

Empire No More!

By Ken Coates,

Reviewed by Theresa Wolfwood

For Peace News

This morning on radio, I heard a USA government lawyer proclaim the intention to grant no rights to foreigners in the USA, warning us we may be subject to detention without any contact, food deprivation and various forms of abuse, even in the transit area of an airport. She ended her speech with the blatant statement (lie) that the USA does not torture.

I felt a chill as I realized I may never again see my friends in the USA who are too frail to travel, that I cannot visit or meet there with the many committed activists who are trying to change the path of their country, I just will not risk it now.

In Coates' dense, information- and analysis-packed book, this latest development is described precisely on the back cover, "American military doctrine has been transmuted into **Full Spectrum Dominance**, or unchallengeable superiority in any contest on or in land, sea, air, space or information." This frightening statement actually comes straight from the USA Department of Defence statement of May 2000. (see page 130).

Since the end of the so-called 'Cold War', the USA has been emboldened to proclaim its intention of global hegemony, an intent that was always there and implicit in the capitalist drive to expand - it no longer needs to worry about opposition or counter-balance.

Coates has collected a number of essays that examine the USA hegemony, the faltering power of the UN, the wars of the last 15 years, the erosion of peace and human rights globally and our efforts to change this dangerous slide into the repression we seem to be headed for.

These papers were intended for discussion by the Network for Peace and Human Rights that has been meeting in Europe since 2002. As such they help any activist looking for insight and direction in the work of peace and human rights – inextricably bound together in these “parlous times”.

The continuing nuclear proliferation today; USA holds more than 10,000 nuclear weapons while it shakes its fist at Iran and North Korea, the development of new ‘nuclear weapons’ i.e. those using U-238 as a steel hardener, while treaties on nuclear proliferation and weapons in space are all abandoned by the USA present great instability even though nuclear disarmament is, to many activists, yesterday’s issue. Unfortunately not.

While those with full spectrum vision and understanding cannot see any serious concerted threat against USA hegemony that calls for military dominance, the USA government leaders are moving into a shady world of unreality where the threat of “terrorism” can be used to subdue any opposition and trample human rights.

The later part of this useful text covers the important connections between the major concerns of today, peace, poverty, human rights and resource control. Torture may become the defining and connective issue that will challenge the empire. Coates points to many areas and directions we are working and need to increase our efforts. The change must come from people acting together non-violently. Violence is their game, not our philosophy.

The book ends with the ever-inspiring words of Arundhati Roy.

“Our strategy should not be to only confront Empire, but to lay siege to it...To shame it. To mock it. With our art, music, our literature, our joy our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness...The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling – their ideas, their vision of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability. Remember this: We be many and they be few...”

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