

Darrell G. Moen, Ph.D.

Promoting Social Justice, Human Rights, and Peace

Behind the Flag

(1991: 20 minutes)

Transcribed by Darrell G. Moen (5 min. excerpt)

[Excerpt of last five minutes of video]

Dennis Bernstein (Pacific News Service): Look at what one minute of video did in Los Angeles to change the nature of the way people think about the situation of police brutality in this country. Can you imagine one minute of truth every night about the war, about the mass incineration of human beings, how that might have changed the character of the way people think about the [Gulf] war?

Narrator: While the major media covered the war primarily from the administration's point of view, a number of alternative news sources provided excellent information from other perspectives.

Dennis Bernstein (Pacific News Service): And I think it's important to also hold your mainstream media accountable. Ask your own questions. If something doesn't sound true to you, well, maybe it's not true.

Narrator: The Bush administration justified our sending troops by announcing that up to a third of a million Iraqi troops were massed at the Saudi border, poised to invade. However, satellite images taken at the time showed no evidence of any Iraqi force. While U.S. forces were clearly visible on the Saudi side, Kuwait's main airbase showed no sign of Iraqi activity. The main road to the border had not been cleared of sand and was unusable for moving troops.

Peter Zimmerman (Former Defense Department Satellite Photo Analyst): What we did see is really what we didn't see, the first question either of us asked. The other is, where is everybody?

Narrator: When Defense Department officials were asked to present evidence to support U.S. administration claims, the request was refused. Was the American public deliberately misled by the administration and the military? Was this a way to

compromise the choice the American people faced between domestic agendas and proposed military cutbacks?

David Hartsough (American Friends Service Committee): The American people have a choice. We can continue to be number one in military technology and missile development, the kind of bombers we have and the number of military bases all around the world, or we can be number one in the quality of life: the air we breathe, the kind of education our children have, the kind of health care we have - the quality of life. My own feeling is that 95% of the people in this society could benefit by cutting 50% of our military budget, which is really wasteful and extravagant and redirect those funds into our own communities.

Rear Admiral (Ret.) Eugene Carroll (Deputy Director, Center for Defense Information): This policy of the present administration is going to [continue to] be the policy of the United States until the citizens finally demand a change. When they get tired of tying yellow ribbons around trees, and mourning the deaths of American men and women, then they're going to speak up in the democratic process. And they're going to make their president listen, and they're going to make their senators and representatives listen, and they're going to stop voting \$300 billion a year to arm Americans to fight wars all over the world.

Mark Friedman (Plant Closures Project): True security in the United States would come from having a health care system that works, from having an educational system that works, from having an environment that's protected, from having renewable energy sources as the keystone of our energy policy rather than a continued reliance on fossil fuels.

Jill Nelson (Common Agenda Coalition): Change is going to come from the local level through getting people mobilized in such a way that they take leadership, and that many more people become active. So that is going to be the way that we are going to achieve social change.

Narrator: Programs in conflict resolution and peace studies are now well- established in universities around the world. A new generation can be equipped with better ways to resolve problems.

Ronald Dellums (U.S. Congressman, Calif.): Here's a moment when we are looking through the window into the future, into an incredible abyss. We are seeing modern warfare, and we've got to educate American people. Do not become enamored of the technology, become frightened of it! And mobilize yourselves to say, "This must end!"

Narrator: Historically, it is the actions of ordinary people that have brought about significant change in human society. There is now growing public support for shifting

our nation's focus away from military spending and meeting urgent human needs. Many organizations are already working toward these ends. Accomplishing this will not be easy. It will require many strong wills and strong voices.

Ronald Dellums: Here's our chance to say there's a better way. To say that solving problems through peace and diplomacy and international cooperation and international institutions is the way to go. And that hi-tech weaponry will not be our salvation, but our demise. And that big military budgets will not be our salvation, but our demise. I continue to believe that we can still bring change.