. It's much more difficult to mobilize against bureaucratic leaders operating in secret who are not overt psychopaths .

30. SENATOR KENNEDY KNEW SULLIVAN WAS LYING, BUT DID NOT INDICT HIM FOR PERJURY

U.S. SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEE REPORT: "the United States has undertaken a large-scale air war over Laos to destroy the physical and social infrastructure in Pathet Lao held areas. . . . Throughout all this there has been a policy of ... secrecy. ... The bombing has taken and is taking a heavy toll among civilians."

Source: "Refugee and Civilian War Casualty Problems in Indochina", the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Refugees, September 1970.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM SULLIVAN TESTIMONY THE U.S. SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEESS APRIL 22, 1971: "The policy of the U.S. is deliberately to avoid hitting inhabited villages"

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY: "I don't believe you."

Narration: Partly as a result of my sending the material to the Kennedy Refugee Subcommittee it finally sent out a team in September 1970 to conduct an investigation. And the team interviewed U.S. Embassy officials and used their interpreters. The team concluded that the civilian population was not "collateral damage." The civilians were the targets. Seven months later Ambassador William Sullivan, a former U.S. Ambassador and at that point a top aide to Henry Kissinger, testified to Senator Kennedy. I was at that hearing. In fact I was called upon by Kennedy and I stood up and denounced Sullivan – it was on national television. But what was most important about this testimony was that you had a member of the U.S. Executive Branch look a member of the U.S. Legislative Branch in the eyes and lie right to his face. As he was speaking, the faces of the hundreds of people I had interviewed flashed through my mind, the crippled kids, the blinded, the burned. These were among the most surreal moments of my life. Particularly significant was not only that a member of the Executive Branch was lying right to the face of a member of the Legislative Branch, but the U.S. Senator **knew** he was being lied to. After all he his staff had concluded six months earlier that they were bombing civilians. But he didn't dare take on Sullivan. He should have brought him up on perjury charges. It's a crime to lie to a U.S. Senator, punishable by imprisonment. But the U.S. Executive Branch is so powerful that all Kennedy did was say, "I don't believe you." And the bombing then continued for several more years."

31. U.S. LEADERS DESERVED EXECUTION FOR THEIR CRIMES OF WAR

CRIMES OF WAR UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

(1) The Fourth Geneva Convention defines "*grave breaches*" which are to be considered "*war crimes*," including:

"Launching an indiscriminate attack affecting the civilian population or civilian objects in the knowledge that such attack will cause excessive loss of life, injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects." (Protocol 1, Article 85).

(1) "Attack or bombardment of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended, is prohibited."

■ Article 25 of the 1907 Hague Convention

(1) "The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to ensure ... public order and safety."

■ Article 40 of the 1907 Hague Convention

Narration: Not only was U.S. domestic law severely being violated, but so was international law. International law, which the U.S. has signed, is very clear on the question of war crimes. It is important to remember that there was a brief moment in the history of human civilization, which occurred right after World War II, when it looked like it might be possible to create a civilized global order. Out of the horrible slaughter of World War II, which killed over sixty million people, this process began with the Nuremberg Tribunal when the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Robert Jackson issued the Nuremberg Judgment and said that if we just execute the Nazis, we haven't accomplished a thing. For the Judgment to have any meaning it must apply to all leaders are responsible for such acts, even American leaders.

Following the Nuremberg Judgment these laws were codified, into the Geneva Convention, and for a year or so one could imagine that "hey, for the first time, after all this mass slaughter of millions of people over the centuries, we finally have reached a point of civilization, where we have actual laws that reflect our humanity." But there is no serious question that if the Nuremberg Judgment, or the Geneva Conventions which the U.S. had signed, had been applied to the behaviors of Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon and other principals, they would have been executed. They had committed precisely the "indiscriminate attacks affecting the civilian population" outlawed by Article 85 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

32. KISSINGER ON BOMBING CAMBODIA: "ANYTHING THAT FLIES ON ANYTHING THAT MOVES"

"[Nixon] wants a massive bombing campaign in Cambodia. He doesn't want to hear anything about it. It's an order, to be done. Anything that flies on anything that moves." (Emphasis added)

Henry Kissinger, "The Kissinger Telcons – Document 3", National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 123

Narration: "One of the issues that came up in the Nuremberg Tribunal is that they were looking for actual orders that had been written down as evidence to convict the Nazis. Many years later this communication from Henry Kissinger to Alexander Haig was revealed. That is, Nixon and Kissinger specifically ordered that no distinction be made between military and civilian targets, precisely the kind of written evidence revealing intent to commit crimes of war. In fact, in Cambodia, the U.S. Executive conducted mass bombings of civilians in villages, just like in Laos. These acts were clearly war crimes, and Nixon and Kissinger were clearly war criminals.

Richard Nixon ordered, and Henry Kissinger executed, the most extensive bombing of civilian targets in world history. All told, they dropped 3,984,563 tons of bombs on Indochina between 1969 and 1973 – 50% more than the 2,742,521 tons dropped by Lyndon Johnson from 1964-8 and twice the two million tons dropped on hundreds of millions throughout Europe and the Pacific in World War II. They dropped 1,628,900 million tons of bombs on Laos – four times the 454,200 tons dropped by Lyndon Johnson. And they dropped 630,000 tons on Cambodia, including the first B52 carpet bombing of civilian targets in history. All told, Nixon and Kissinger were responsible for murdering, maiming and making homeless more than 10,770,000 Indochinese, including countless civilians, as officially estimated by the U.S. Government, between January 20, 1969 and April 30, 1975. (Please see "Indochina War Statistics", *Congressional Record*, May 14, 1975, p. 14265.)

33. NIXON-KISSINGER B52 BOMBING OF CAMBODIA CREATED THE KHMER ROUGE

"We heard a terrifying noise which shook the ground; it was as if the earth trembled, rose up and opened beneath our feet. Enormous explosions lit up the sky like huge bolts of lightning; it was the American B-52s."

Cambodian bombing survivor, *Kampong Thom*

"Every time after there had been bombing, they would take the people to see the craters, to see how big and deep the craters were, to see how the earth had been gouged out and scorched. . . . The ordinary people sometimes literally shit in their pants when the big bombs and shells came. Their minds just froze up and they would wander around mute for three or four days. Terrified and half crazy, the people were ready to believe what they were told. It was because of their dissatisfaction with the bombing that they kept on co-operating with the Khmer Rouge, joining up with the Khmer Rouge, sending their children off to go with them. . . . Sometimes the bombs fell and hit little children, and their fathers would be all for the Khmer Rouge."

Source: How Pol Pot Came To Power, by Yale Professor Ben Kiernan

Narration: Now we get to a very important point. During the 4 years of U.S. bombing in Cambodia from 1970-3, which included B52s carpet-bombing villages, there were a U.S. Embassy-estimated two million people living in guerrilla zones. I visited Cambodia in the summer of 1970, a few months after Sihanouk was overthrown and Lon Nol had become Prime Minister. At that time the Khmer Rouge was almost non-existent. The U.S. Embassy said we don't even know if the top Khmer Rouge leaders – Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan, were in Cambodia. Nobody estimated that they had more than a few hundred people. After the war ended and after the Khmer Rouge had committed their horrible genocide and Cambodia had been conquered by the Vietnamese, a Yale professor named Ben Kiernan went to Cambodia and interviewed people who had lived under the Khmer Rouge. And he conducted dozens of interviews like this one.

It was the bombing that created the Khmer Rouge. If the U.S. Executive had not intervened in Cambodia there would have been no Khmer Rouge, no genocide that occurred from 1975 to 1979. Executive Branch leaders constantly justify their mass murder on the grounds that they are protecting us. But the fact is that they're not protecting us. And this is a perfect example. Their bombing, their assassinations, their drones, infuriate their enemies and increase their recruitment to an alarming level. We'll get back to this in a moment, but if you look at what's going on today with the Executive Secret Wars, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Taliban in Pakistan, are stronger than ever. You only have to look at the spread of terrorism, as it spreads to more and more new countries, to see how the Executive Branch jeopardizes rather than enhances 'national security'.

34. THE U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH IS ENDANGERING NOT PROTECTING US

Admiral Dennis Blair, Former Director Of National Intelligence: Drone warfare “is damaging our ability to work with Pakistan [in] eliminating Taliban sanctuaries, encouraging Indian-Pakistani dialogue, and making Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal more secure.”

Gen. James E. Cartwright, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: “Cartwright expressed concern in a speech here on Thursday that America’s aggressive campaign of drone strikes could be undermining long-term efforts to battle extremism. ‘We’re seeing that blowback. If you’re trying to kill your way to a solution, no matter how precise you are, you’re going to upset people even if they’re not targeted.’”

Sherard Cowper-Coles, Former U.K. Special Representative To Afghanistan: “For every dead Pashtun warrior, there will be 10 pledged to revenge.”

Director of National Intelligence’s National Intelligence Estimate: “The final report concluded that Iraq had become a ‘cause célèbre’ for jihadists, ‘breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement.’”

Robert Grenier, Former Head Of The CIA Counterterrorism Center: “We have gone a long way down the road of creating a situation where we are creating more enemies than we are removing from the battlefield. We are already there with regards to Pakistan and Afghanistan,”

Narration: U.S. leaders have justified their drone strikes in Pakistan, for example, on the claim that it reducing the threat of another 9/11. But numerous military leaders have concluded that the opposite is true.

The former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Patterson, revealed in the Wikileaks cables that her greatest fear was that nuclear materials would fall into the hands of terrorists, which could then be used in America. But she said we can’t cooperate with the Pakistani government, they won’t cooperate with us in safeguarding their nuclear materials – and Pakistan has the world’s fastest-growing and least secure nuclear stockpile according to all the experts – because the U.S. is so hated in Pakistan because of the drone strikes. The U.S. Executive Branch is actually increasing the danger to us of another 9/11, even as it wastes trillions of dollars falsely claiming that it is protecting us.

35. THE EXECUTIVE MURDERED, MAIMED AND REFUGEED OVER 17 MILLION INDOCHINESE CIVILIANS

U.S. CREATED CIVILIAN VICTIMS IN INDOCHINA, 1962-1973

CIVILIANS KILLED, VIETNAM	1,200,000	(1)
CIVILIANS WOUNDED, VIETNAM	3,000,000	(2)
CIVILIAN REFUGEES, VIETNAM	10,270,000	(2)
CIVILIAN VICTIMS, LAOS AND CAMBODIA	3,000,000 +	(3)
<hr/>		
TOTAL CIVILIAN VICTIMS, INDOCHINA	17,470,000+	

Sources:

- (1) Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, "The Post-Cold War World; Implications for Military Expenditures In Developing Countries," in Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics, 1991 (Washington D.C.: International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, 1991)
- (2) U.S. Senate Refugee Subcommittee
- (3) U.S. Government Accounting Office, U.S. Senate Refugee Subcommittee

Narration: All told U.S. Executive Branch leaders, according to former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who certainly had no motivation to inflate these figures, killed 1.2 million civilians in Vietnam. The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Refugees also reported that they wounded another three million and made over 10 million homeless in Vietnam, and that there were another three million people killed, wounded or made homeless in Laos and Cambodia. Total civilian victims in Indochina were 17 million people. In Iraq, which U.S. leaders occupied and were therefore legally responsible for providing public safety under international law, they actually disbanded the military and provided no police protection, so the country descended into a situation where over 5 million people were killed, wounded or made homeless. U.S. leaders as the Occupying Power were thus legally responsible for all the killing that ensued.

Therefore the U.S. Executive Branch is legally responsible for murdering, maiming and making homeless well over 20 million civilians in Indochina and Iraq alone since 1960, far more than any other government on earth. If we say that one of the definitions of "evil" is killing civilians, the U.S. Executive Branch is the most evil institution on the face of the earth. And by not obeying international law calling for protecting civilians, the U.S. Executive Branch is the most criminal institution on the face of the earth. No other government has failed to sign so many international treaties and so violated those it has signed.

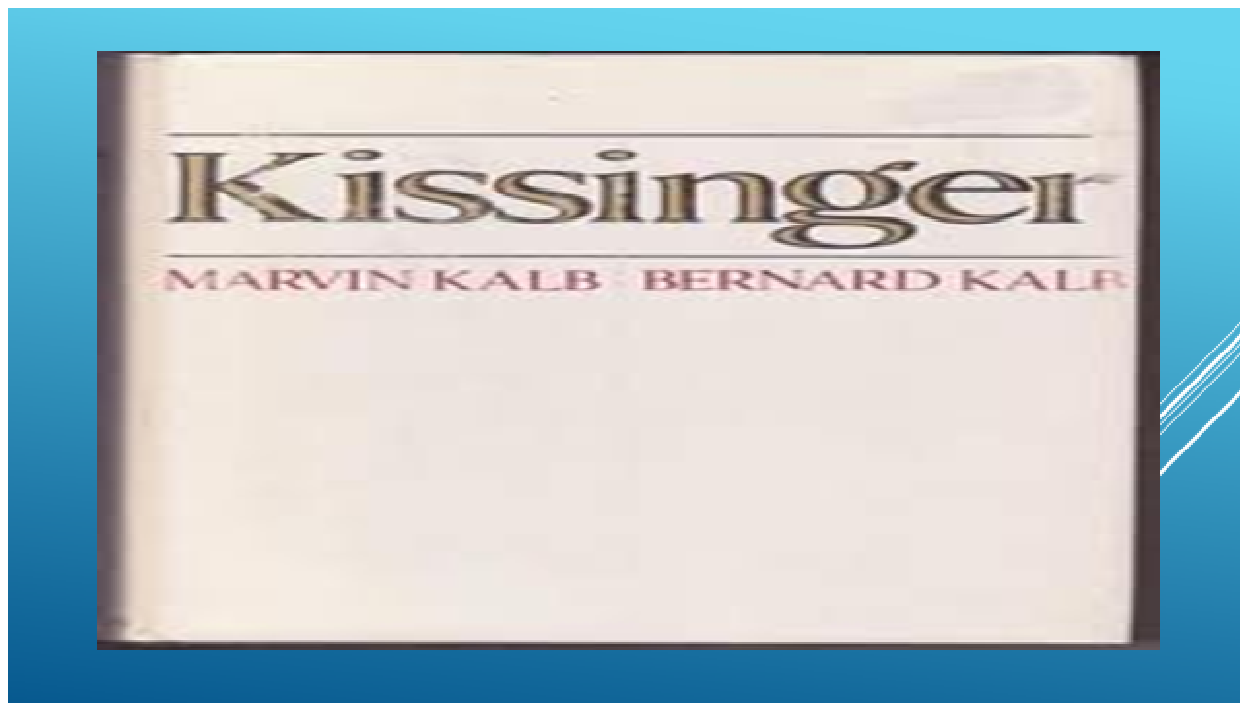
36. A JOURNALIST I WORKED WITH: TED KOPPEL AND THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN U.S. SOCIETY

Narration: Now you might ask what was the role of the U.S. media in all this? Why don't the American people know that their leaders have killed, wounded and made homeless millions of innocent civilians, more than any other government on earth? Well, I had some pretty personal insights working with the U.S. media in Laos. The finest person I worked with was Ted Koppel, who at that time was an ABC News correspondent based in Hong Kong. I also worked with Bernie Kalb of CBS News, Welles Hangen of NBC News, Sidney Schanberg of *The New York Times*. Nobody was based in Laos, they were based in Saigon, Bangkok, Hong Kong or Singapore, and they would come to Laos for a week at a time.

Basically, they would come to Laos, and their first stop would be at the American Embassy. They might meet a political or military officer, the Ambassador, and told what the Executive Branch wanted to be reported on Laos, e.g., that the North Vietnamese had invaded Laos and wanted to take it over, that the U.S. had never dropped a bomb in Laos or, later, that it had never bombed any villages or civilian targets.

The reporters then functioned as a conveyor belt and transmitted what they had been told by the American Embassy to the American people. They were taken on trips to support this storyline and so forth. What I saw with my own eyes every single day was that the U.S. mass media, on an hourly daily basis reported to the American people what they were told by U.S. Executive Branch officials. Now, of course, there were notable exceptions and they should be acknowledged. But it's also important to understand that more than 90% of what you read about U.S. foreign and military policy is what the Executive Branch wishes to convey to the American people through the mass media.

37. *KISSINGER, A FLATTERING BIOGRAPHY BY MARVIN AND BERNARD KALB*



Narration: I had been impressed with Ted back in Laos. He was the only journalist I took out to the refugee camps who teared up at their stories. So a few years after returning to Washington, D.C., to run Project Air War I called him up for lunch. At that point he was the ABC correspondant at the State Department under Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. A book had just come out called *Kissinger* by Marvin Kalb, a former NBC correspondant and his brother Bernie, who was then the CBS correspondent at the State Department. I'd worked with Bernie also in Laos, and he had even helped produce a CBS Special on Laos, which showed footage of the refugees. I was interviewed by Bernie, and described how the U.S. had bombed them. But their book on Kissinger only flattered him, and there was nothing about Laos and the bombings. Bernie knew exactly what Kissinger had done in Laos and had not even reported it. And now, by fawning on Kissinger, these reporters were building up his reputation, helping him conduct more bombing, kill more people, overthrow more governments. I said to Ted, something like, "Jeeeshhh! Can you believe that sickening book on Kissinger by the Kalb brothers?"

To my utter amazement, Ted sat up straight in his chair, grew very angry, and said, "I'll have you know that Marvin Kalb is a personal friend of mine! And so is Henry Kissinger!" I was stunned. I said, "But Ted you were in the camps, you know he tripled the bombing, you know he is as mass murderer, what are you talking about?" He remained angry with me and wouldn't discuss the subject. What I realized of course was that as the ABC News correspondent assigned to Henry Kissinger, his job required that he stay in the Secretary's good graces. If Kissinger decided to give all the information to Bernie Kalb and cut Ted out because Ted was criticizing him, he would be out of a job.

38. TED KOPPEL: I WAS "SUCKING UP" TO HENRY KISSINGER TO ADVANCE MY CAREER

TED KOPPEL: "It has been an extraordinary three years for me, and I have enjoyed it immensely. You are an intriguing man, and if I had a teacher like you earlier I might not have been so cynical"

HENRY KISSINGER: "You have been a good friend."

TED KOPPEL: "We are lucky to have had you."

--"In Calls to Kissinger, Reporters Show That Even They Fell Under Super-K's Spell," N.Y. Times , Oct. 22, 2004

"Newsmakers and news reporters use one another, and it may not be so surprising that they sometimes grow personally close. 'Am I shocked by the notion that people were sucking up to a very powerful official they relied on for information?' asks Mr. Koppel, now the anchor of "Nightline" on ABC. Frankly, no. (Emphasis added.)

--"In Calls to Kissinger, Reporters Show That Even They Fell Under Super-K's Spell," N.Y. Times , Oct. 22, 2004

Narration: Some 33 years later *The New York Times* ran a story on "The Kissinger Logs." It turned out that Kissinger had been recording all his telephone conversations with reporters. And part of the story contained this conversation between Ted and Kissinger. (Later in the story a reporter asked Ted about this conversation with Kissinger and so his response is included).

Most of what you read in the newspapers has come from U.S. reporters "sucking up" to Executive Branch officials using them to convey Executive Branch propaganda to the American public. This same story quoted David Binder, a reporter for 43 years with *The New York Times*: "The negative is that if you become too close to a guy you're covering, you become his spokesman." The mass media in America basically functions as the public relations arm for the U.S. Executive Branch.

39. KISSINGER TO KOPPEL: "YOU GUYS DID SOME OF MY WORK FOR ME OUT THERE"

"Only yesterday my daughter Andrea, who is diplomatic correspondent for CNN, called me and said 'you know, Dad, the State Department has just released a whole pile of conversations that Kissinger had that were recorded. And you had a ton of conversations with him.' And she started to read me some of the transcripts. She said 'I just can't believe what kind of access you guys had to the Secretary of State. I mean I almost never get to talk to the Secretary of State!'

"Kissinger once explained to me that 'I cultivated the press, knowing that, you know, you guys could do some of my work for me out there'. He was a very very skillful manipulator of the press."

-- Ted Koppel, "On Covering Kissinger," YouTube interview, 2005

Narration: I recently came across a YouTube video entitled "Ted Koppel on Covering Henry Kissinger," in which he discussed the reaction of his daughter Andrea, a CNN correspondent, to the "Kissinger Logs." I wondered if he or she was embarrassed by the revelations of how he had been "sucking up to Kissinger."

40. 80 MILLION UNEXPLODED ANTI-PERSONNEL BOMBS (UXO), 20,000 PEACETIME VICTIMS

UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) FACT SHEET

- 80 million unexploded cluster bombs left behind by the U.S.
- 20,000 civilians killed and wounded
- 0.28% of the bomb-contaminated land has been cleared since 1975.
- The U.S. has spent \$61 million for cleanup, \$500 million looking for the bone fragments of Missing in Action U.S. pilots, one-tenth of 1% of what it spent bombing Laos.
- The Lao government: "Fertile or valuable land effectively becomes unusable, (causing) chronic food shortages; Individual communities and families suffer significant physical, emotional, social and financial trauma."

Source: The Lao Government National Regulatory Authority, 2010

Narration: After the war ended in 1975, the people of the Plain of Jars went back home and unexpectedly discovered something almost as horrible as the bombing itself. It was discovered that the United States had dropped 250 million cluster or antipersonnel bombs on Laos, and that one-third of them had not exploded. 80 million unexploded bombs were still in the ground. The farmers were subsistence-level farmers and were given only very minimal aid when they returned to the Plain of Jars. So they had to farm to survive. Well, it turned out that over the next 40 years 20,000 Laotian villagers, mainly children, in peacetime, were killed or wounded by the cluster bombs.

The U.S. Executive had spent \$70 billion in today's dollars bombing Laos, but it only contributed \$61 million, one-tenth of one percent of what it had spent bombing Laos, to clean up the bombs it had left behind. As a result only 0.28% of the bomb-contaminated land has been cleared, over 99% of the bomb-contaminated land has not been cleared. We're still killing Laotians 40 years after the war ended. The bombing began in 1964. This year marks the 50th year that the U.S. Executive Branch leaders have been tormenting the innocent people of Laos who to this day do not know why they were bombed. The \$61 million the U.S. has contributed to UXO cleanup may also be compared to the far more than \$500 million, ten times as much, that has been spent looking for the bone fragments of dead American soldiers who were missing in action. U.S. bone fragments are more important than living Laotians to Executive officials.

41. 2010: "YOUNG GIRL KILLED, SISTER INJURED IN CLUSTER BOMB TRAGEDY"



Narration: A U.N. conference to ban cluster bombs was held in Laos in October 2010, which I attended. There is a U.N. treaty now that bans the use of cluster bombs. The U.S. Executive has refused to sign the Cluster Bomb Treaty, as well as refusing to clean up the deadly mess it left behind. They childishly refused to even attend the conference, even though the U.S. dropped more cluster bombs on Laos than have been dropped on the rest of the world put together.

During the conference this story appeared in the local newspaper about a 10 year-old girl who was killed by a cluster bomb and her older sister who was wounded. Each year 300 more civilians like this, mostly children, are still being killed or wounded by the cluster bombs U.S. Executive Branch officials have refused to take responsibility for."

42. LIFE UNDER AUTOMATED WAR IN NORTHWEST PAKISTAN TODAY

"Hovering drones have traumatized millions living in these areas. Drones hover twenty-four hours a day over communities in northwest Pakistan, striking homes, vehicles and public spaces without warning. Their presence terrorizes men, women and children, giving rise to anxiety and psychological trauma among civilian communities. Those living under drones have to face the constant worry that a deadly strike may be fired at any moment, and the knowledge that they are powerless to protect themselves."

-- Source: "Living Under Drones: Death, Injury and Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan", Stanford/NYU Study, September, 2012"

Narration: I want to emphasize that in talking about what happened in Laos then we are not talking about ancient history. We're talking about what is happening right today, and we're talking about some of the central issues that concern our own future here in America. This is a quote from just a few years ago about what a Stanford-NYU research team concluded after visiting Pakistan.

Laos marks the birth of modern automated warfare. In previous wars air power was seen as support for ground troops. But in Laos it was the machines of war that did the bulk of the killing. Ground troops played a secondary role, serving as "live bait" to try and draw enemy fire so the planes would know where to bomb and going in after aerial mass murder to clean up the remains. Today the U.S. Executive is largely relying on automated warfare in the form of drones. Drone warfare is spreading over the planet. It started in Pakistan and Afghanistan and since then has spread to Yemen and North Africa. There will be far, far more automated war in the future.

43. U.S. EXECUTIVE WEAKENING NATIONAL SECURITY: THE CIA VS. THE SENATE ON TORTURE TODAY

"CIA ACCUSED OF SPYING ON U.S. SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE"
-- REUTERS, MAR 11, 2014

"... THE SENATE STAFF CONCLUDED THAT THE C.I.A. HAD FALSELY CLAIMED THAT TORTURE AND OTHER BRUTALITY PRODUCED USEFUL INTELLIGENCE."
-- "THE CIA TORTURE COVERUP", NYT EDITORIAL, MARCH 11, 2014

"IF THE SENATE CAN DECLASSIFY THIS REPORT, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ENSURE THAT AN UN-AMERICAN, BRUTAL PROGRAM OF DETENTION AND INTERROGATION WILL NEVER AGAIN BE CONSIDERED OR PERMITTED."
-- SENATOR DIANE FEINSTEIN, CHAIR, SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, MARCH 11, 2014

Narration: To bring it up to the present, here are some more recent stories. Once again there's a conflict between the Executive and Legislative Branches. Basically the U.S. Senate Committee on Intelligence did nothing to stop 8 years of torture by the Bush Administration, but afterwards began to investigate the history of Bush's torture regime. In the course of that study it reviewed an internal document given to the Committee by the CIA that said there was no "actionable intelligence" produced by the torture. Once again, while the Executive publicly justified its use of torture on the grounds that it was "protecting national security" while it knew privately that it didn't produce any "useful intelligence." Thousands and thousands of human beings tortured horrendously, torture which actually harmed national security by increasing recruitment in the ranks of U.S. enemies.

The CIA gave this report by mistake to the Senate Intelligence Committee. More embarrassingly, that report had been written prior to the present CIA Director, John Brennan having given the Senate Intelligence Committee a 122-page report saying the torture **had** produced actionable intelligence. So John Brennan, the CIA Director, was caught red-handed lying to the Senate Intelligence Committee. His reaction was to illegally hack into the computers of the Senate Intelligence Committee and try to expunge that report. This is why Diane Feinstein, even though she has until now entirely justified spying by the intelligence community, got so annoyed.

44. U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRET WAR ABROAD AND AT HOME – KEY FEATURES

U.S. EXECUTIVE SECRET WAR ABROAD AND AT HOME - KEY FEATURES

- GOALS: To keep local governments and elites allowing U.S. military and corporate investment in power, to destabilize those who do not
- Consumes \$1.2 trillion annually, more than the U.S.'s 12 closest competitors combined
- Has killed wounded or made homeless well over 20 million civilians since 1960, more than any other governing institution on earth
- Operates in secrecy
- Has no meaningful oversight by Congress, the Judiciary, U.S. media or American people
- Today conducts unaccountable and secret assassinations of countless individuals around the world through its drone and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) programs in over 100 countries
- Has not won a single major war it has fought since World War II
- Has helped cause a frightening rise in international terrorism, most seriously in nuclear-armed Pakistan
- Has created a Surveillance State and the infrastructure of a Police State at home
- Is effectively a Secret Government

Narration: The Executive Branch's behavior is an ongoing threat to democracy and is continuing to endanger us until today. Here are the key features of U.S. Executive Secret War. You can see all of this in its most extreme form in Laos. After all, U.S. leaders lost in Laos after wasting \$70 billion bombing it. They also lost in Cambodia and lost in Vietnam. And, in fact, the U.S. Executive Branch has not actually won a major war since the end of World War II. They have wasted trillions of dollars that could have created jobs and rising incomes for tens of millions of Americans, \$4-6 trillion wasted on Afghanistan and Iraq alone and endangering national security at the same time. Today in fact the U.S. Executive Branch is spending \$1.2 trillion a year, more than our twelve closest military competitors combined, including Russia and China, all in the name of protecting us even though they have in fact clearly failed to do so. Terrorism is spreading all over the globe, particularly seriously in nuclear-armed Pakistan.

They have switched to an ever-increasing reliance on secret war. Basically, the President today has his own global secret police, called the Joint Special Operations Command. It consists of 75,000 people operating in over 100 countries assassinating anyone they want. And although this form of Secret War began in its modern form in Laos, it is as current as today's newspaper.

45. MY EXPERIENCE WITH, AND BELIEFS ABOUT, THE U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH TODAY

CRIME DOES PAY

HONESTY IS NOT THE BEST POLICY

MIGHT MAKES RIGHT

OUR LEADERS ARE NOT FUNDAMENTALLY DECENT
HUMAN BEINGS

AMERICAN LEADERS DO NOT DESERVE OUR TRUST

AMERICA IS NOT A DEMOCRACY, GOVERNED BY
SYSTEM OF CHECKS BALANCES

AMERICA DOES NOT ENJOY FREEDOM OF THE
PRESS

AMERICA IS NOT GUIDED BY THE RULE OF LAW

AMERICA IS NOT THE GREATEST COUNTRY ON
EARTH

Narration: Let us now look at Executive Branch in terms of beliefs many Americans hold about their country, and the beliefs I originally held. "Crime doesn't pay." Crime does pay for members of the Executive Branch. Henry Kissinger has grown immensely wealthy on the blood of the more than 6 million Lao, Cambodians and Vietnamese that he helped murder, maim or make homeless. His crimes have paid off and he is now honored by U.S. society – precisely because might does make right in our nation. "Honesty is the best policy." I defy anyone to name a single member of the U.S. Executive Branch who has been fired for lying. In fact, like General Stanley McChrystal after he lied in saying that Pat Tillman was killed by friendly fire, they are promoted for doing so. The only time I can remember a U.S. Executive Branch spokesperson being fired was for telling the truth, as when P.J. Crowley some years back was dismissed after criticizing the mistreatment of Private Manning. In the Executive Branch, honesty is not the best policy. Lying is the best policy. American leaders are fundamentally decent and deserve our trust, we enjoy a system of checks and balances, freedom of the press and the rule of law. I don't need to comment. All you have to do is listen to the voices from the Plain of Jars. Secrecy is the key to Executive power. If Americans understood that Executive officials were increasing rather than diminishing terrorism it would experience the most grievous harm that can befall a bureaucracy. Budgets would be cut. Executive Branch officials' mission is to increase their budgets and incomes. And to do so they must lie to and deceive the American people. And if killing, wounding and making homeless tens of millions of innocent people doesn't disqualify the U.S. from being "the greatest country on earth," I don't know what would."

46. THE U.S. EXECUTIVE'S "AHUMANITY" THREATENS FREEDOM MORE THAN FOREIGN "ENEMIES"

U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH "AHUMAN" CONSCIOUSNESS

-- INDIFFERENCE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH VICTIMS ABROAD

-- INDIFFERENCE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS, E.G. THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY, THE RIGHT NOT TO BE SPIED UPON AND LIED TO BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICIALS WHOSE SALARIES WE PAY

-- INDIFFERENCE TO THE RIGHTS OF OUR OWN CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN, OUR OWN FUTURE FLESH AND BLOOD, TO ENJOY A HEALTHY BIOSPHERE AND THE CONTINUATION OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT

Narration: The most chilling implication of U.S. Executive Branch behavior abroad for Americans at home is the "ahuman" mentality it reveals. Many Executive Branch officials are human enough in their private lives. But at work they are engaged in an enterprise devoted to control of the populace, characterized by a complete indifference to human rights, whether at home or abroad.

This Executive Branch mentality kills, maims and tortures not out of hatred or malice, but simply because it can and no one can stop it. And this ahuman consciousness also extends to American citizens. It is shocking that so many Americans, many with license plates that say "Live Free or Die," have meekly accepted that the Executive Branch is taping our phone calls **without even telling us.** If Edward Snowden hadn't revealed all of this, they would still be doing it without our knowledge. We pay them to spy on and lie to us. They don't regard us as human beings with a human right to privacy and not to be spied upon by our own government. And nothing more reveals the ahuman mentality of Executive Branch officials than their indifference to the human rights of their **own** children and grandchildren to enjoy a healthy biosphere. In the pursuit of their short-term goals, with the collusion of the corporations and oil companies they represent, they are destroying their **own** children's lives. Again, they are doing this out of an **ahuman** consciousness. They don't hate their children, they just don't consider them as human beings with rights. No institution in America today is more at odds with American values than the U.S. Executive Branch. No foreign enemy is surveilling the American people, constructing a police-state infrastructure, or wasting trillions on senseless war-making abroad while American citizens go hungry and jobless at home. The U.S. Executive is in many ways the enemy of the American people.

47. HOWARD ZINN AND THE KEY QUESTION: CAN WE LIVE WITH OURSELVES IF WE DO NOT ACT?
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QUESTION: "WHY DO YOU KEEP FIGHTING FOR YOUR GOALS AT AGE 86, WHEN IT SEEMS SO UNLIKELY YOU WILL SUCCEED?"

HISTORIAN HOWARD ZINN: "I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I DIDN'T."

Narration: I believe that the present situation is very serious – particularly if more and more people in America have to fight for their economic survival. You see people working two and three jobs now, and they still have to go on food stamps. You could see massive public opposition to government policies on behalf of the rich, in which case the police-state infrastructure that Obama has created could come into being. We don't have a police-state now, of course. But it could happen in the future. As regards climate change and mass public opposition to current economic policies, my view is that only a giant shift in mass consciousness and mass movements can stop the Executive Branch and the corporations it represents from destroying human civilization and creating a police-state at home.

Mass movements in turn begin with **individuals** deciding to act not because they are sure of victory, but because they feel they must. I asked the historian Howard Zinn shortly before his death at age 86, "Why do you keep fighting for your goals when it seems so unlikely that you will succeed?" And he answered simply, "I couldn't live with myself if I didn't." If enough of us **can** live with ourselves in the present situation we are doomed. But if enough of us **cannot** live with ourselves knowing that U.S. Executive officials and global corporations are destroying our young, democracy and human civilization as we know it, we will be able to save humanity.