

# Manufacturing Enemies: Undermining U.S. Security in a Climate of War

BY: MICHAEL MCCONNELL

Who killed Asaq Mohammed and why did his death make us less secure as a nation?

Asaq's uncle watched him die. Asaq was two years old when the U.S. bombed Afghanistan. His family fled the bombing and for four days they traveled across snow-covered mountains with a few blankets and no tents.

After three years of drought everyone was already weak with hunger and the long trek was too much for the most vulnerable, like Asaq who died in his mother's arms. His family believes he would still be alive if not forced to flee the bombing.

At least 20,000 people like Asaq are casualties of the Afghan war, most killed more directly through missile strikes, drone attacks and gunfire. If we are to believe General Stanley McCrystal's "insurgent math:" for every innocent person we kill, we create ten new enemies, then that is, at a minimum, an additional 200,000 "enemies" created by the war, just in Afghanistan. The numbers are exponentially higher for Iraq.

This means that the primary method of military intervention and occupation that the United States has pursued since 9/11 has been fundamentally counter productive and ultimately dangerous to our real security as a nation. We are, by the military's own admission, manufacturing enemies. Certainly the polls taken in Muslim countries that were extremely sympathetic to the United States after 9/11, have now reversed to where the majority are critical of us.

But also here at home, war has undermined our security. Do the fifteen million unemployed feel secure? The Census Bureau recently reported that the percentage of Americans struggling below the poverty line in 2009 was the highest it has been in fifteen years.<sup>1</sup> With the country in its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, four million additional Americans found themselves in poverty in 2009, with the total reaching 44 million, or one in seven residents. Millions more were surviving only because of expanded unemployment insurance and other assistance. Add to that the epidemic of home foreclosures and the huge increase of working families visiting food banks and we paint a profile of a nation anything but secure.

But how has war contributed to this economic collapse? As of last May, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost \$1 trillion in operations alone. Since all of that money was borrowed, it increases the deficit. Nobel Prize economist Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard professor Linda Bilmes estimate that the wars will cost over \$3 trillion due to exorbitant health care costs of returning vets, interest on the debt and replenishing the military. That is an unnecessary debt burden that our



children and grandchildren will bear, further undermining a quick and full economic recovery.

A study by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, found that in terms of job creation, the military produced the least and lowest paid jobs of all sectors including retail, mass transit, construction, education and health care. That means that the over \$700 billion of taxpayer

dollars (57% of the discretionary annual federal budget) have hemorrhaged from our economy into the military that could have created jobs here at home. For example, the \$1 trillion spent on war could have provided a \$50,000/year job for every unemployed person in America with \$350 billion left over to build schools, hospitals, high speed rail systems or renewable energy.

Even the U.S. military admits that the global economic crisis, climate change and the Israel-Palestine conflict are the biggest threats to our security and all three have no military solution. In fact, military interventions are only exacerbating those problems. The world has reached a point where the most nonviolent actions to address conflict are now the most practical and war has become not only counterproductive but dangerous and obsolete.

We are truly a global community where our concern for the life of people like Asaq Mohammed is inextricably intertwined with concern for our own lives. Protecting the lives of the most vulnerable like Asaq is not only morally right, it is practically necessary, for his sake and for ours.

**Michael McConnell** is the Regional Director of American Friends Service Committee, in Chicago IL, <http://www.afsc.org>.

## NOTES

Photo courtesy of AFSC.

<sup>1</sup> United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau Public Information Office, 2010), [http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income\\_wealth/cb10-144.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb10-144.html).

# City of Impunity

BY: CIPRIANA JURADO

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, is located on the United States border near El Paso, Texas.

A few decades ago, Ciudad Juárez was known worldwide for its sweatshops. However, the image of the city has changed due to the rising amount of insecurity, violence and deaths caused by the 'war on drugs' declared by President Felipe Calderón.

As of late 2007, there have been more than 7,000 murders, most unsolved, in addition to kidnappings, extortion, and closed businesses. The present day situation in Ciudad Juárez has not improved. The city now suffers the worst public safety crisis in its entire history with murders involving high-caliber weaponry.

Ciudad Juárez has experienced unimaginable levels of extreme violence against women. As of 1993, Ciudad Juárez became known as the "city of femicide." Today, more than 800 women have been murdered and approximately 400 have disappeared. These figures have grown under the "war on drugs," in which women continue to be victimized by the authorities on three governmental levels.

In previous years, women in Ciudad Juárez had been victimized for dressing provocatively or because they were living a double life. Today however, women are killed because they're drug runners, hired killers, or are lovers or girlfriends of drug traffickers. In the eyes of the authorities, we women are to blame for what happens to us.

The femicide in Ciudad Juárez and in other states of the Mexican Republic reflect the lack of political will to resolve the deep wound in the lives of Mexican women, as well as the lack of implementation of gender-specific public policies that would guarantee the lives and safety of women.

The solution to end this insecurity was to militarize the city. The first soldiers came to Juárez during the last months of 2007, but the majority of the more than 15,000 troops arrived in our city in March of 2008. Initially, many citizens felt that the troop increase was a good thing, as it was thought that the army was actually coming to end the serious problem of insecurity with which we're living.

However, the problem became that the military didn't arrest the criminals who were terrorizing the people, but instead arrested people - mainly young people - from poor areas. The military went into Ciudad Juárez homes without search warrants, violently threw doors open, destroyed furniture, and kidnapped the men inside. This became commonplace in our neighborhoods.



Human Rights organizations have documented reports of the more serious cases including extrajudicial murders, forced disappearances, and torture. In addition, there are reports of personal property damage, in which members of the military have been accused of robbing items of value and money during searches.

The human rights organizations involved in these reports include El Centro de Investigación y Solidaridad Obrera (CISO A.C.), la Comisión Estatal y Nacional de Derechos Humanos, and international organizations such as Amnesty International, American Watch, and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mexico.

**Cipriana Jurado** has worked as a human rights advocate for the labor rights of women and for economic and environmental justice for more than 20 years in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. She founded the Center for Information and Solidarity for Working Women (CISO), a non-profit organization. Since 2008, Cipriana has been involved in undertaking investigations of human rights violations committed by Mexico's army, deployed by President Calderón across Mexico as a means to reduce the flow of drugs from Mexico into the United States. Because of this work, Cipriana and others received death threats and one of her colleagues was killed.

In 2010, an alert was sent out to the International community by Amnesty International requesting the protection of Cipriana and other human rights workers from Ciudad Juárez experiencing intimidation and death threats. Chicago New Sanctuary Movement responded to this request and has provided temporary refuge for Cipriana and her two children in Chicago. Cipriana has spoken to many social justice groups, parishes, and churches across Illinois as a means to raise awareness of the ongoing human rights crisis in Ciudad Juárez. This biography was provided by Chicago New Sanctuary Movement ([www.crln.org/Chicago-New-Sanctuary](http://www.crln.org/Chicago-New-Sanctuary)). This article has been translated from Spanish.

## NOTES

Photo above taken by Jhonathan Gómez.

8th Day Center for Justice  
205 West Monroe St Ste 500  
Chicago, Illinois 60606-5062

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Chicago, Illinois  
Permit No. 7596

8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice



# CENTERINGS

A PUBLICATION OF 8TH DAY CENTER FOR JUSTICE

## SPONSORING MEMBERS

Claretians, East, USA  
Clerics of St. Viator  
Divine Word Missionaries, North America  
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration  
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters  
Priests of the Sacred Heart  
Sisters of Charity, BVM  
Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN  
Sisters of St. Joseph of the  
~Third Order of St. Francis

## MEMBER FRIENDS

Capuchin Province of St. Joseph  
Congregation of St. Joseph  
Daughters of Charity of  
~St. Vincent de Paul, Evansville, IN  
Dominican Sisters of Adrian, MI  
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, WI  
Dominican Sisters of Springfield, IL  
Franciscan Sisters, Rochester, MN  
Hospital Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis  
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate  
Order of Carmelites-PCM  
Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ  
School Sisters of Notre Dame  
~Atlantic Midwest Province  
Sisters of the Living Word  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
~West Midwest Community

## CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago  
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes  
De LaSalle Christian Brothers  
Dominican Sisters of Columbus, OH  
Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, KS  
Dominican Sisters of Racine, WI  
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters  
Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph  
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
School Sisters of St. Francis  
Servants of Jesus, Detroit MI  
Sisters of Christian Charity, Western Province  
Sisters of St. Benedict, Rock Island, IL  
Sisters of St. Francis of Joliet, IL  
Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, OH  
Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, IA  
Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Villa Maria, PA  
Ursuline Sisters, Central Province  
Wheaton Franciscans

## UPCOMING EVENTS - 2011

### 8th Day's Urban Plunge

April 25th – 30th  
Contact – Mary Kay Flanigan  
[marykayfr@gmail.com](mailto:marykayfr@gmail.com)

### 31st Annual Good Friday Walk for Justice

April 22nd  
Contact – Kathleen Desautels  
[kathleend8@gmail.com](mailto:kathleend8@gmail.com)

### SOAW Washington Event

April 4 –11, Washington DC  
[www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org)

To receive ongoing information on upcoming events sign up for the **8th Day E-Newsletter**. Contact Beth Connor at [beth@8thdaycenter.org](mailto:beth@8thdaycenter.org).

Volume XXXVII, No.1 Fall 2010

# Homeland Security for the Holidays

BY: LIZ DELIGIO

**“We will bankrupt ourselves in the vain search for absolute security.”**

- President Eisenhower

NBC recently ran a news piece entitled “Home for the Holidays” as a segment in its nightly program. This piece wasn’t focused on shopping trends or family activities. Instead, the report highlighted the security measures used in airports.

“Home for the Holidays” provided an upbeat explanation of a “body pat down,” along with helpful video clips showing people receiving pat downs. We are told to just put our arms out, hold our feet slightly apart, look straight ahead and let the TSA agent feel around our chest, waist, and thighs. This is normal and this is what will make us safe.

Home, with its traditional associations of comfort and safety were invoked in this segment to sell a security measure the ACLU has called a violation of our civil liberties. The TSA in the clip was portrayed as a loving but admonishing grandmother, “Wipe your boots or you will have to empty all your pockets for the scanner!”

“Home for the Holidays” is one of many threads in a barrage of stories that all share the same script: security is necessary, security requires the relinquishing of rights, and most importantly security is so complex that only experts know what we need to be safe.

We are not knowledgeable enough to question policies that developed in the wake of 9/11: the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the indefinite detentions, or the Mexican border wall. If any of these appear as human rights disasters, this is because we do not have access to special information that the CIA, FBI, ICE, TSA, Homeland Security, lawmakers, and White House are privy too.

The dangers of this world need our tax dollars, not our understanding to be resolved. Safety is no longer created through the strength of community, but the anti-thesis of community suspicion, surveillance, and control.

This narrative is full of holes that work to justify its means with an end. A tale of absolutes that asks us to never be troubled by the methods the “heroes” of the tale may be forced to use.

Much like the airport pat down, something in this narrative simply leaves us with a feeling that perhaps a larger point is being missed.

This edition of Centerings looks at security from a different perspective. Our authors point to the consequences that “Home for the Holidays” wants us to forget. Their accounts provide a different lens in which to understand an alternative story beyond the “Home for the Holidays” narrative. In doing so, we are forced to ask; do we create safe communities through militarization? Do we resolve “terrorism” through occupations?

Cipriana Jurado shares her experience as a human rights defender in Ciudad Juárez and what has happened in her community since militarization was sought as a solution to the rising violence in the city.

Michael McConnell shares his reflections on U.S. intervention in the Middle East and its impact in the communities of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the United States. Have we created solutions to the security “crisis” of 9/11?

Real people are being impacted by these policies and real people are not experiencing safety but rather increasing instability.

“Home for the Holidays” ironically brings to memory the classic film *It’s A Wonderful Life*. The main character, George Bailey, faces desperate financial circumstances and wishes that he had never been born. After a series of revelations, George returns to his community. It is his community and their generous outpouring that ultimately solves George’s problems and trumps the banker Mr. Potter.

The community’s actions reveal that relationship is an asset as real as money. It is the trust, generosity and relationship with the community in which Bailey is able to best the richest man in town. In the end money, with all of its power could not overcome the strength of community.

*It’s A Wonderful Life* provides an alternative story to the “Home for the Holidays” narrative. If we want to create security let us highlight community rather than “pat downs”. Many communities around the world choose to face the challenges of today through relationship and trust rather than suspicion and control. We offer this issue of Centerings as a means to lift up such communities and provide an alternative narrative to “Home for the Holidays”.

**Liz Deligio** is in her fourth year at 8th Day Center for Justice and is staff for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration community.