



**BEYOND THE EVIL OF TRUMP:
LIVING KING'S LEGACY OF STEADFAST RESISTANCE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 04-20-17, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

IT HAS BEEN RIGHTFULLY REMEMBERED and necessarily noted that this month marks the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's classic anti-war speech, April 4, 1967, a year to the day of his assassination and martyrdom. It was titled "Beyond Vietnam—A Time to Break Silence" and offered reasons of moral conscience and a rightful reading of history for why people of conscience were morally obligated to oppose the Vietnam war and by implication war in general as a way to solve human problems. Surely, in times like these, we are compelled to re-read King and reaffirm in practice his legacy of steadfast resistance.

One of the major points King makes in his speech is the need for America to move away from its political myths about itself and face the facts concerning its self-deception, its worship of wealth, its addiction to violence and its unhealthy commitment to racism, militarism and vulgar materialism in its various social forms and cultural fashions. And now we are on the edge of a new round of war-mongering linked to self-delusions about greatness void of goodness and claims of a manufactured right to rule others, kill and replace their leaders, rob them of their resources, and savagely destroy their lives and occupy their lands.

And it is a man called Trump, hold up in a house called White, who serves as both a key source and symptom of America's new bout of willful self-delusion about becoming "great" again, doing "God's work," saving the world from itself, meting out Viking justice as vengeance and terror with advanced technology, and propping up and praising war and massive violence as the solution to all problems at home and abroad.

Trump claims a new found religion in rescuing the very Syrians he tried to ban and reject as refugees. He talks to us in the old language of lies of "weapons of mass destruc-

tion" and the need to replace leaders and play moral police in the world. He diverts the country from his legal problems and political failures and calls on the country to join him in war as the new sheriff in town—armed, dangerous and determined.

But his claim to be concerned about Assad of Syria killing the Syrian people, when America and its allies have been doing this for years, reeks of the rankest hypocrisy. And it clearly opens the way for the political myth making King condemns. For it calls the people to mindless loyalty which not only condones wars, but calls for it out of fear, hatred and condoning of corporate plunder. It is patriotism of rallying around the flag and the flag wavers regardless of the merit, morality or meaning of the call and the acts involved.

King explains how such patriotism emerges in the midst of mindless self-congratulating and myth-making claims about a country's greatness and a parallel need to condemn and talk hatred toward others. It is reflected in racist and enemy talk, like Trump's talk about waging wars, high walls to be built and war machines to be refurbished and funded in increased amounts. Thus, the beast of war and the war hawks, warlords and war-mongers must be fed and funded, and cuts to goods and services to the poor, the ill, the aged, infants and other vulnerable and needy people will have to be made in mad and mean-spirited times like these.

Trump has also authorized the dropping of the largest non-nuclear bomb on Afghanistan without concern for the welfare of the people or the effect on the air, water or soil. The President and his supporters declare he is waging a war on terrorism, but actually such a war is terrorism in its most powerful and unrestrained form—not a small or large group setting of a bomb in a crowded place, but a state attacking the people with all its power from

**BEYOND THE EVIL OF TRUMP:
LIVING KING'S LEGACY OF STEADFAST RESISTANCE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 04-20-17, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

air, land and sea. It is dropping bombs by plane and drone not only on Isis and Al Qaeda, but also in the midst of a city, town and village, killing and maiming innocents and non-combatants and immorally calling it “acceptable collateral damage.”

It means following Hitler's and Mussolini's model of testing weapons on people, using whole countries and peoples as testing grounds. And in the midst of this massive murder, mayhem and destruction—the president and gloating journalists dare to call it a proud, beautiful and glorious action. Indeed, one journalist declared the bombing of Syria was beautiful and inspired him to remember a signature declaration of a warmonger posing as poetry, i.e., “I am guided by the beauty of our weapons.”

Dr. King also raised questions about what he calls a “brutal solidarity in killing,” a dishonest and disreputable interracial solidarity in killing the declared enemy abroad, while lacking any serious solidarity at home in our daily relations with each other. Not only were we, as Malcolm so often pointed out, sent overseas to kill the White man's enemies, but were prohibited from defending ourselves against the White lynch mob, racist police or average White citizens who decided to savagely deny our freedom, callously brutalize our bodies or ruthlessly take our lives.

But if we are to have a righteous solidarity of any measure or meaning, then it must be based on mutual respect, mutual support and mutual benefit and not be a solidarity in the killing and injuring of others, making war on the weak and vulnerable around the world and at home. In a word, it can't be a sinister solidarity against conveniently imagined ene-

mies, but a solidarity in pursuit of a shared human good and the well-being of the world.

From the beginning of his ministerial mission in Montgomery, Alabama, Dr. King poses Black people as a moral and social vanguard who through their struggle would “save the very soul” of America, if it really wanted to be saved from its disgusting image of itself and of others and the brutal behavior toward others such a mutilating misconception encourages. He says our vision of our interests must extend beyond ourselves, but never exclude ourselves. For he held “the conviction America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear.” And these shackles still remain in the mind and in the social conditions that corrupt and kill and deny by race and class the opportunity to live lives of dignity, decency, security and flourishing.

King lets us know he realizes how difficult it is to oppose a government policy, especially in matters and times of war. And he also recognizes how difficult it is to move “against all the apathy of conformist thought” within ourselves and the surrounding environment. But we are compelled to move, to take a stand, oppose evil and injustice wherever we find it. King tells us that we must act to end this madness that has wreaked havoc on our lives and the lives of people all around the world. Thus, he calls to us saying, “Let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter but beautiful struggle for a new world.” He tells us we must choose to act for the good regardless of the cost and consequences. Indeed, he says, “The choice is ours and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.”

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*, *The Message and Meaning of Kwanzaa: Bringing Good Into the World* and *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.