

THE EMPIRE AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE OF HUMAN BEINGS

That's terrific! So I exclaimed when I read down to the last line about the revelations of the famous journalist Seymour Hersh, printed in Democracy Now! and collected as one of the 25 most censored news items in the United States.

The material is entitled "The War Crimes of Stanley McChrystal, U.S. General" and it was included in Project Censored, put together by a university in California, including the essential paragraphs from those revelations.

Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal, named the commander responsible for the war in Afghanistan by Obama in May of 2009, had earlier been the head of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) reporting to Dick Cheney [Bush's vice president]. Most of Gen. McChrystal's 33-year military career is being kept classified [in other words, secret], including his services between 2003 and 2008 as commander of JSOC, the highly secret elite unit that for years the Pentagon refused to acknowledge its existence. JSOC is a special unit, of 'black' operations of the Navy Seals (Marines Special Forces) and Delta Force [secret army soldiers for special operations, formally called 'Special Forces Operational Division-Delta (SFOD-D), while the Pentagon calls it the Combat Applications Group].

"Pulitzer Prize-winning Seymour Hersh said the Bush administration ran an "executive assassination ring" that reported directly to Vice President Dick Cheney and that Congress never felt any concern to investigate. JSOC teams used to travel to different countries, without even speaking to the ambassador or the CIA Station Head, with a list of people they were looking for, finding them, killing them and leaving. There was a current list of people marked as targets, drawn up by Vice President Cheney's office [...] There were assassinations in dozens of countries in the Middle East and in Latin America, Hersh stated : 'There's an executive order, signed by Jerry Ford, President Ford, in the '70s, forbidding such action. It's not only contrary—it's illegal, it's immoral, it's counterproductive.'

JSOC was also implicated in war crimes, including the torture of prisoners in secret 'ghost' detention centres. Camp Nama in Iraq, operated by JSOC under McChrystal, was one of such 'ghost' facilities hidden from the Red Cross International Committee (CICR) and accused of some of the worst acts of torture."

They officially installed the Major General at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, but he was "a frequent visitor to Camp Nama and at other special forces bases in Iraq and Afghanistan where the forces under his command were based".

Next we deal with a point of special interest, when such facts came into conflict with officials who, in fulfilling their functions, were obliged to commit deeds that put them in open violation of the law and implied serious crimes.

"An interrogator at Camp Nama known as Jeff described locking prisoners in shipping containers for 24 hours at a time in extreme heat; exposing them to extreme cold with periodic soaking in cold water; bombardment with bright lights and loud music; sleep deprivation; and severe beatings."

Immediately we are dealing with flagrant violations of international principles and covenants signed by the United States. Cuban readers will remember the story told in the two pieces where I wrote about our relations with the International Red Cross, to which we returned a great number of prisoners from the enemy army that had fallen into our hands during our defence of the Sierra Maestra and the later strategic counter-offensive against the Cuban army, trained and supplied by the U.S. Never was any

prisoner mistreated and none of the wounded was ever denied immediate care. That very same institution, headquartered in Switzerland, could testify to those facts.

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is the international body charged under international law with monitoring compliance with the Geneva Conventions, and it, therefore, has the right to inspect all facilities where people are detained in a country that is at war or under military occupation."

"In the explanation why no other press had covered this story, Hersh stated: 'My colleagues at the press corps often don't follow up, not because they don't want to but because they don't know who to call. If I'm writing something on the Joint Special Operations Command, which is an ostensibly classified unit, how do they find it out? The government will tell them everything I write is wrong or that they can't comment. It's easy for those stories to be dismissed. I do think the relationship with JSOC is changing under Obama. It's more under control now.'"

...the decision of the Obama Administration to appoint Gen. McChrystal as the new commander in charge of the war in Afghanistan and the prolongation of military jurisdiction for U.S. prisoners in its war on terrorism, held in the Guantanamo Bay prison, are unfortunately examples of how the Obama Administration continues walking in Bush's footsteps.

Rock Creek Free Press revealed in June 2010 that Seymour Hersh, taking part in the Global Research Journalism Conference in Geneva, criticized President Obama in April of 2010 and denounced that US forces were carrying out executions on the battlefield.

"Those captured in Afghanistan are being executed on the battlefield", Hersh stated

By this point, the story comes in contact with highly current reality: the continuity of a policy by the president that succeeded the delirious W. Bush, inventor of the war waged to get power over the most important gas and oil resources in the world in a region inhabited by more than 2.5 billion people, by virtue of acts committed against the people of the United States by an organization of men who were recruited and armed by the CIA to fight in Afghanistan against Soviet soldiers and who continue to enjoy the backing of the closest U.S. allies.

The complex and unpredictable area whose resources are being disputed goes from Iraq and the Middle East right up to the remote limits of the Chinese region of Xinjiang, going through Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and the former Soviet republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazajstan, Kirguistan and Tayikistan, capable of supplying the gas and oil for the growing economy of the Peoples' Republic of China and industrialized Europe. The population of Afghanistan, as well as a part of Pakistan, a country with 170 million inhabitants and possessing nuclear weapons, is the victim of the unmanned Yankee airplane attacks that are massacring the civilian population.

Among the 25 most censured news items by the great media, selected by Sonoma State University of California, as it has been doing for 34 years, one of them, corresponding to the 2009-2010 period, was "The War Crimes of General Stanley McChrystal"; and another two are related with our island: "The Media Ignores Cuban Medical Aid in Haitian Earthquake" and "Prisoners in Guantanamo are Still Being Brutalized". A fourth state: "Obama Reduces Social Spending and Increases the Military".

Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez, was politically responsible for the Cuban Medical Mission sent to Pakistan when the destructive earthquake battered the simple nature of that country's north-eastern region where extensive areas inhabited by the same ethnic group, with the same culture and traditions were arbitrarily split up by English colonialism into countries that later fell under the aegis of the Yankees.

In his speech yesterday, on October 26th, at UN headquarters, he demonstrated how excellently well-informed he is about the international situation of our complicated world.

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His brilliant speech and the Resolution approved by that body, because of its great importance, require a Reflection that I propose to write.

Fidel Castro Ruz
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