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The piece is dedicated to two individuals, William Rawson and Carl Thorne-Thompson who lost their lives in Vietnam.

Pre-emptive d’gustation

This installation mixed media piece has been created as a protest against the too often used power of the United States government to try by subversion or outright military intervention to achieve policy goals. The motivations driving these goals are varied but usually not truthfully stated. This essentially amounts to lies, stated in order to gain public support. The Iraq pre-emptive invasion is among the most recent and clear examples of this technique.

Pre-emptive d’gustation consists of a table setting consisting of a flag motif paper tablecloth and placemats derived from frames of the “Different Sons” film by Jack Olfield. Toy soldiers are attached to eating utensils, symbolizing the combatants being used as utensils of ideological intervention. Napkins are also flag motifs but inverted, a symbol of distress. The centerpiece consists of medieval warriors fitted with the faces and chef hats of the four presidents, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and G.W. Bush. Finally is the menu with the chef’s choice interventions.

Pre-emptive d’gustation focuses on those most obvious interventions in which there have been few if any real threats to the USA, but have been conjured through ideology to provide justification. I have focused primarily upon three interventions; the Bay of Pigs abortive attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro, the Vietnam war and the second Iraqi war. In addition I have made references to the Spanish-American war that led to the “manifest destiny” concept of hemispheric (now global) justification for intervention. Another reference was the successful overthrow (murder) of Salvador Allende in Chile. Other examples exist but the ones chosen were among the most blatant examples.

A nation most certainly must protect itself and does indeed have interests to protect. The war against the Taliban in Afghanistan was one such example as individuals that had trained in that country attacked the US. The aftermath of scaling back reconstruction in Afghanistan has been an unfortunate consequence of the Iraqi debacle.

Aside from the consequences usually meted out to a civilian population in any war, the wonton waste of young men and women in the military is despicable. It is clear that perhaps a majority of the military is convinced that the Iraq war is right and justified. Most of these individuals are truly convinced in the righteousness of the cause.

I take issue with their conclusion but honor their dedication. It is the leaders of such endeavors that I have targeted in the artwork. The “chefs” of these interventions readily commit the precious lives of the military to ill-conceived adventures that cost us dearly in talent and devotion to country