

**San Jose State University**

---

**From the Selected Works of Gil J. Villagran**

---

March 20, 2015

# Ferguson, Vietnam, Afghanistan: Variations on a Theme

Gil J. Villagran



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/gil\\_villagran/73/](https://works.bepress.com/gil_villagran/73/)

March 20, 2015, updated Dec. 2015

I was so impressed by MIT emeritus linguistics professor Noam Chomsky's NY Times op ed interview "The Roots of American Racism" that I forwarded it to several of my friends, with this introduction below:

<http://nyti.ms/1BTFRiU>

Ok gentlemen, here is a NY times interview of Noam Chomsky, the oracle of our nation, who tells us what we must know about why our so-called enlightened democracy is and has been a slave owning oligarchy almost since the first English landing in the "new world." The genocide began and has continued here and across the globe, ever since.

I pre-apologize if this is an inconvenient truth for you, but some truths must be known if we are to not re-live them again and again in Afghanistan, Ferguson, Vietnam, Iraq, Wounded Knee, Cuba, The Philippines, the Alamo, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Chile, etc. etc.!!!

Regards, Gil

my lifelong friend Tom (w/ an MA in history) wrote: "Before I read (present tense) this, Afghanistan and Ferguson have something in common? It will take some convincing for me."

Hi Tom,

The common denominator between Afghanistan and Ferguson, and any other case of one country or class in conflict with an asymmetrical power imbalance, is that a powerful ruling elite controls, exploits and ultimately, if challenged, in even a minor way, destroys those without power, quickly and directly with weapons or gradually and indirectly with abuse; over-work without sustainable wages, such as white tenant farmers during the dust bowl or black sharecroppers during reconstruction, or low-grade chemical degradation such as of Mexican farmworkers in present day U.S.

Here are the parallels:

Afghanistan in the 1800s is haplessly between two mighty empires in what English fiction and historical writer Rudyard Kipling called, "**The Great Game**" -- the strategic rivalry and [conflict](#) between the [British Empire](#) and the [Russian Empire](#) for supremacy in [Central Asia](#)."

So in 1838 the British rode on horseback to conquer the diverse tribal people of Afghanistan to further secure their century old colony, India, the so-called Jewel in the Crown of Queen Victoria, fearful that Victoria's cousin, Czar Nicholas I, coveted India. To save the empire and British honor, hundreds of thousands died in the rocky gorges of the Khyber Pass and it began the gradual dimming of the British Empire due to cost

over-runs of this and every other war—and most of British history is the tragic history of one war after another, and often—several wars at the same time. Hence the ironically proud claim: “the sun never sets upon the British Empire” until it will finally set if even a fraction of the Empire’s enemies can sustain a coalition and obtain their own weapons of mass destruction. I hope this does not happen because I love British literature, but I fear we may live in a time such as depicted by the Percy Bysshe Shelly’s 1817 poem, “Ozymandias,” which describes the remains of a long dead mighty emperor’s stone statue, decaying in the desert sands, where nothing remains of his civilization. I fear it may prove to be much more than just another Romantic poem, but a tragic prophecy for many empires, and the present American empire.

By 1979 it was Russia's turn to what historian Barbara Tuchman aptly named, "The March of Folly" when empires suffer from national hubris, and spend themselves to an early death spiral to conquer, control and exploit a lesser empire.

As Russia invaded Afghanistan seeking its millennia long dream of a warm water port (eventually needing to then invade Pakistan to finally get to the warm water of the Indian Ocean) suffered its own "Vietnam," aka: an ignoble defeat.

**Zbigniew Brzezinski, president** Carter's national security advisor, ensured this by providing the Afghanistan army with Stinger missiles to enable resistance fighters to shoot down hundreds of Soviet planes and helicopters--causing so many Russian deaths that Russian mothers, after ten years of war, were no longer willing to give up more sons to Mother Russia, bitterly protested the war—almost sparking an insurrection--and Russian spent itself into near financial collapse, the once mighty and feared USSR broke apart into competing and stumbling “Balkan”-like states.

See the quote below:

***Zbigniew Brzezinski admitted in an interview:***  
**“How Jimmy Carter and I Started the Mujahedeen”**

By Alexander Cockburn And Jeffrey St. Clair

Q: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs ["From the Shadows"], that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan 6 months before the Soviet intervention. In this period you were the national security adviser to President Carter. You therefore played a role in this affair. Is that correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahedeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.

Q: Despite this risk, you were an advocate of this covert action. But perhaps you yourself desired this Soviet entry into war and looked to provoke it?

Brzezinski: It isn't quite that. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

Brzezinski: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the **Afghan trap** and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter: We now have **the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War**. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupported by the Russian people, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.

Gil: So the CIA plan worked, but **our U.S. ruling elite** failed to learn from our own history in Vietnam, and our folly was replicated as we funded Osama bin Laden's "liberators" to damage the USSR. Then by the 1990s bin Laden began his plot to kill the other giant empire, the U.S. So on Sept. 11, 2001, he sprang his **U.S. A. trap** upon us at the World Trade Center, and the rest is our tragic history---we marched back into Afghanistan "to get bin Laden," but George W. Bush did not really want to capture bin Laden at Bora Bora. He realized that we **"must not"** because if we captured him, he would tell the world his tale of collaborating with the Saudi Royal family and GHW Bush family and Dick Cheney-Halliburton Corporation on oil infrastructure projects in the middle east, cashing our CIA issued checks, receiving our weapons, training his terrorists at the camps we built for the **Mujahedeen**, who bin Laden renamed **al Qaida**.

**Now back to Ferguson, Mo:** the ruling elite of mayor, city manager, DA, judge and police milked the powerless Black population with petty infractions like parking, jay walking, or changing lanes without signaling (as did Sandra Bland in Texas—which led to her death days later). One black teen had a \$500 fine for not crossing at a crosswalk *on a street without sidewalks*. In addition to high fines for municipal infractions that cannot be appealed, late fees and court costs are added, atop of other fines to the extent that they provided more than 60% of the municipal budget--more than \$2 million per year. The city manager and fiscal officer sent a memo to the police chief, "can your officers increase last year's fines to \$3 million?" The police chief responded cheerfully, "We'll do our best!"

So that is why Michael Brown was stopped by Officer Darren Wilson, for jaywalking--in the middle of the day, on an almost empty street--not because it is dangerous, but rather because the city needed the fines to be able to afford police and all other city services to "serve and protect" the citizens of Ferguson (sic).

So the U. S. Attorney General's Department of Justice report just released, concluded

that the Black population was “used as a fiscal source for city services.”

Not dissimilar to how the pre-emancipated Black population, called slaves at the time, were used as a source of free labor to enable their owners to live a life of ease and luxury. It took a war—the Civil War—with 600,000 dead Americans, to end that despicable abuse of one population by another. Let us pray that we do not need a second civil war to resolve the present injustices in our nation.

Do you need more explanation of the connection?

I would like to discuss further, over a beer. Our own beer summit?

Regards, Gil

Many of my editorials, essays, and statements are posted at [www.indybay.org](http://www.indybay.org)

search: gil villagran

My email is: [gibert.villagran@sjsu.edu](mailto:gibert.villagran@sjsu.edu)