

connections

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SAVE THE DATES

PEACEFUL HOLIDAY FAIRE.....

DEC 2/3 & DEC 9/10

MOVIES AT THE P&J CENTER TUESDAYS

WINTER SOLSTICE PARTY..... DEC 21

**JOHN MCCUTCHEON .
..... JAN 24**

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December 2&3 and December 9&10

Celebrate the Peaceful Holiday Faire at the new P&J Center

Once again, Peace & Justice Network is sponsoring a Peaceful Holiday Faire.

This year we're trying something new...two weekends of Holiday Faire, with different vendors each weekend. Also new—the Faire will be held at our new Peace & Justice Center at 231 Bedford Rd, just off the Miracle Mile in Stockton.

The Faire, which began 19 years ago as a Peaceful Toy Fair to counter the prevalent violent toys for children, has evolved into an event

that focuses on thoughtful gift-giving with local, international, fair trade, and other nonviolent/socially responsible items for sale. Profits go to local craftspeople and non-profit organizations rather than corporations.

As always, you'll see old friends and new, and there will be food and music—all the ingredients to start your holiday season right.

So join us on December 2&3 and again on December 9&10. Hours are: Fridays 4–9pm and Saturdays 10–3. Call (209) 467-4455 for more information.



P&J Center open for business & fun

Tuesday night movies, with popcorn. A meeting of universal health care advocates. Discussion of issues with a variety of voices. A place to view art in its many forms. Video from world news sources. A place to read and to relax.

The Peace & Justice Center has opened and is thriving. As more people visit the space, more ideas on how it can be used flow. WiFi computer connections, demonstration organizing, multiple activist group offices, a wine tasting...

With the coming of the holidays, we will see how a cozy Peaceful Holiday Faire works out—we have two weekends to shop, adding flexibility to shoppers busy schedules. A Winter Solstice party is planned for December 21—and then there are those Tuesday night movies—all free of charge, stimulating and fun.



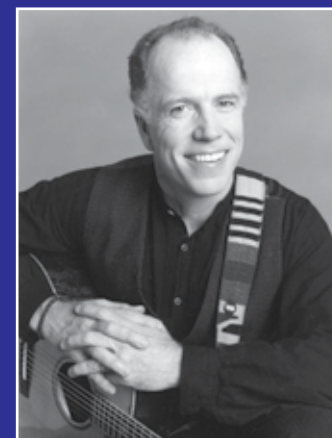
If you haven't come by lately, drop in—at the Holiday Faires, the winter party or whenever. It's a clean, well-lighted place the Peace & Justice Network has come to call home. Welcome.



Gary Barrington, who made it all happen

January 24

John McCutcheon back by popular demand



Mark your calendars for Tuesday, January 24 when PJN is pleased to present John McCutcheon.

Last year's concert was loved by all who attended. McCutcheon is one of the great folksingers of our time. He sings both old classics and songs he has written including the haunting "Not In Our Name."

You are invited to start the new year with this inspiring singer.

At Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific. \$15/\$5 children under 12. 209.467-4455.

Details next issue.

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A new year portends pleasant possibilities

With the holiday season comes the belief that we can do better. The operative word, of course, is "do." And yet, while we generally have the best of intentions, there seems so much beyond our control. The horror of Katrina's aftermath, the neglect of Pakistanis freezing to death as you read this, the war, and the chronic ignorance we have come to expect from our leaders. We deserve better - and 2006 seems to portend some pleasant possibilities, as this issue of Connections implies. Stay active.

For my part, however, my day job lands me in open enrollment

season—the time when employers nationwide try to find a way to get as much health insurance coverage for their employees as possible. This year, our rate increases at Head Start are 13% for Kaiser, 19% for HealthNet: the monthly cost for an employee plus two or more dependents will range between \$825 and \$1,050. After the employer-paid portion, an employee will have about \$220 deducted from her paycheck every two weeks—just for health benefits (about \$2.75/hour for a full time employee). It's heartbreaking—the choices these prices force on all of

us. For 2006, our resolution must be, at the least, to establish a universal health care system here in California. We have seen that, with some organizing, we can defeat reactionary initiatives placed on the ballot totally at odds with working people. Now for the other shoe to drop—positive action. Watch for Information in *Connections*.

Meantime, we will have some holiday merriment afoot at the Peace Center. The Holiday Faire has now expanded to cover two weekends, squeezed between the Tuesday night films will come our Winter Solstice party—and then

the great fun and pleasure of a John McCutcheon concert in January. And spring cannot be too far off when we have set an April 30 date in Victory Park for our 17th annual Earth Day Festival—for the first time totally solar powered.

In closing, we have a great deal to be thankful for. This year, consider celebrating the day after Thanksgiving as "buy nothing" day—a protest against consumerism and an affirmation of what we can do with our own power. Celebrate that—and organize for better days. Peace.



Bruce Giudici

Feedback

Buy KUOP?

How about a valley community non-profit buying KUOP radio, as a repeater station for KPFA in Berkeley? They do that in Fresno; they run mostly KPFA's programming, plus they originate some of their own.

I spoke to the manager of KPFA today, and they are interested in working with us out here. Think of it! The international resources of the Pacific network, plus local progressive programs.

I've started an email circle going, with hundreds of people from Sacramento to Modesto. If you want to join the conversation, call me at 464-3326, or preferably email me at john@morearty.com.

This requires ACTION NOW!

John Morearty

Save the endangered species act

Once upon a time there was a horrible tyrant, who pillaged the land; who stole from the poor and helpless and gave what little they had to his rich, greedy, power-hungry comrades. He consistently chose animal suffering by supporting and encouraging: keeping legal the use of steel leg-hold traps, opposing funding to stop gambling through animal fighting, support-

ing seal-clubbing for fur import and bison slaughter, while hoping to reinstate commercial killing of whales, and the wide-spread slaughter of elephants for ivory. He found still other ways to pillage by taking special interest money, paving the roads—literally—for his friends to take nature and its inhabitants and discard them at will. He claimed to be a friend to the natives, and took their money, too. But he's in the spotlight, exposing a true Central Valley player in a horror story.

Let's make his job and his other-party pal endangered. He is a traitor to us and our land: locally, regionally, statewide and countrywide. His name is Pombo (R-Tracy)—his endangered counter-part in crime is Cardoza (D-Merced).

Save the Endangered Species Act. Halt opening our protected land to mining. Keep drilling out of the Arctic Refuge—leave the native Alaskan tribes alone! Contact your senators, and tell them DO NOT SUPPORT HR3824, and let these two "congressmen" know how you feel about their betrayal. Go to www.saveesa.org. Write to me for more information/links: ryke40@ainet.com.

S.E. Mears

References: www.defenders.org, www.pombointheirpocket.org, www.hsus.org, www.stopextinction.org, www.alaskacoalition.org

Iran and United States roles clarified

Editor,

The *Record* Editorial of November 3rd "Why inflame a volatile situation?" brought up some debatable points. First we have the statement, "Leaders in Iran, the country that in 1979 invaded US sovereign territory (i.e. the American Embassy in Tehran) continue to ignore even the most basic tenets of international comportment." Perhaps a look in the mirror is necessary.

The United States, not Iran, is the more recent large scale ignominious violator of the so-called "basic tenets." It was the U.S. that invaded a sovereign foreign country, Iraq, in direct violation of international law with no legitimate provocation and against the express wishes of an overwhelming number of the countries of the world.

The 70 Americans held hostage in Iran for 444 days, as The Record recounts, were indeed innocent victims of a brutal regime and its political mechanizations. But what of the thousands of political prisoners our country now keeps incarcerated under the guise of a "war on terror?" How many of them are perhaps innocent? How many years must they wait before getting a day in court? Doesn't American justice demand this? How many abuses must they endure at the hands of an administration that continues to endorse the use of torture? These

abuses are being perpetrated upon them by a democratic, purportedly egalitarian, nation supposedly dedicated to the axiom "justice for all."

The *Record* states that Iran's foreign minister has claimed his country "has never tried to use force of threat against a second country" and has forgotten the eight year war with Iraq. Can our own country make the case of never using force of threat against a second country? Ask that question down in Central America and see the response you will get. During the Iran-Iraq war, the United States was supplying Saddam Hussein's regime with weapons, including chemical weapons, to punish the Iranians. Of course, we were also selling weapons to the Iranians, resulting in President Reagan's fiasco—the Iran Contra scandal. This was again in direct violation of not only international law but also of laws enacted by the U.S. Congress.

The *Record* also states that the oil rich country of Iran "remains in the clutches of clerical conservatives devoted to blocking reformers' attempts to bring that nation into the international community." Each day, under current Republican leadership, many clerical conservatives in our own country continue to staunchly advocate the war in Iraq, all the while attacking the idea of separation of church and

(continued next page)

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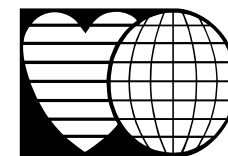
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"The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared responsibly for the well-being of all her inhabitants and all future generations."

Yes, they lied

“How the United States should react if Iraq acquired WMD. The first line of defense ... should be a clear and classical statement of deterrence—if they do acquire WMD, their weapons will be unusable because any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration.”

—Condoleezza Rice, 2/1/2000

“We are greatly concerned about any possible linkup between terrorists and regimes that have or seek weapons of mass destruction ... In the case of Saddam Hussein, we’ve got a dictator who is clearly pursuing and already possesses some of these weapons. A regime that hates America and everything we stand for must never be permitted to threaten America with weapons of mass destruction.”

—Dick Cheney, 6/20/2002

“Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.”

—Dick Cheney, 8/26/2002

“There is already a mountain of evidence that Saddam Hussein is gathering weapons for the purpose of using them. And adding additional information is like adding a foot to Mount Everest.”

—Ari Fleischer, 9/6/2002

“We don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.”

—Condoleezza Rice, 9/8/2002

Feedback (continued from previous page)

state in their feverish attempt at imposing their will upon the whole of our diverse population: prayer in school, public displays of the Ten Commandments, a distorted, Messianic vision of our role in the Middle East, and what will amount to be a devastating attack on women’s rights orchestrated by a right-wing fundamentalist stacking of the Supreme Court.

Finally, the *Record* condemns Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s remarks concerning the destruction of Israel as “inflammatory rhetoric doing nothing to reassure neighbors or contribute to any sane person’s desire for peace.” Right on for the *Record*. At least you got

“Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons.”

—George W. Bush, 9/12/2002

“Iraq has stockpiled biological and chemical weapons, and is rebuilding the facilities used to make more of those weapons. We have sources that tell us that Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons—the very weapons the dictator tells us he does not have.”

—George W. Bush, 10/5/2002

“And surveillance photos reveal that the regime is rebuilding facilities that it had used to produce chemical and biological weapons.”

—George W. Bush, 10/7/2002

“After eleven years during which we have tried containment, sanctions, inspections, even selected military action, the end result is that Saddam Hussein still has chemical and biological weapons and is increasing his capabilities to make more. And he is moving ever closer to developing a nuclear weapon.”

—George W. Bush, 10/7/2002

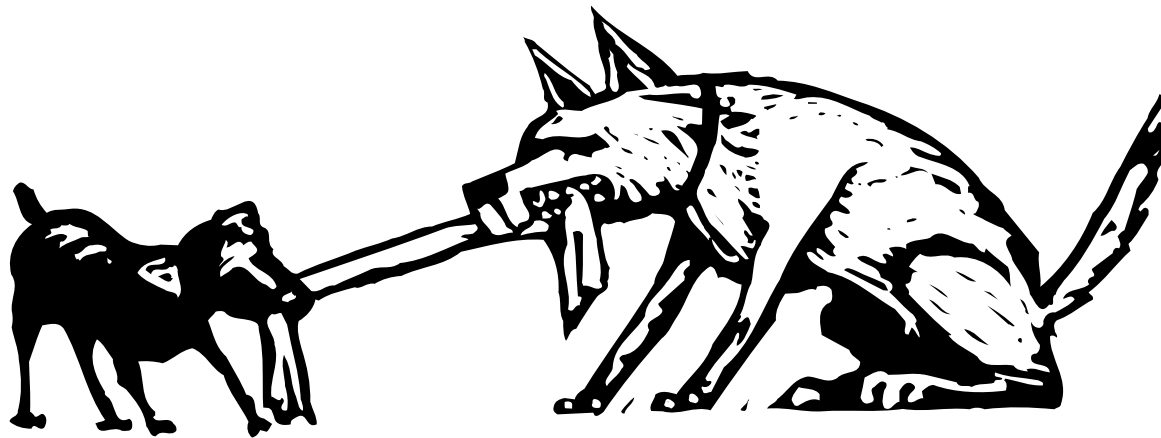
“We’ve also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas.”

—George W. Bush, 10/7/2002

one right. I’m trying to remember, however, if the *Record* editors condemned a certain high profile, easily recognizable world leader for his own special brand of inflammatory rhetoric when he was heard by seething Islamic ears halfway around the world to say, “Bring it on!”? Does anybody doubt these three little words resulted in escalated violence and death, not only to the so called “evil doers” but to our own troops as well?

And so I ask the Stockton *Record*, if “sane people” have a desire for peace, what exactly is the mental state of our own world’s leaders? Surely, we “peaceniks” can’t all be crazy.

Dave Waldon



“Iraq could decide on any given day to provide biological or chemical weapons to a terrorist group or to individual terrorists ... The war on terror will not be won until Iraq is completely and verifiably deprived of weapons of mass destruction.”

—Dick Cheney, 12/1/2002

“If he declares he has none, then we will know that Saddam Hussein is once again misleading the world.”

—Ari Fleischer, 12/2/2002

“We know for a fact that there are weapons there.”

—Ari Fleischer, 1/9/2003

“The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production.”

—George W. Bush, 1/28/2003

“Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent.”

—George W. Bush, 1/28/2003

“We know that Saddam Hussein is determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction, is determined to make more.”

—Colin Powell, 2/5/2003

“There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more. And he has the ability to dispense these lethal poisons and diseases in ways that can cause massive death and destruction. If biological weapons seem too terrible to contemplate, chemical weapons are equally chilling.”

—Colin Powell, 2/5/2003

“If Iraq had disarmed itself, gotten rid of its weapons of mass destruction over the past 12 years, or over the last several months since (UN Resolution) 1441 was enacted, we would not be facing the crisis that we now have before us ... But the suggestion that we are doing this because we want to go to every country in the Middle East and rearrange all of its pieces is not correct.”

—Colin Powell, 2/28/2003

“Let’s talk about the nuclear proposition for a minute. We know that based on intelligence, he has been very, very good at hiding these kinds of efforts. He’s had years to get good at it and we know he has been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire nuclear weapons. And we believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons.”

—Dick Cheney, 3/16/2003

“Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.”

—George W. Bush, 3/17/2003

“Well, there is no question that we have evidence and information that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical particularly ... all this will be made clear in the course of the operation, for whatever duration it takes.”

—Ari Fleischer, 3/21/2003

“We know where they are. They’re in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat.”

—Donald Rumsfeld, 3/30/2003



“We are learning more as we interrogate or have discussions with Iraqi scientists and people within the Iraqi structure, that perhaps he destroyed some, perhaps he dispersed some. And so we will find them.”

—George W. Bush, 4/24/2003

“I’m absolutely sure that there are weapons of mass destruction there and the evidence will be forthcoming. We’re just getting it just now.”

—Colin Powell, 5/4/2003

“It’s going to take time to find them, but we know he had them. And whether he destroyed them, moved them or hid them, we’re going to find out the truth. One thing is for certain: Saddam Hussein no longer threatens America with weapons of mass destruction.”

—George W. Bush, 5/25/2003

“But for those who say we haven’t found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they’re wrong, we found them.”

—George W. Bush, 5/30/2003

“No one ever said that we knew precisely where all of these agents were, where they were stored.”

—Condoleezza Rice, 6/8/2003

Yes, they lied.

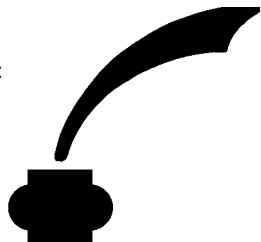
Source: *Yes, They Lied*, by William Rivers Pitt, *truthout | Perspective*, 11/8/05 http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/

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So yesterday?

GAO report upholds Ohio vote fraud claims

As if the indictment of Lewis "Scooter" Libby wasn't enough to give the White House some heavy concerns, a report from the Government Accounting Office takes a big bite out of the Bush clique's pretense of legitimacy. This powerful and probing report takes a hard look at the election of 2004 and supports the contention that the election was stolen. The report has received almost no coverage in the national media.

The GAO is the government's lead investigative agency, and is known for rock-solid integrity and its penetrating and thorough analysis. The agency's agreement with what have been brushed aside as "conspiracy theories" adds even more weight to the conclusion that the Bush regime has no business in the White House whatever.

Almost a year ago, Rep. John Conyers, senior Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, asked the GAO to investigate the use of electronic voting machines in the Nov. 2, 2004, presidential election. That request was made as a flood of protests from Ohio and elsewhere deluged Washington with claims that shocking irregularities were common in that vote and were linked to the machines.

CNN said the Judiciary Committee got more than 57,000 complaints after Bush's claimed re-election. Many were made under oath in a series of statements and affidavits in public hearings and investigations carried out in Ohio by the Free Press and other groups seeking to maintain transparent elections.

Online Journal.com reported that the GAO report stated that "some of [the] concerns about electronic voting machines have been realized and have caused problems with recent elections, resulting in the loss and miscount of votes."

This is the only democratic nation that permits private partisan companies to count and tabulate the vote in secret, using privately-held software. The public is excluded from the process. Rev. Jesse Jackson and others have declared that "public elections must not be conducted on privately-owned machines." The makers

of nearly all electronic voting machines are owned by conservative Republicans.

The chief executive of Diebold, one of the major suppliers of electronic voting machines, Warren "Wally" O'Dell, went on record in the 2004 campaign vowing to deliver Ohio and the presidency to George W. Bush.

In Ohio, Bush won by only 118,775 votes out of more than 5.6 million cast.

Honest election advocates contend that O'Dell's statement to hand Ohio's vote to Bush still stands as a clear indictment of an apparently successful effort to steal the White House.

The findings

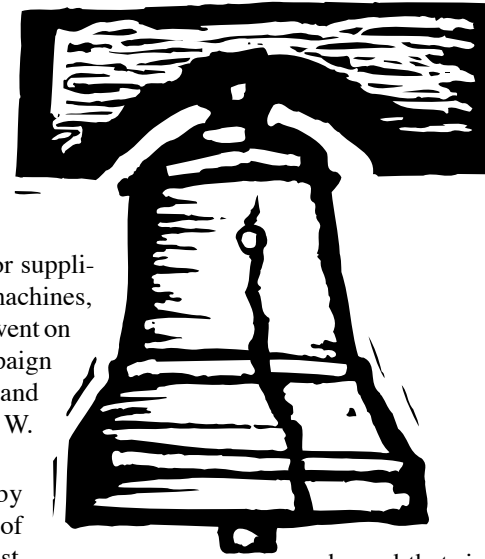
Some of the GAO's findings are:

1. Some electronic voting machines "did not encrypt cast ballots or system audit logs, and it was possible to alter both without being detected." In short, the machines provided a way to manipulate the outcome of the election. In Ohio, more than 800,000 votes were cast on electronic voting machines, seven times Bush's official margin of victory.

2. The report further stated that: "it was possible to alter the files that define how a ballot looks and works, so that the votes for one candidate could be recorded for a different candidate." Very many sworn statements and affidavits claim that did happen in Ohio in 2004.

Next, the report says, "Vendors installed uncertified versions of voting system software at the local level." The GAO found that falsifying election results without leaving evidence of doing so by using altered memory cards could easily be done.

The GAO additionally found that access to the voting network was very easy to compromise because not all electronic voting systems had supervisory functions protected by password. That meant access to one machine gave access to the whole network. That critical finding



showed that rigging the election did not take a "widespread conspiracy" but simply the cooperation of a small number of operators with the power to tap into the networked machines. They could thus alter the vote totals at will. It therefore was no big task for a single programmer to flip vote numbers to give Bush the 118,775 votes.

Another factor in the Ohio election was that access to the voting network was also compromised by repeated use of the same user ID, coupled with easy-to-guess passwords. Even amateur hackers could have gotten into the network and changed the vote.

System locks were easily picked, and keys were easy to copy, so gaining access to the system was a snap.

One digital machine model was shown to have been networked in such a rudimentary manner that if one machine experienced a power failure, the entire network would go down.

These findings are even more damning when we understand the election in Ohio was run by a secretary of state who also was co-chairman of Bush's Ohio campaign. Far from the conclusion of anti-fraud skeptics, the GAO's findings confirm that the network, which handled 800,000 Ohio votes, was vulnerable enough to permit a handful of purposeful operatives to turn the entire election by means of personal computers using comparatively simple software.

Source: Rock River Times editorial, Rockford IL, 11/2-8/05 issue <http://www.rockrivertimes.com/index.pl?cmd=viewstory&cat=2&id=11529>

Oil "crisis" sets record profits

Kelpie Wilson

Every time conservationists have criticized the energy industries for the pollution and climate destruction it takes to pull oil, coal, gas and uranium out of the ground and turn it into energy, the retort is always the same: "You eco-freaks want everybody to freeze in the dark!"

Only in a society with no concern beyond next quarter's bottom line can such an accusation stick. Far from wanting everyone to freeze in the dark, conservationists are concerned with the long term sustainability of civilization, and they promote renewable energy that won't destroy the only planet we have to live on.

But still we hear it. In Congress just the other day, Texas Rep. Ted Poe, arguing for his bill to end the off-shore oil drilling moratorium, said we must open up these areas, "Otherwise, Madam Speaker, we will freeze in the dark. That is just the way it is."

Rep. Poe and the politicians who support opening the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling all insist that tapping these sources will reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, but they fail to recognize that these are America's very last reserves of oil and gas. When we use them up—and all the oil from the Arctic Refuge would fuel the US economy for less than a full year—then where will we be? We will freeze in the dark, ladies and gentlemen. That is just the way it is unless we get serious about renewable energy now.

Up until now, freezing in the dark has always been a "someday" thing, but after this year's hurricane season devastated domestic oil and gas production, suddenly we face real shortages of heating oil and gas for our furnaces this winter.

Heating oil supplies are even lower than expected post-Katrina-Rita because refineries have concentrated on producing gasoline to knock pump prices down at the expense of filling the nation's heating oil reserves. Government analysts predict that people will pay an average of \$360 more this year to heat their homes. Some, obviously, will pay much more than that, and for the poor, any increase will be far more than they can afford.

If you are poor and have to choose between heating and eating, LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), is where you can try to find help.

But LIHEAP is chronically underfunded. Typically only about 75% of those who apply get any assistance before the money runs out.

This year, there is even less money budgeted for the program, and Senate Democrats and moderate Republicans were defeated in their attempts to add funding for LIHEAP to the just-passed budget reconciliation spending measure.

Last week some Republican senators decided to appeal to the quaint notion of "noblesse oblige" and asked that oil companies voluntarily donate a portion of their profits to fund the heating assistance program for the poor. They gently suggested that such a move might soothe the angry mobs that would soon be demanding the heads of oil companies, and failing that, of senators.

But Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, speaking for the Bush administration and the Oil Lords, sniffed and declared the proposal very too much like "a tax."

This year's hurricane season was far from devastating to oil company earnings. The sky-high gas prices that followed the storms produced Category Five profits. In fact, shutting down refinery capacity was just the medicine prescribed by energy analysts when industry profits flagged in the mid-nineties (see Energy Hog Lessons http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/1006051.shtml for the details).

Rumblings about price gouging have led to several Congressional proposals for a windfall profits tax. Democratic Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island said he will introduce a measure this week to add \$2.9 billion to LIHEAP through a temporary windfall profits tax. Sens. Byron Dorgan, D-ND, and Chris Dodd, D-Conn., will try to insert a more permanent 50 percent tax on the sale of oil over \$40 a barrel into the tax portion of the budget reconciliation bill later this month. Their proposal would give cash back to consumers in the form of an income tax rebate.

The price-gouging talk has also led the Senate Energy and Commerce committees to summon oil company CEOs to a hearing that will take place this Wednesday. Executives from Exxon Mobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, BP and Shell will be asked to justify their post-hurricane profits.

The companies are on the defensive. They are expected to say that

their profits are not unusual or excessive. Senator Dorgan's windfall tax proposal would allow companies to first deduct their costs for oil exploration, investment in refineries or in alternative sources of energy, so they might not end up paying any tax at all. Companies will say they are already doing these things and so a windfall tax is unnecessary.

But are oil companies really making the investments they would need to make in order to keep us all from freezing in the dark a decade or two from now? Congress wants oil companies to spend a lot of money on oil exploration, but all indications are that there is not a whole lot more oil out there to find, and what exists is in increasingly remote and hard to develop places, like the Arctic or deep off-shore in the hurricane-prone gulf.

It is easier and cheaper for oil companies to invest in acquiring other companies that hold proven reserves than to invest in exploration. That's why Congress went ballistic when China tried to buy Unocal earlier this year. Unocal had a healthy backlog of proven reserves in its portfolio.

We should not forget that the number one business of publicly traded oil companies is not to produce energy but to keep their share prices high. In the first three quarters of this year, Exxon Mobil spent \$12.3 billion on exploration and refinery investments and \$12.1 billion repurchasing its own stock.

This is why we the people should demand a windfall profits tax. But we should not support a tax that would just put a few hundred dollars back in each of our pockets. That might help pay this year's heating bills, but it won't deal with "someday."

The solution is to direct windfall profits tax dollars to a renewable energy development fund to create the new energy infrastructure that will bring us heat and light after the oil runs out. If we trust in the oil companies to do the job or wait around for "the market" to get it right, we are not going to like the result. The only warm and well-lit rooms will be in the gated fortress communities inhabited by the Oil Lords.

Kelpie Wilson is the truthout environment editor. Her first novel, Primal Tears, is forthcoming from North Atlantic Books in Fall 2005.

Source: truthout.org 10/8/05



Mainstream press = truth? Get alternatives & decide.

If you tap in to some of the alternative media, you will get a very different perspective on events. Especially now, when the mainstream media often acts as a cheerleader for whatever the administration does, it's necessary to go a little further to get your news. An internet connection is helpful.

KPFA (94.1 FM) provides extraordinary coverage of issues. There are short news reports most hours and longer news programs at 3 and 6 pm. You can listen on the internet at <http://www.kpfa.org>

Democracy Now! on KPFA, 94.1 FM at 9am, on KVMR, 89.5 at 7pm or on the web at: <http://www.democracynow.org>

Huffington Post <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

OpEdNews.com <http://www.opednews.com>

Common Dreams News Center: <http://www.commondreams.org/>

Truth Out: <http://www.truthout.org/>

AlterNet.org: <http://www.alternet.org/>

Free Press <http://freepress.net>

<http://www.reclaimthemedial.org>

Media Tank, <http://www.mediatank.org>

Counter Punch <http://www.counterpunch.org>

MediaChannel: <http://www.mediachannel.org/>

Independent Media Center: <http://www.indymedia.org>

Black Voices for Peace: <http://www.bvfp.org/>

Other places for news and information

The Nation—<http://www.thenation.com/>

Hightower Radio — <http://www.webactive.com/hightower/>

Mother Jones—<http://www.motherjones.com/>

In These Times — <http://inthesetimes.com/>

The Progressive — <http://www.progressive.org/>

Z Magazine—<http://www.zmag.org/>

Tom Paine.common sense — <http://www.tompaine.com/>

MoveOn.org — <http://www.moveon.org/>

Global Alliance Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space — <http://www.space4peace.org>

The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/>

Angry Arab News Service—<http://www.angryarab.blogspot.com/>

Corporate Watch — <http://www.corpwatch.org/home/PHH.jsp>

Institute for Global Communication — <http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/index.html>

We're on the web too!

The Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County (pjnsjc) website is back with information, calendar, media links, and more. Under construction and growing. Share your ideas on how the website should evolve.

<http://www.pjnsjc.org>

One world, one family

Jean-Claude Crhi

Groups of words like “White people” or “Black people” are very superficial ways of calling others. Superficial because they do not give information of the true identity of human beings. According to their birth position and their genealogy, the true term to call each other is cousins. If you call others by the appropriate terms of who they are, and if others do the same to you, it is proof that you are aware of who is around you; and so you can protect yourself better, or have more fun.

You live now in the 21st century, a century of literacy and knowledge. Why do you have to show that you don't know the identity of people around you, when you call them with terms that demonstrate that you don't know exactly who they are?

According to archaeological research, a long time ago, Africans extended out to the whole Middle East. Around 744 B.C. Africa started to be conquered by the Assyrians, and then the Babylonians, the Persians, and the Greeks. These White folks (that we call Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and so on) were in reality by their blood the cousins of the black folks that they conquered. Their parents had left the land of Africa long ago, and in 744 B.C. they started returning to the land of their ancestors. As they returned, they met with the children of the brothers of their parents, who never left the land - their cousin Black folks who had developed cultures and knowledge about various things.

It is true that the newcomer cousins took advantage of their cousins who never left the land. It is again true that many of the beautiful cultural behaviors that are spread now around the world were copied from the Black cousins by the cousins whose skin now looked white. Everything happened for a reason. All these sufferings of the black cousins were preparing for all of us to become one today.

This scenario of cousins taking or borrowing by force things from their other cousins happens in daily life. When we were kids in Cameroon, I remember, we

used to borrow each other's shoes or shirts. We were poor, and we used to borrow from our cousins articles that we liked, to go on a date for example. Sometimes some articles from our cousins that we



Jean-Claude Crhi

like very much we will “forget” to give back. Our mother or our daddy had to intervene sometimes for us to remember to give them back.

Through migrations and through the tragic course of history that took place in Africa and in the middle East, the world has become more connected — regardless of race. I am saying that the Ancient Egyptians and the original Hebrew have shared little pieces of themselves in their tradition, and in their culture, and in their blood that have been spread out all over the world.

Look closely at whom you hate. Look closely at whom you dislike. You might have little pieces of that person in you, in your body, and in your mind. You might have been using pieces of culture, pieces of a



tradition, pieces of a skin tone and pieces of a jewelry that you have inherited from “others” (cousins). Look again closely; you might be surprised that you have drops of “their” blood that runs in your body, in your family and you don't even know it. Ain't that a shame.

In the way that you cook food, if ever your way is similar to another person's way of cooking, then you have a little piece of that person's tradition in your manner. When you dress, if ever that way is similar to some other people's way of dressing, then you have a little piece of those people in you. And in the music that you listen to, in the way that you dance, the way that you walk, the way that you talk, the decoration that you have in your house - if ever they are from other people, and they are similar to other people's tradition, then you have little pieces of those people in you, and in your house, and in your spirit, and in your heart, and in your mind.

When you hate the people your clothes are from, or your decorations are from, or the music that you like is from, or the food and the way of cooking are from; or the way that you talk, or walk, or the gold you wear is from, actually you are not hating them, you are hating part of yourself that is like them. You hate yourself and you might not even know it.

You can not love me while hating yourself. Part of my face looks like part of your face; part of your face looks like part of my face — in a way that, to love me, you have to first love yourself with all the different drops of blood, and the culture, the tradition, the little pieces of people that live in you, in your house, your family, your village, your city, your country, your states. As John Morearty my good friend says. “We are the people that we have been waiting for.” And we are like diamonds. Lovely!

Jean-Claude Crhi was born in Cameroon and lives in Stockton. He plays the African drum, the djembe. He is also a painter, a storyteller, and the author of two children's books. He can be reached at Jcrhi@yahoo.com

Einstein's farm

John Morearty

On the last morning of the “Meeting of the Ways” conference of peace activists and spiritual people at Stanford in 1982, as we were downing coffee and bagels, the moderator stepped to the microphone and said, “There's someone here who is not on the program, but we would like you to meet him.” An old man came forward, leaning on the arm of a young man.

“My name is William Hermans,” he said, “and this is my adopted son. I'm here because I have a message for you from Einstein.”

We snapped awake.

“I was a soldier in the German army in World War I,” the old man went on. “As I sat in those terrible trenches, I said to God, ‘God, if you will only bring me out of this war alive and well, I will dedicate the rest of my life to world peace.’ God did bring me out safe, and I began working for peace. A few years later I met Einstein, and we became friends. We were close friends until he died. Shortly before Einstein died, he told me, ‘Willi, there is going to be a third world war. It will be a thermonuclear war, it will start in the Middle East, and

only one quarter of humankind will survive.’

‘This is terrible!’ I said.

‘Yes, it's terrible,’ said Einstein.

‘We must do something!’ I said.

‘There is nothing to be done,’ he told me.

‘But it's terrible! We must do something!’

‘Well,’ said Einstein, ‘I'm too old to do anything about it. But if you want to do something, you do two things: FOUND A WORLD PARLIAMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE, and FOUND A COSMIC RELIGION OF ABSOLUTE LOVE.’ “

The old man stood there, leaning on his son, looking at us. “This is the message from Einstein.”

Among green hills under trees, imagine a school, thronging with children of all colors, hundreds of them. Most are orphans, children whose parents have died in the wars, children whose parents have abandoned them or abused them, children who have run away.

The sign carved over the gate says, in many languages, “Einstein's Farm.”

Imagine.

Deja vu all over again

Until our present generation of songwriters gets busy, we'll have to rely upon the skills of earlier musical poets. Here is a short bibliography of songs for peace:

- “Alice's Restaurant”- Arlo Guthrie
- “Bring the Boys Home- Freda Payne
- “Draft Dodger Rag”- Phil Ochs
- “Give Peace a Chance”- John & Yoko
- “I Ain't Marchin' Anymore”- Phil Ochs
- “I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die Rag”- Country Joe and the Fish
- “If You Love Your Country”- Peter, Paul, and Mary
- “Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream”- Joan Baez
- “Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation”- Tom Paxton
- “Masters of War”- Bob Dylan
- “Military Madness”- Graham Nash
- “Peace Train”- Cat Stevens
- “Stop the War”- Edwin Starr
- “Talking Vietnam Blues”- Phil Ochs
- “Universal Soldier”- Donovan
- “Waist Deep in the Big Muddy”- Pete Seeger
- “With God on our Side”- Baez and Dylan

List provided by H. Jackson Zinn. If you have additional songs to recommend, please pass them along.

Time to ban torture—really

By voice vote, the Senate amended its \$491.6 billion defense authorization bill with a provision that would ban cruel and inhumane treatment of detainees in U.S. prisons abroad last week.

The amendment, by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., is identical to one that the Senate last month added to the defense appropriations bill, which will be considered shortly by the Conference Committee. The proposal to regulate treatment of detainees is likely to be the most contentious issue as lawmakers try to draft final versions of the two bills. The White House has threatened to veto any measure that contains McCain's legislation, which also would make an Army field manual on interrogation methods the U.S. standard for handling prisoners.

McCain vowed on the Senate floor that if his amendment is stripped from the defense bills, "it will be on every vehicle that goes through this body."

McCain said prisoner abuse "has executed a terrible toll on us in the war of ideas."

His proposal was cosponsored by Armed Services Chairman John W. Warner, R-Va., and ranking Democrat Carl Levin of Michigan.

ACTION: Write or call Senator Diane Feinstein, who sits on the Conference Committee, to urge her to vote to include McCain's ban on torture in the defense appropriations bill.

Senator Dianne Feinstein, 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510; 209-224-3841; feinstein.senate.gov/email.html

Source: League of Women Voters of California alert, 11/10/05

Ten million protesters: right on Iraq war

Nick Turse

American "foreign policy had been hijacked by 'a secretive, little-known cabal' [headed by Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld] that hated dissent," according to retired Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, Colin Powell's former chief of staff.

As striking as Wilkerson's revelations were, the more striking thing may be that those of us out protesting in the streets before the first shock-and-awe missiles landed on Baghdad didn't need such information. We didn't

need the latest intel from generals or politicians or spymasters with top-secret access to reports from the intelligence community. We did better without it. On February 15, 2003, at least 10 million people in 400 cities in 60 countries, across 5 continents saw what was about to happen plenty clearly. They saw that the coming war would be illegitimate, deadly, and destructive. They sensed that invading Iraq would, in the long run, be no cakewalk. They already understood that what the Bush administration so clearly planned to do was based on lies. And they knew it was all wrong—not from the start or months or years later—but before it ever began.

If medals are being given out, perhaps this is what should never

be forgotten. It was the "crazies" in the streets. It was kids in weird clothes with strange hair. It was a man holding a puppet and a woman with a homemade sign. They knew then what it took the majority of Americans years to figure out. That the war would be a disaster and that, in any case, it was wrong. Those

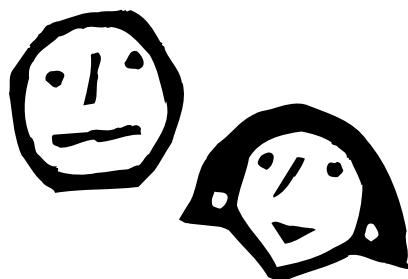


people, braving a bitterly cold day in New York City (and Stockton's Delta College) in February 2003, had better intel, more foresight, and better judgment than the military, the intelligence agencies, and especially the President and Vice President of the United States and all their advisors.

Remember well that—if you want the real story, if you want the unvarnished truth, if you want the intel that trillions can't buy - you just might find it in the streets. It might be the only place left where you can actually get a clue.

Nick Turse works in the Department of Epidemiology at Columbia University and is the Associate Editor and Research Director of TomDispatch.com.

Source: TomDispatch.com, 11/7/05



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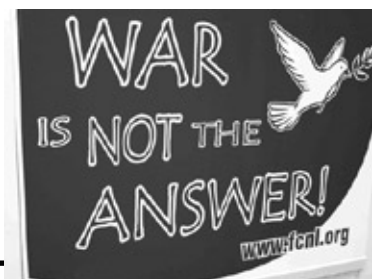
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Lawn signs, peace pins, mugs, and a comic book



NEW!!! Beautiful cobalt blue mugs engraved with peace cranes on one side and Margaret Mead's famous quote on the other. \$10.

"War is NOT the answer" lawn signs come from the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). We are requesting a \$5 donation to cover costs (sorry, we can't ship lawn signs). We also have elegant pins made of pewter in the shape of the peace symbol for \$10. *Addicted to War: Why the U.S. Can't Kick Militarism* is a great resource for students and adults. Filled with little-known historical facts. \$3 a copy, call 467-4455 and arrange to pick up. Or postage and handling included, \$6. Send check to Peace and Justice Network, PO Box 4123, Stockton CA 95204. Call 467-4455.



"As far as we're concerned, we've been entirely successful. That tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important."

—Ahmed Chalabi

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48 pages \$6 postpaid

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Superiority of the American press is crumbling

Joe Lauria

Some Italian reporters have long put American journalism on a pedestal but the myth of the American press's superiority is crumbling.

American journalism wraps itself in the mantle of exceptionalism usually associated with US foreign policy. Washington imposes international law on other nations but doesn't believe it applies to itself.

Likewise, the US news media pries into private lives and unearths unethical behavior of government officials and corporate executives but refuses to examine its own ethical shortcomings. It is easy to block criticism when you control the presses and the airwaves.

But the most powerful American newspaper, the New York Times, has turned on itself over its failure to challenge the government's march into Iraq. It was unprecedented for a *New York Times* columnist to rip a *New York Times* reporter in the pages of the *New York Times*. The biting *Times* news story about the misadventures of Judy Miller's pre-war reporting was also very rare.

The self-criticism is peeling away a central deception of American journalism: that it is always objective and unbiased. In fact its biases are normally hidden, unlike in Italy where they are trumpeted on the front page.

Italian newspapers run editorials on the cover everyday. Front-page editorials in America are extremely rare.

Many Italian dailies are organs of political parties: Il Popolo was for the Christian Democrats, Il Manifesto still is for communists and so on. They don't hide their political viewpoint.

In Italy, the prime minister owns a media empire. Berlusconi's outlets naturally support his government. Carlo de Benedetti, a Berlusconi opponent, openly uses his media to oppose the prime minister. There's nothing hidden about it.

In other words, Italy's news is more honestly slanted than America's.

A US president could never get away with owning a newspaper or a TV station. But the president has a more indirect, subtle way to control the news. A government that finds

a free press a nuisance must make it dependent while maintaining the illusion of its independence. This White House has done that splendidly by exploiting the great weakness of the American press: its clamor for Almighty Access and for leaks.

Too many American journalists are blinded by the illusion of celebrity and the vicarious power that comes from being close to high-level government officials. Careerism is often the motive rather than serving the public by challenging government, especially when thousands of innocent lives are at stake.

Access and easy leaks are confused with digging out a story that government doesn't want the public to know. Every official has a motive for leaking, and a reporter must find it out. Most often the leaker has an agenda and is exploiting the reporter's ego to further it.

By cozying up to their sources, American journalists think of themselves as great reporters because of their access, not realizing, or not caring, that they are often being manipulated. Sometimes they agree ideologically with the leaker. But the chief job of journalism is to challenge authority, not take an official's words as true just because he is an official.

Since US officials don't own newspapers, they leak to control the press, unlike Berlusconi and his opponents. But a Berlusconi ally who differs with him may leak to the opposition papers. This is key: a leaker who is a whistleblower against the powerful is entirely different from the powerful leaking to push their agenda.

To personify the difference between the Italian and the American press, one need only compare Giuliana Sgrena and Judy Miller. Both are controversial journalists. Both spent weeks in captivity because of the US invasion of Iraq. That's where the similarity ends.

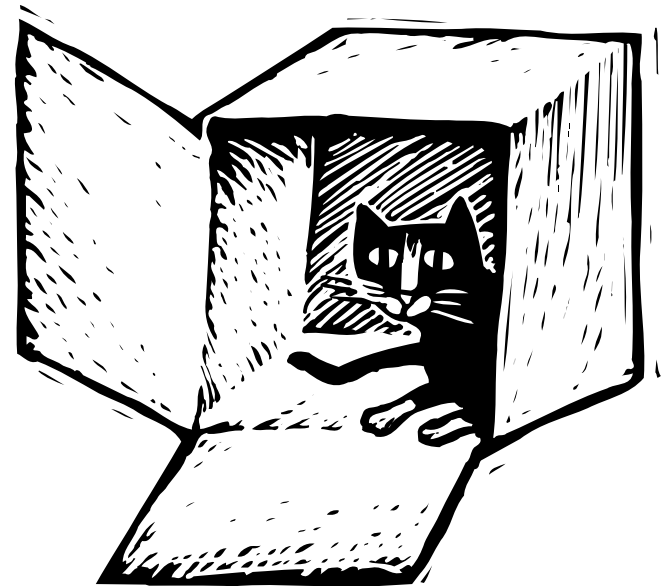
Sgrena was kidnapped by Iraqi insurgents while reporting the war from ordinary Iraqis' viewpoint. She shunned press conferences. She avoided access to "official" sources. Her viewpoint is already well known. She is a communist. You can take it or leave it.

Miller's politics are unknown. She was imprisoned by a federal court for protecting the name of a powerful official source who may have broken the law by smearing a whistleblower trying to avert the deaths of ordinary Iraqis and Americans. She admits now that the stories she wrote based on leaks about WMD were wrong, stories that purposely drummed up support for invasion.

Miller was embedded with a special US MET Alpha force just behind the front lines that expected to find the WMD. She was dressed in a military uniform and told the colonel leading the unit where to search. When he rejected her advice, she called a general friend who pressured the colonel to listen to her.

Which do you prefer: the openly avowed Italian communist slanting the news from her theoretical point of view or the "objective" American journalist?

Source: *CommonDreams.org* 11/8/05
<http://www.commondreams.org/views05/1108-34.htm>



Strong evidence U.S. used chemical weapons in Iraq

Tom Regan

RAI, the all news state-run satellite channel in Italy, aired a documentary early November that accused the United States of using chemical weapons against the civilian population during a November 2004 bombardment of Fallujah. AKI, the Italian news agency, reports that the documentary, entitled "Fallujah: The Hidden Massacre" and aired on the first anniversary of the assault on insurgents in Fallujah, includes interviews with former US soldiers and with residents of Fallujah who say that during the assault on the city the US military used the chemical white phosphorus.

"I heard the order being issued to be careful because white phosphorus was being used on Fallujah. In military slang this is known as Willy Pete. Phosphorus burns bodies, melting the flesh right down to the bone," says one former US soldier, interviewed by the documentary's director, Sigfrido Ranucci.

"I saw the burned bodies of women and children. The phosphorous explodes and forms a plume. Who ever is within a 150 metre radius has no hope," the former soldier adds.

RAI says the use of white phosphorus in built-up areas amounts to the illegal use of chemical weapons, although the BBC notes that such bombs are considered incendiary devices. The US military admits to using the weapon to illuminate battlefields in Iraq, and says it did so in Fallujah, but insists it did not use it in civilian areas. Washington is not a signatory of an international treaty restricting white phosphorus devices.

La Repubblica, the Italian newspaper which recently broke the story on the Italian government's involvement with the forged Niger-Iraq uranium documents, reports the documentary also broadcast what it claimed is proof of the use in Iraq of a new napalm formula called MK77. The use of the incendiary substance on civilians is forbidden by a 1980 UN treaty. The use of chemical weapons is forbidden by a treaty that the US signed in 1997.

The Independent reports that ever since the assault, "rumours

"I saw the burned bodies of women and children. The phosphorous explodes and forms a plume. Who ever is within a 150 metre radius has no hope."

have swirled that the Americans used chemical weapons on the city." But the US denied the charges last year, saying "The fighting in Fallujah, Iraq has led to a number of widespread myths including false charges that the United States is using chemical weapons such as napalm and poison gas. None of these allegations are true."

"The United States categorically denies the use of chemical weapons at any time in Iraq, which includes the ongoing Fallujah operation. Furthermore, the United States does not under any circumstance support or condone the development, production, acquisition, transfer or use of chemical weapons by any country. All chemical weapons currently possessed by the United States have been declared to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and are being destroyed in the United States in accordance with our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention."

The US also denied charges by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, that US forces were using "poisonous gases" during a recent battle in the Iraqi city of Tall Afar, saying "those who wish to discredit the United States find it useful to invent the false charge that the United States is using such weapons."

The Independent reports, however, that the documentary offers video and photographs it alleges proves that the white phosphorus was used "indiscriminately" on both insurgents and the civilian

population.

Photographs on the website of RaiTG24, the broadcaster's 24-hour news channel, show exactly what the former [US] soldier means. Provided by the Studies Centre of Human Rights in Fallujah, dozens of high-quality, colour close-ups show bodies of Fallujah residents, some still in their beds, whose clothes remain largely intact but whose skin has been dissolved or turned the consistency of leather by the shells.

The BBC reports that the US denounced the documentary as "disinformation." It aired a day after Iraq's president, Jalal Talabani, came to Italy for a five-day visit.

The documentary began with formerly classified footage of the Americans using napalm bombs during the Vietnam War. The film repeated accusations that Washington has systematically attempted to destroy filmed evidence of the alleged use of chemical weapons in the attack on Fallujah last November.

Italian public opinion has been consistently against the war and the RAI documentary can only reinforce calls here for a pullout of Italian soldiers as soon as possible, our correspondent says.

Last March 3, Dr. Khalid ash Shaykhli, an Iraqi health ministry official, told a Baghdad press conference that the US military had used internationally banned chemical weapons, including nerve gas.

Source: *csmirror.com 11/8/05*



Hold Bush accountable now

Senator Ted Kennedy

Kennedy's statement on the administration's efforts to exaggerate threats in their march to war in Iraq—and as Chalabi, the Pentagon's favorite Iraqi dissident, visits DC—he reminds the Senate of Chalabi's own words.

Earlier this week, several of our Republican colleagues came to the Senate floor and attempted to blame individual Democratic Senators for their errors in judgment about the war in Iraq.

It was little more than a devious attempt to obscure the facts and take the focus off the real reason we went to war in Iraq. 150,000 American troops are bogged down in a quagmire in Iraq because the Bush Administration misrepresented and distorted the intelligence to justify a war that America never should have fought.

As we know all too well, Iraq was not an imminent threat. It had no nuclear weapons. It had no persuasive links to al Qaeda, no connection to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, and no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

But the President wrongly and repeatedly insisted that it was too dangerous to ignore the weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Saddam Hussein, and his ties to al Qaeda.

In his march to war, President Bush exaggerated the threat to the American people. It was not subtle. It was not nuanced. It was pure, unadulterated fear-mongering, based on a devious strategy to convince the American people that Saddam's ability to provide nuclear weapons to al Qaeda justified immediate war.

Administration officials suggested the threat from Iraq was imminent, and went to great lengths to convince the American people that it was.

At a roundtable discussion with European journalists last month, Secretary Rumsfeld deviously insisted: "I never said imminent threat."

In fact, Secretary Rumsfeld told the House Armed Services Committee on September 18, 2002, "... Some have argued that the nuclear threat from Iraq is not imminent—that Saddam is at least 5-7 years away from having nuclear weapons. I would not be so certain."

In May 2003, White House

spokesman Ari Fleischer was asked whether we went to war "because we said WMD were a direct and imminent threat to the United States." Fleischer responded, "Absolutely."

What else could National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice have been suggesting, other than an imminent threat - an extremely imminent threat - when she said on September 8, 2002, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

President Bush himself may not have used the word "imminent," but he carefully chose strong and loaded words about the nature of the threat—words that the intelligence community never used - to persuade and prepare the nation to go to war against Iraq.

In the Rose Garden on October 2, 2002, as Congress was preparing to vote on authorizing the war, the President said the Iraqi regime "is a threat of unique urgency."

In a speech in Cincinnati on October 7, President Bush specifically invoked the danger of nuclear devastation: "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

At an appearance in New Mexico on October 28, 2002, after Congress had voted to authorize war, and a week before the election, President Bush said Iraq is a "real and dangerous threat."

At a NATO summit on November 20, 2002, President Bush said Iraq posed a "unique and urgent threat."

In Fort Hood, Texas on January 3, 2003, President Bush called the Iraqi regime a "grave threat."

Nuclear weapons. Mushroom cloud. Unique and urgent threat. Real and dangerous threat. Grave threat. These words were the Administration's rallying cry for war. But they were not the words of the intelligence community, which never suggested that the threat from Saddam was imminent, or immediate, or urgent.

It was Vice President Cheney who first laid out the trumped up argument for war with Iraq to an unsuspecting public. In a speech on August 26, 2002, to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he asserted: "... We now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weap-

(continued on page 20)

Budget savings? cut nukes

In a new report, former Reagan assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb identifies \$60 billion in funds that could be trimmed from the defense budget—without hurting America's ability to fight the Iraq War or defend against terrorists in any way. Korb's proposed cuts include: Cold War weapons programs (\$26 billion), "Star Wars" missile defense (\$7 billion), nuclear weapons (\$13 billion), armed forces structure changes (\$9 billion), and streamlining bureaucracy (\$5 billion). The National Priorities Project has produced an online map showing how the Iraq War and Katrina illustrate misguided federal priorities. And their website has other excellent resources here, showing how your community could benefit if the Pentagon budget were trimmed.

ACTION: Tell your representative to trim wasteful Pentagon spending and use the money to save needed domestic programs.

The most important letters—yours

Dear Rep.,

I'm amazed that our country is still wasting \$60 billion per year on weapons and programs designed to defeat the defunct Soviet Union. This situation would be bad enough if America had a budget surplus, but we're deep in the red, unable to pay for the basics, like health insurance for our kids. And now, President Bush is proposing further cuts in health care and education, among other programs, to pay for Katrina relief and the Iraq War. Why not trim wasteful spending—on nuclear bombs, for example—from the Pentagon budget and transfer the savings to important priorities like health care for kids?

In the article below, President Ronald Reagan's Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence J. Korb presents the argument very well, pointing out that both Republicans and Democrats can come together on this issue and straighten out mixed up budget priorities. Please take time to read this article:



Trim fat from Pentagon budget to help pay for Katrina relief

Lawrence J. Korb

Baltimore Sun, 10/13/05

Congress no doubt will encounter a political minefield as it tries to find money to delete from the budget in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, which is estimated to exceed \$200 billion to repair.

Surprisingly, for politicians on both sides of the aisle, the most promising source of hurricane relief funds, within the federal budget itself, is the Pentagon's regular budget.

It might seem paradoxical or even unpatriotic to call for reducing defense spending in the middle of a war. But the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are not being paid for with money from the annual defense budget.

For most in Washington, it's been an unspeakable truth for decades that the defense budget is rife with waste. But because so many politicians are frightened of being perceived as "weak on defense," the costs and benefits of trimming the Pentagon budget are often not given serious consideration.

The costs of Hurricane Katrina—on top of the fiscal crisis already on the table in Congress—should remove the long-standing resistance to leaving the military budget off the table when a fiscal crisis strikes.

And this approach to securing funds—eliminating waste rather than adding to the deficit—could appeal to fiscal conservatives and moderates, not to mention mavericks such as Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain who are perennially up in arms about wasteful and pork barrel Pentagon spending, such as the Boeing tanker deal—the attempt to get the taxpayers to spend \$23.5 billion for more than 100 planes that the Air Force did not need.

Sen. George V. Voinovich, an Ohio Republican, surprised Washington insiders by saying last month that he will comb through the Pentagon budget for cost savings. As an ardent crusader for controlling the deficit, Mr. Voinovich knows the money wasted on defense is not small-time.

An analysis of President Bush's \$440 billion defense budget proposal for 2006, which is before

Congress, shows that about \$50 billion to \$60 billion could be saved by trimming waste from the military budget—without putting our troops at risk or diminishing our ability to fight extremists or terrorists. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are paid for with separate supplemental defense budgets.

Most of these savings could come from cutting weapons originally designed to achieve military superiority over the Soviet Union. Astonishingly, these weapons—such as the \$300 million F/A-22 fighter—have survived the end of the Cold War and the Pentagon's new focus on terrorism. And they have no real value in today's national security environment.

Other major savings could come from keeping national missile defense in a research mode until we know it can work, eliminating thousands of unnecessary nuclear weapons and not building new ones, reducing unnecessary force structure in the Navy and the Air Force and streamlining the bureaucracy throughout the Pentagon.

It's clear that the \$50 billion to \$60 billion that could be saved from the Pentagon would be only a fraction of the money needed for Katrina relief. But budget analysts will be hard-pressed to find as much money squandered in any other agency of the federal government.

In private, almost every member of Congress—and even high-level Pentagon officials—would agree that there are tens of billions of dollars' worth of waste in the military budget. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld himself has said that about 5 percent of the defense budget is wasted. Now, following Katrina, maybe our political leaders will summon the courage to do something about it.

Lawrence J. Korb, an assistant secretary of defense during the Reagan administrations, is a member of the Military Advisory Committee of Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities.

Thanks for considering the thoughtful comments of Lawrence J. Korb.

Sincerely,

Source: *TrueMajorityACTION.org* (http://action.truemajority.org/campaign/korb_budget) 11/8/05. *TrueMajorityACTION.org*, 191 Bank St, Third Floor, Burlington, VT 05401

Budget savings? Cut farm payments to the rich

When it comes to congressional spending, there's no holier sacred cow than farm subsidies. No matter how much lip service is paid to reining in these outdated, depression-era programs, time and again Congress buckles under the pressure of agribusiness and the powerful farm lobby, and continues its blank check farm policy.

Just last week, the Senate failed to place a modest \$250,000 cap on commodity payments and reform regulations that direct the largest checks to the biggest, most lucrative mega-farms. Worse, subsidy supporters are trying to avoid the question of farm policy altogether by sneaking a four year extension of farm bill programs into this year's budget—at a \$60 billion cost to taxpayers, further confirming Congress's unwillingness to take even the smallest steps towards a more efficient and equitable farm policy for the 21st century.

Additional examples abound. The 1996 farm bill was supposed to reduce agriculture spending and return the farm sector to the free-market. Instead, total farm spending more than doubled. In 2002, Congress reversed gears, re-wrote the farm bill, and threw in everything but the kitchen sink, resulting in the most expensive farm legislation in history. Spending on commodity subsidies alone are scheduled to top a record breaking \$24 billion this year.

Even worse, farm payments have become increasingly concentrated, flowing to fewer and fewer individual farmers. According to the USDA, 8 percent of producers receive 78 percent of subsidies. At the top of the subsidy food chain, huge corporate operations

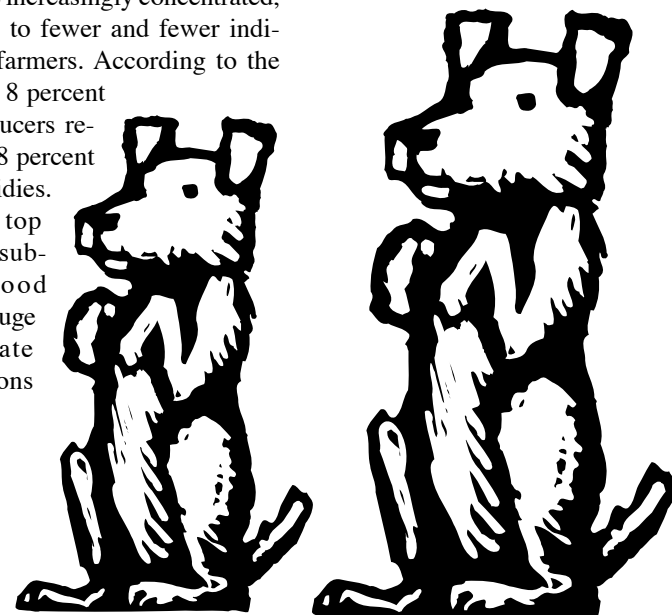
receive millions, while the average payment for the bottom 80 percent of farmers is under \$1,000.

And there's more. The current overemphasis of certain crops—92 percent of payments are for corn, wheat, soybeans, cotton, and rice—also has a negative impact on the land itself. Soil erosion, water contamination, and wetlands drainage occur because many of the crops that qualify for commodity payments, such as cotton, encourage farmers to over-produce, farm on marginal lands, and use chemicals intensively.

Across the board, American farm policy has fallen far short of its promises. Corporate farms walk away with millions, small farmers are frozen out, the environment suffers, and taxpayers take a bath.

Merely hitting reset for four years and expecting new results will only make matters worse. It is time for President Bush and Congress to build a responsible, cheaper, and more effective farm program that accomplishes its goals without breaking the federal bank. The answers are out there. What remains to be seen is whether the leadership exists to translate them into reality.

Source: *The Chopping Block Issue 12, Volume 1* (a production of the Green Scissors Campaign, led by Friends of the Earth, Taxpayers for Common Sense and U.S. Public Interest Research Group) 11/10/05 release. www.green-scissors.org



Prisons into plowshares

*Ari Wohlfeiler,
California Prison Moratorium
Project*

Since 2003, the Northern California Women's Facility (NCWF) outside Stockton has sat closed. On November 5th, the California Prison Moratorium Project (PMP) gathered local Stockton residents, rehabilitation specialists, and mental health professionals together for a Redesign Forum to figure out a better use for the 150-plus acre parcel.

"The main idea," explained PMP organizer Debbie Reyes, "is to help local residents take control of the vision, use and reconstruction of NCWF. We know it didn't help the city or county as a prison, and it didn't help the prisoners there either. We have a one-time chance now to turn this negative into a positive."

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation announced plans this summer to convert NCWF into a new training facility for prison guards. PMP organizers are happy it won't be immediately re-opened as a prison, but are wary about what this training facility holds in store. "Next to a prison, this training facility is probably the worst use of NCWF," said Amy Vanderwarker, a PMP member and environmental justice activist. "The training center

won't bring stable jobs to Stockton, because most of the people who 'work' there will be trainees—and they'll only stay here for a few months." The real concern, though, is that this plan keeps the prison intact as a prison, making it easy for the Department to re-convert NCWF back to a functional prison. "That's our biggest fear," explained Reyes, "We need to make sure NCWF is only used to benefit people, not punish them."

The highlight of the forum was the consensus among all participants that something better can be made out of this facility. High on the list of possibilities was a skills center—a one-stop location where people could receive housing assistance, drug treatment, job training and placement, and other resources necessary to gain independence. While the facility is relatively difficult to get to (it's on Arch Road, by the airport), participants felt this could also open the door for industry onsite. One suggestion was that onsite roads and the freight docks be used as the foundation for a truck-driving school, which could generate jobs for residents.

Organizers are not naïve, however, about what lies ahead. "The Department has a long history of ignoring and marginalizing community input" continued Reyes. "They purposefully try to prevent the communities that host their

prisons and other facilities from having a say in what happens." This argument is bolstered by the lackluster success rate the Department has had in bringing economic developments to towns across the Valley. Smaller towns like Corcoran, Delano, Avenal, Coalinga, Chowchilla, and Wasco have all experienced first hand the primary impact of prison development: zero economic growth, or worse. In most of these towns, unemployment rates have remained stable or even swelled in the wake of prison construction.

While Stockton isn't in such a dire position of reliance relative to the Department, it stands to reason that the city and county will be better off minimizing this relationship for the future. Stockton's need for jobs and housing isn't going to go away. We need to take a long hard look at NCWF to see what type of development will be the most beneficial for the most people, and not limit ourselves to what Sacramento says we can do.

ACTION: PMP has called a planning meeting for Saturday November 19th to plan an upcoming Town Hall meeting on NCWF's future. For more information and to get involved, contact Debbie Reyes at 559-916-4370, or at reyesdm@pacbell.net

New Orleans & Hurricane George

Jim Hightower

If I was from New Orleans, I'd be scared to death right now. Not because of the toxic mud and such, but because of the answer given by a White House spokesman when asked who is "in charge" of the federal reconstruction effort on the Gulf Coast: "The president," he said.

George W!?! The guy who took five days to find New Orleans?

That's truly a scary thought? but it really doesn't matter whether it's George himself or that gaggle of neocon ideological zealots he keeps around him. Either way, the chances of the Bushites actually delivering much for the hard-hit people of this region are slim and none... and you know where slim went.

If the good folks on the Gulf want to know how Bush & Co. handles reconstruction jobs, they should telephone Afghanistan. In 2001, our troops drove the Taliban from power, and George loudly proclaimed that his government would soon secure and rebuild the country, providing roads, schools, clean water, etc.

Four years later, how's it going? Not well, says a new report by the

government's own accountability office. It seems the Taliban is back, war lords rule most of Afghanistan, and Bush's hand-picked president can't even travel outside the capitol.

Meanwhile, the \$1.6 billion we've spent so far on reconstruction there has largely been a waste, achieving little that was promised. Take schools. The nation needed 5,500 of them. How many have U.S. contractors completed? Eight! They also have refurbished 77 schools, but the report says that a coat of paint is sometimes counted as "refurbished." Plus, many of the completed schools have no desks, blackboards, books, trained teachers, or even drinking water.

This is Jim Hightower saying... Now, despite Bush's own pledges that he would "stay the course" in Afghanistan, he reportedly will begin withdrawing from there next year. Maybe he'll dust off that infamous "Mission Accomplished" banner he used two years ago to claim "victory" in Iraq.

Source: BUSH RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY 11/2/05 <http://www.junction-city.com>, Jim Hightower, Hightower & Associates, 81 San Marcos St, Austin, TX 78702 info@jimhightower.com

Stop Halliburton's thievery

To Barbara Lee, Lynn Woolsey, and 17 other members of congress: Thank you!

Jim Hightower

Thank you for putting into official words the deep sense of outrage that a majority of us grassroots Americans have long held about the White House's perverse pampering of the Bushites' pet corporate criminal: Halliburton. If an ordinary American did to a 7-Eleven what Halliburton routinely does to taxpayers, that poor soul would be doing 25-to-life in state prison.

Check the federal rap sheet on this multibillion-dollar outfit: Bribery, bid-rigging, fraud, overcharging taxpayers, and even doing business with nations that sponsor terrorism. The departments of

The departments of defense, justice, and treasury have had Halliburton under investigation or indictment nine times in the past five years for its despicable, shoddy, and criminal record of performance on contracts it gets from the government. Its ripoffs total hundreds of billions of our tax dollars.

defense, justice, and treasury have had Halliburton under investigation or indictment nine times in the past five years for its despicable, shoddy, and criminal record of performance on contracts it gets from the government. Its ripoffs

total hundreds of billions of our tax dollars.

Yet, instead of jail time, this scofflaw keeps getting more public money shoveled into its coffers by Bush & Company. Not only has it been blessed with more than \$10

billion in contracts—often without competitive bids—since the Bush Cheney regime took power, but also,

after Hurricane Katrina hit, there it was again at the federal trough, first in line to get another multimillion-

dollar, no-bid contract.

Finally, though, Representatives Lee, Woolsey and their 17 colleagues have said enough is enough. Citing chapter and verse of federal contracting rules, these members of the congressional progressive caucus have sent a formal demand that Halliburton be suspended from eligibility for any federal contracts until all of the charges against it are resolved.

This is Jim Hightower saying... How can our society hold common thieves accountable when uncommon thievery is sanctioned from the highest office in our land? For more information, call the progressive caucus: 202-225-5161.

Source: STOP HALLIBURTON'S THIEVERY 11/1/05 <http://www.junction-city.com>, Jim Hightower, Hightower & Associates, 81 San Marcos St, Austin, TX 78702 info@jimhightower.com

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ANWR on life support

Polar bears, caribou, Arctic foxes and other animals in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge won a reprieve when House Republican leaders pulled the budget bill that would have legalized drilling there. Early November, House Republicans yanked the Budget Reconciliation Bill off the House floor. But the real victory came the following night, when proposals to legalize harmful oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and off our coasts were dropped from the bill. Unfortunately, the battle to save the Arctic Refuge's wildlife

from harmful oil drilling is far from over.

The Senate also passed its own budget bill that legalizes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Senators Ted Stevens (R-AK) and Pete V. Domenici (R-NM), who will serve on the House-Senate conference committee on the bill, have made it clear that they will not agree to any final measure that does not include Arctic drilling.

Indicted former House Majority Leader Representative Tom DeLay (R-TX), a drilling proponent, has also made his intentions clear. He's quoted in today's New York Times

saying that "chances are very good" that the drilling provisions will reemerge. Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA), who inserted the drilling provisions into the House bill, indicated to the San Francisco Chronicle that he would be unwilling to support any final bill that didn't include drilling.

ACTION: Let your representative (especially Rep. Pombo) know how you feel about oil drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

Source: Defenders of Wildlife release 11/04/05 Defenders of Wildlife, 1130 Seventeenth St, NW, Washington, DC 20036 1-800-385-9712

Solar cell panels from everyday plastics?

With oil and gas prices in the United States hovering at an all-time high, interest in renewable energy alternatives is again heating up. Researchers at the UCLA Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science hope to meet the growing demand with a new and more affordable way to harness the sun's rays: using solar cell panels made out of everyday plastics.

In research published in Nature Materials magazine, UCLA engineering professor Yang Yang, post-doctoral researcher Gang Li and graduate student Vishal Shrotriya showcase their work on an innovative new plastic (or polymer) solar cell they hope eventually can be produced at a mere 10 percent to 20 percent of the current cost of traditional cells, making the technology more widely available.

"Solar energy is a clean alternative energy source. It's clear, given the current energy crisis, that we need to embrace new sources of renewable energy that are good for our planet. I believe very strongly in using technology to provide affordable options that all consumers can put into practice," Yang said.

The price for quality traditional solar modules typically is around three to four times more expensive than fossil fuel. While prices have dropped since the early 1980s, the solar module itself still represents nearly half of the total installed cost of a traditional solar energy system.

Currently, nearly 90 percent of solar cells in the world are made from a refined, highly purified form of silicon—the same material used in manufacturing integrated circuits and computer chips. High demand from the computer industry has sharply reduced the availability of quality silicon, resulting in prohibitively high costs that rule out solar energy as an option for the average consumer.

Made of a single layer of plastic sandwiched between two conductive electrodes, UCLA's solar cell is easy to mass-produce and costs much less to make—roughly one-third of the cost of traditional silicon solar technology. The polymers used in its construction are commercially available in such large quantities that Yang hopes cost-conscious consumers worldwide will quickly adopt the technology.

Independent tests on the UCLA solar cell already have received high marks. The nation's only authoritative certification organization for solar technology, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), located in Golden, Colo., has helped the UCLA team ensure the accuracy of their efficiency numbers. The efficiency of the cell is the percentage of energy the solar cell gathers from the total amount of energy, or sunshine, that actually hits it.

According to Yang, the 4.4 percent efficiency achieved by UCLA is the highest number yet published for plastic solar cells.

"As in any research, achieving precise efficiency benchmarks is a critical step," Yang said. "Particularly in this kind of research, where reported efficiency numbers can vary so widely, we're grateful to the NREL for assisting us in confirming the accuracy of our work."

Given the strides the team already has made with the technology, Yang calculates he will be able to double the efficiency percentage in a very short period of time. The target for polymer solar cell performance is ultimately about 15 percent to 20 percent efficiency, with a 15 - 20 year lifespan. Large-sized silicon modules with the same lifespan typically have a 14 percent to 18 percent efficiency rating. The plastic solar cell is still a few years away from being available to consumers, but the UCLA team is working diligently to get it to market.

"We hope that ultimately solar energy can be extensively used in the commercial sector as well as the private sector. Imagine solar cells installed in cars to absorb solar energy to replace the traditional use of diesel and gas. People will vie to park their cars on the top level of parking garages so their cars can be charged under sunlight. Using the same principle, cell phones can also be charged by solar energy," Yang said. "There are such a wide variety of applications."

Source: AZoM.com release 11/10/05 <http://www.azom.com/details.asp?newsID=4093>

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Pombo's Poison Pills

Kelpie Wilson

Arctic natives and caribou got a reprieve last week when some House Republicans refused to go along with adding Arctic Refuge oil drilling to the budget reconciliation bill. Conservationists are jubilant, though the feeling is tempered somewhat by knowing that Arctic drilling may be re-inserted when the final bill is worked out with the Senate.

Still, this is a victory and a sign that the hard-core drill and spill crowd is not polling well these days. Republicans who want to save their political hides will continue to reject any budget bill that opens the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling. Fear of political backlash prompted the Republican leadership to also drop a provision ending the moratorium on off-shore oil drilling.

But removal of the Arctic Refuge and offshore drilling provisions should not clear the House budget bill for passage. Outrageous environmental poison pills remain. They are mostly the work of the Chair of the House Resources Committee, Mr. Richard Pombo, a real estate developer from Tracy, California.

Pombo is a Republican in the DeLay mold. Oil and gas interests keep his campaign cash barrel topped up; he pays his relatives inflated salaries from those funds; he is deeply involved in the gambling-industry / Indian-casino money machine; he took thousands of dollars from DeLay's buddy, indicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

Pombo will be a busy man this week as the Republican leadership tries to rescue its budget bill. Late last week, he met with a group of hard-liners and let House Leader Blunt know that this group would withhold votes from any budget bill that did not include a significant oil measure like opening the Arctic Refuge or the coasts to drilling. "Picking up four or five votes by pulling [arctic drilling] doesn't make up for the 25 or 30 votes you're going to lose," Pombo said, and he asked that Blunt and House Speaker Dennis Hastert promise him that "some American energy production" will be included in the final version approved by the House and Senate.

Pombo may work out a deal with the balking Republicans, perhaps some modified form of his off-shore oil proposal. That could grease the votes needed to pass the bill over



Before



After

Democratic objections.

But there is a lot more at stake for the environment than the oil drilling deals. Buried in the bowels of the bill is a stunning Pombo poison pill—one of the biggest land grabs in history.

Disguised as a modification to mining law, it would allow developers to purchase any public land with minerals on it for their own private use. According to the Environmental Working Group, if passed it would immediately put 5.7 million acres of public lands with existing mining claims up for sale, including more than 2 million acres inside or adjacent to national parks, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges and other environmental and cultural treasures.

Over time, Pombo's giveaway could transfer as many as 350 million acres of public lands to private ownership.

Last month, Pombo floated a proposal to sell off 23 percent of the national park system, including, ironically, a Teddy Roosevelt

memorial, in order to balance the deficit. He passed it off as an attention-getting joke, but this latest proposal is deadly serious.

Here is just one example of what it would mean on the ground:

There is a place in my neck of the woods that would rank high on anyone's list of the most beautiful places in the world. That place is a 26,000-acre roadless watershed in the Siskiyou National Forest called Rough & Ready Creek. It was named by the mining prospectors who came and killed or drove out most of the native people back in the 1800s.

No one knows what the natives called the creek, but they might have called it something like "turquoise waters of many flowers." It's an absolutely unique place. The creek cuts through an uplift of ancient seafloor composed of rare peridotite redrock. The water is crystal clear and the floral diversity is stunning. Unfortunately, those rare rocks also contain small quantities of nickel and other metals that have attracted

Pombo's giveaway could transfer as many as 350 million acres of public lands to private ownership.

Fighting sprawl

Use of paper water rejected by court

Early November, the 2nd District Court of Appeals delivered an important decision rejecting development reliant on questionable water supplies. The Court's ruling determined that the City of Santa Clarita inappropriately used "paper water" to approve a large new development.

"Paper water" is water that exists only on paper, but may well not exist in fact. It's "predicted" water, in other words, not water we can be sure of. The term was coined by the 3rd District Court of Appeal in the precedent-setting lawsuit by the Planning and Conservation League, which challenged the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Monterey Amendments (PCL v. DWR). In that case, the court found that DWR could not deliver full contracted amounts of water from the State Water Project (water that appeared to be available "on paper," in the contracts between DWR and the water agencies). Yet,

despite the fact that this "paper water" wasn't actually in existence, contractors and local land use planners were relying on that water as they made key land use and growth decisions. The Court determined that paper water was nothing more than a hope and dream.

Despite the PCL v. DWR decision, approvals of developments based on paper water have continued in some areas. Last week's decision reinforces the findings of PCL v. DWR and firmly asserts that real water must be available before a development is approved.

In the recent decision, the Judge rejected approval of the environmental impact report for the development, stating that the document, "does not discuss the fact that [State Water Project] entitlements are... only "paper water" that may not be available in every year.

Source: *Planning and Conservation League Insider*, 11/10/05

the interest of miners.

The Nicore mining company has claimed more than five thousand acres of this watershed under the 1872 Mining Law. Congress passed that 1872 law to encourage settlers to move out west and develop the land, and it includes a patenting provision that even today allows miners to buy public land for what it was worth back then, no more than \$5.00 an acre. Once they own the land, they can do anything they like with it—build houses, shopping malls, industrial facilities or pricey resorts.

Public outcry against this giveaway of the people's land finally led the Senate to place a moratorium on the patenting provision of the law 11 years ago. But Nicore applied for its patent sometime before that, and the application was grandfathered in. The friends and neighbors of Rough & Ready Creek have fought to have it denied.

Under the 1872 law, a miner must show that an economically viable quantity of mineral resource exists in the land before he can purchase it. Friends and neighbors of Rough & Ready Creek have successfully shown that the low-grade nickel ore there is not economically sig-

nificant.

But under Pombo's new mining law, there is no such requirement, and Nicore would be eligible to purchase the mining claims the minute the law passes. Friends and neighbors and the public at large would be shut out of Rough & Ready Creek forever, and the crystal clear waters enjoyed by all downstream would be at risk.

Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., said it well: "If somebody went to Fort Knox and took gold out, they'd be in jail for the rest of their lives. But in national forests, people can take gold (under the bill) and be considered friends of the Republican Party."

The whole reason for the budget reconciliation bill is to enact measures that will help balance the budget. Pombo's land giveaway is like selling the family heirlooms cut-rate at a pawn shop to pay the rent. But really it is worse than that, because the money will only be used to fund a \$70 billion tax cut for the rich.

ACTION: Call Rep. Pombo.

Source: *truthout | Perspective*, truthout.org 11/13/05

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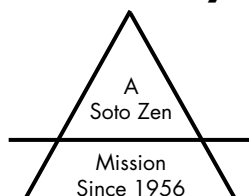
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Good news from Israel

Peace candidate Peretz wins

For peace-oriented folk, the news from Israel is great—and presents a tremendous challenge for us: can those who want to support the peace process in Israel overcome their petty rivalries and small-mindedness and create a presence in the politics of the US, Canada, England, France and Germany that unequivocally supports an end to the Occupation of the West Bank and a “middle path” that is both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine.

On November 10, members of Israel's Labor party voted in their primary for the party chair. The result was a stunning upset for incumbent Shimon Peres (currently Israel's deputy prime minister). Histadrut leader Amir Peretz won by a margin of 2.5 percent on a social-justice and peace platform dedicated to returning the Labor party to its socialist roots. He similarly has promised voters that if elected he will pull the Labor party out of its current coalition with Likud (Sharon's party) and call for new elections.

Returning to Labor's roots

Just as the Democratic Party undermined its own credibility in the U.S. by adopting the militarist rhetoric of the Republicans in the post 9/11 period to prove that they too were “tough,” so the Israeli Labor Party under Shimon Peres had destroyed its position as an alternative to the Right when it joined the Ariel Sharon government which imposed a unilateral withdrawal on Gaza as a way to strengthen its ability to withstand pressure to withdraw from the West Bank.

Polls taken yesterday in Israel reveal that the implicit rejection of this path of alignment with the Right has immediately increased the Labor Party's viability in the next election, though it has a long way to go to win majority support. If Labor ever becomes a fighting force for peace and social justice, as Amir Peretz might make possible, it could change the landscape in Israel and bring real reconciliation with Palestine. Yossi Beilin of the Israeli peace party Meretz (Yachad) and the negotiator of the Geneva Accord immediately signaled his interest in exploring an alliance between Meretz and the new Labor



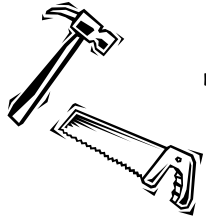
US peace movements: respond

The peace movements in the U.S. need to respond to this new possibility by uniting for effective action to change the discourse in the U.S. We need a powerful and united voice that avoids two errors: on the one hand, the tendency of the liberals in the Democratic Party (including Kerry, Hillary Clinton, and many other national leaders)

to act as though the only way to be pro-Israel is to give support to the assumptions and worldview that Ariel Sharon's supporters champion in the US (that there is no one to negotiate with, or that Israel has a legitimate right to hold on to territory in the West Bank for security reasons, or that raising the issue of some serious way to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees is tantamount to being anti-Israel); or on the other hand, the tendency of some in the anti-war movement (particularly—but not only—the crowd around the sect group ANSWER) to talk about “ending the Occupation” but really meaning not the occupation of the West Bank, but rather meaning that all of Israel is an occupation and should be replaced by a binational state in which the Jewish people would no longer have national self-determination. There is a middle path here, defined well by Yossi Beilin and Yasir Abed Rabbo's Geneva Accords—a path that recognizes the legitimate rights of both sides.

The challenge is this: to get all the groups who share this “progressive middle path” to work together to create an equivalent to AIPAC in Washington D.C. First step: all the groups should do one shared and united Teach-in-to-Congress lobbying day in favor of this middle path. But that won't happen until all the groups start real cooperation with each other. We in the Tikkun Community want to reach out to the Christian, Islamic and other religious communities, as well as to the array of Jewish organizations, and invite them to participate in shaping this new cooperation.

Source: Tikkun release 11/11/05 <http://www.tikkun.org>, 2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704 510-644-1200



Sawznhammers

"Saw": a tool for analysis, taking things apart; a proverb, often trite
"Hammer": a tool for synthesis, putting things together; to pound away

Bolivarian revolution comes to Stockton

I went to a movie recently at our lovely new Peace and Justice Center, looking for information about Venezuela. What I found was a community of hope, extending from the Miracle Mile to the hillside slums of Caracas-and it doesn't stop there.

It's called the Bolivarian Revolution, after Simon Bolivar, the great nineteenth century liberator of Latin America from the Spanish. Bolivar was a Venezuelan, and when in 1989 the Venezuelan army killed thousands of poor people who were demonstrating for justice, a group of young army officers looked at each other and said,

"This is not right. Killing our people is not in the spirit of Bolivar."

They staged a coup in 1992, and called for a constitutional convention.

"We were a little naïve," smiles President and ex-paratrooper Hugo Chavez. "They threw us into prison. Then we really learned! We read and studied, talked and planned-and when we got out we organized and campaigned, and in a free election the people elected my government."

That was 1998, and they called it "the Bolivarian Revolution." It is built on popular democracy, and runs on petroleum.

Because Venezuela has oil. Vast underground pools and caverns of oil, zillions of barrels, some of the largest reserves of oil on earth, and it all belongs to the Venezuelan people, not the Global Masters of Petroleum. Chavez's government markets that oil in the U.S. through Citgo gas stations, and uses the billions for-who can believe it?-the benefit of the poor of Venezuela. Food prices are heavily subsidized, so the poor can feed their families. Education is free, and almost everyone has already reached the level of third grade, basic literacy. The next goal is sixth grade. Medical care is free, with 12,000 Cuban doctors working in

the countryside and in the urban hillside shantytowns. Venezuela has paid off its debt to the international bankers, it barter oil to a couple dozen poor Caribbean countries, and is helping foster democracy in nearby Ecuador.

The movie is called Hugo Chavez, Venezuela and the New Wave in Latin America. It's an hour long, and features Chavez talking in his garden for about twenty minutes in all, interviewed by Che Guevara's daughter Aleida, a Cuban pediatrician. Cuban doctors talk about the enthusiastic reception they receive. Venezuelans at a huge Bolivarian rally -indios, dark-skinned ones from countryside and jungle-tell why they love the new government, THEIR government. The army chief of staff tells the story of how a huge popular uprising and the democrats in the army, working together, stopped a right wing military coup in 2002, sent the coup-makers into exile and within a couple days restored Chavez as the elected president. (The U.S. knew the coup was in the works, according to official State Department documents, and instantly recognized its plotters as the "legitimate" government.)

I liked Hugo Chavez as a person. He's modest, he's gentle, he doesn't rant, he tells funny stories. He comes from indigenous peasant stock and looks it-"mostly indio," he smiles, "but also Spanish, and a little bit of blanco-we are not anti-white, we stand for all the people."

After the coup was turned back, the wealthy who had ruled Venezuela for so long called for a referendum on Chavez. By Venezuelan law the referendum was illegal, but Chavez said "go ahead if you insist, hold it anyway"; international observers, including Jimmy Carter, agree that Chavez won by 60%.

"They remind me of my little brother," he smiled. "When we would play baseball, he would insist that he could never strike out. Finally he would hit the ball, and

we would let him go to first base. But then we'd just leave him standing there, and the game would go on."

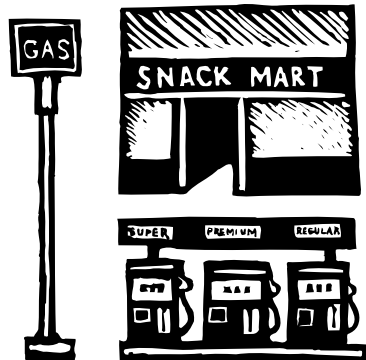
The Bush government is not pleased with Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian revolution. In 2005, Rev. Pat Robertson called (in the name of Jesus) for Chavez to be assassinated. The State Department says Chavez is disturbing the international order. At the end of October, Chavez and George W. Bush confronted each other at the Summit of the Americas in Argentina-mano a mano, the paratrooper and the bogus fighter pilot.

"George Bush is here to push the Free Trade Area of the Americas," said Chavez, "and I came to bury it. I brought my shovel. He wants a document referring to the 92 million desperately poor people in Latin America; I'll sign only if the document also mentions the 37 million people in poverty in the United States."

The FTAA was rejected at the summit by a few little South American countries-Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina.

"The United States would like to assassinate me, or invade my country," said Chavez. "If they do that, they can expect one hundred years of war."

Hugo Chavez comes up for reelection in 2006; polls place his popularity at an astounding 80%. Democracy is on the loose in Latin America. Stay tuned. If the poor down there have the courage to oppose George Bush's empire, how about us?



"War is the only game in which both sides lose."
—Walter Scott



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Something rotten in Ohio vote — again

Bob Fitrakis and
Harvey Wasserman

While debate still rages over Ohio's stolen presidential election of 2004, the impossible outcomes of key 2005 referendum issues may have put an electronic nail through American democracy.

Once again, the Buckeye state has hosted an astonishing display of electronic manipulation that calls into question the sanctity of America's right to vote, and to have those votes counted in this crucial swing state.

The controversy has been vastly enhanced due to the simultaneous installation of new electronic voting machines in nearly half the state's 88 counties, machines the General Accountability Office has now confirmed could be easily hacked by a very small number of people.

Last year, the US presidency was decided here. This year, a bond issue and four hard-fought election reform propositions are in question.

Issue One on Ohio's 2005 ballot was a controversial \$2 billion "Third Frontier" proposition for state programs ostensibly meant to create jobs and promote high tech industry. Because some of the money may seem destined for stem cell research, Issue One was bitterly opposed by the Christian Right, which distributed leaflets against it.

The Issue was pushed by a Taft Administration wallowing in corruption. Governor Bob Taft recently pleaded guilty to misdemeanors stemming from golf outings he took with Tom Noe, the infamous Toledo coin dealer who has taken \$4 million or more from the state. Taft entrusted Noe with some \$50 million in investments for the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, from which some \$12 million is now missing. Noe has been charged with federal money laundering violations on behalf of the Bush-Cheney campaign. Taft's public approval ratings in Ohio are currently around 15%.

Despite public fears the bond issue could become a glorified GOP slush fund, Issue One was supported by organized labor. A poll run on the front page of the *Columbus Dispatch* on Sunday, November 6, showed Issue One passing with 53% of the vote.

Official tallies showed Issue One passing with 54% of the vote.

The polling used by the *Dispatch* had wrapped up the Thursday before the Tuesday election. Its precision on Issue One was consistent with the *Dispatch's* historic polling abilities, which have been uncannily accurate for decades. This poll was based on 1872 registered Ohio voters, with a margin of error at plus/minus 2.5 percentage points and a 95% confidence interval. The Issue One outcome would appear to confirm the *Dispatch* polling operation as the state's gold standard.

But Issues 2-5 are another story.

The *Dispatch's* Sunday headline showed "3 issues on way to passage." The headline referred to Issues One, Two and Three. As mentioned, the poll was dead-on accurate for Issue One.

Issues Two-Five were meant to reform Ohio's electoral process, which has been under intense fire since 2004. The issues were very heavily contested. They were backed by Reform Ohio Now, a well-funded bi-partisan statewide effort meant to bring some semblance of reliability back to the state's vote count. Many of the state's best-known moderate public figures from both sides of the aisle were prominent in the effort. Their effort came largely in response to the stolen 2004 presidential vote count that gave George W. Bush a second term and led to U.S. history's first Congressional challenge to the seating of a state's delegation to the Electoral College.

Issue Two was designed to make it easier for Ohioans to vote early, by mail or in person. By election day, much of what it proposed was already put into law by the state legislature. Like Issue One, it was opposed by the Christian Right. But it had broad support from a wide range of Ohio citizen groups. In a conversation the day before the vote, Bill Todd, a primary official spokesperson for the opposition to Issues Two through Five, told attorney Cliff Arnebeck that he believed Issues Two and Three would pass.

The November 6 *Dispatch* poll showed Issue Two passing by a vote of 59% to 33%, with about 8% undecided, an even broader margin than that predicted for Issue One.

But on November 8, the official vote count showed Issue Two going down to defeat by the astonishing

margin of 63.5% against, with just 36.5% in favor. For the official vote count to square with the pre-vote *Dispatch* poll, support for the Issue had to drop more than 22 points, with virtually all the undecideds apparently going into the "no" column.

The numbers on Issue Three are even less likely.

Issue Three involved campaign finance reform. In a lame duck session at the end of 2004, Ohio's Republican legislature raised the limits for individual donations to \$10,000 per candidate per person for anyone over the age of six. Thus a family of four could donate \$40,000 to a single candidate. The law also opened the door for direct campaign donations from corporations, something banned by federal law since the administration of Theodore Roosevelt.

The *Sunday Dispatch* poll showed it winning in a landslide, with 61% in favor and just 25% opposed.

Tuesday's official results showed Issue Three going down to defeat in perhaps the most astonishing reversal in Ohio history, claiming just 33% of the vote, with 67% opposed. For this to have happened, Issue Three's polled support had to drop 28 points, again with an apparent 100% opposition from the previously undecideds.

The outcomes on Issue Four and Five were slightly less dramatic. Issue Four meant to end gerrymandering by establishing a non-partisan commission to set Congressional and legislative districts. The *Dispatch* poll showed it with 31% support, 45% opposition, and 25% undecided. Issue Four's final margin of defeat was 30% in favor to 70% against, placing virtually all undecideds in the "no" column.

Issue Five meant to take administration of Ohio's elections away from the Secretary of State, giving control to a nine-member non-partisan commission. Issue Five was prompted by Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell's administration of the 2004 presidential vote, particularly in light of his role as co-chair of Ohio's Bush-Cheney campaign. The *Dispatch* poll showed a virtual toss-up, at 41% yes, 43% no and 16% undecided. The official result gave Issue Five just 30% of the vote, with allegedly 70% opposed.

According to a recent General Accountability Office report, all such technologies are easily hacked. Vote skimming and tipping are readily available... Vote switching could be especially easy for those with access to networks by which many of the computers are linked.

Diebold to the rescue

But the *Sunday Dispatch* also carried another headline: "44 counties will break in new voting machines." Forty-one of those counties "will be using new electronic touch screens from Diebold Election System," the *Dispatch* added.

Diebold's controversial CEO Walden O'Dell, a major GOP donor, made national headlines in 2003 with a fundraising letter pledging to deliver Ohio's 2004 electoral votes to Bush.

Every vote in Ohio 2004 was cast or counted on an electronic device. About 15%—some 800,000 votes—were cast on electronic touchscreen machines with no paper trail. The number was about seven times higher than Bush's official 118,775-vote margin of victory. Nearly all the rest of the votes were cast on punch cards or scantron ballots counted by optiscan devices—some of them made by Diebold—then tallied at central computer stations in each of Ohio's 88 counties.

According to a recent General Accountability Office report, all such technologies are easily hacked. Vote skimming and tipping are readily available to those who would manipulate the vote. Vote switching could be especially easy for those with access to networks by which many of the computers are linked. Such machines and networks, said the GAO, had widespread problems with "security

and reliability." Among them were "weak security controls, system design flaws, inadequate security testing, incorrect system configuration, poor security management and vague or incomplete voting system standards, among other issues."

The possible explanations for the staggering defeats of Issues Two through Five boil down to two: either the *Dispatch* polling—dead accurate for Issue One—was wildly wrong beyond all possible statistical margin of error for Issues 2-5, or the electronic machines on which Ohio and much of the nation conduct their elections were hacked by someone wanting to change the vote count.

If the latter is true, it can and will be done again, and we can forget forever about the state that has been essential to the election of every Republican presidential candidate since Lincoln.

And we can also, for all intents and purposes, forget about the future of American democracy.

Bob Fitrakis and Harvey Wasserman are co-authors of *HOW THE GOP STOLE AMERICA'S 2004 ELECTION AND IS RIGGING 2008*, available at <http://www.free-press.org/> and <http://www.harvey-wasserman.com/>, and, with Steve Rosenfeld, of *WHAT HAPPENED IN OHIO*, available from *The New Press* in spring, 2006.

Source: truthout.com 11/13/05



Stay the course, Mr. President

Dear Mr. President

I have been remiss in not communicating much sooner and, certainly, more often. I commiserate with you in your time of need. You had no sooner settled down on your ranch for a well-earned respite from a lightening schedule of summit meetings, officiating with foreign dignitaries, never-ending speeches, social security rallies, and Washington's summer doldrums, when all heck broke loose. First it was the intrusive gold star mom from California. Cindy Sheehan and her entourage were provided a comfortable encampment, courtesy of one of your neighbor ranchers. Not very neighborly, I'd say.

Cindy Sheehan had the unmitigated gall to dog you daily for three weeks. It was wise and prudent to cut your vacation two days short and head west for some golf and relaxation. Who could have known that hurricane Katrina was about to ravage New Orleans and the gulf regions in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama? You have weathered many a political storm in recent months but hell has no fury as a woman scorned, in this case, mother nature. Then comes Rita on the heels of Katrina. If Cindy Sheehan is a gnat in your coffee, hurricane Katrina is the boot in the punch bowl. You have had better times. I know it is of little solace now to bear in mind the guiding principle of the Boy Scouts solemn oath, namely, "Be prepared."

Putting all that aside, I truly need to keep you up to speed on what a few of the nationally syndicated columnists have been putting down

about you. You can always count on George Will to discover the silver lining in every cloud. He defends your every move in grandiloquent terms. He is your best friend in the world of journalism. Not every writer is as objective as George Will nor as impartial. I cite two columnists who, apparently, have nothing better to do than spew forth their mean spirited critiques, which, for the most part, have no basis in reality.

E.J. Dionne Jr. of the Washington Post, opined, in a recent column, "The Bush era is over. The sooner politicians in both parties realize that, the better for them - and the country." Adding insult to injury, Dionne claims that a steadily growing number of Americans have lost confidence in your leadership which he describes as "detached and self-indulgent." He further maintains that your way of politics has produced a "divided, angry, and dysfunctional public square." Whew! Dionne does not mince words. He makes no reference to the "uniter" hallmark of your presidency. He mentions not a word of the melding of southern congressional democrats with the God fearing conservatives throughout America.

In fairness to Dionne, he praises your response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. He acknowledged your skill in identifying enemies and rallying a nation already disposed to action. Unable to leave well enough alone, Dionne's praise was short-lived. He quickly returned to critical mode, accusing you of failing in your central

task to forge national unity in the months following Sept 11, 2001. In his words, "Bush put patriotism to the service of narrowly ideological policies and an extreme partisanship." Dionne was on a roll. He joined the chorus of lefties who have been hammering you for your obsession with increasing tax cuts for your wealthiest supporters and then making them permanent.

Dionne has the cheek to remark that you invoked our national anger over terror to win support for a war in Iraq initiated on false premises and egregious deception. When it comes to piling on, Dionne leaves no stone unturned. Mr. President, I marvel at your unwavering resolve to continue on what you believe to be the right path, the road to freedom and democracy.

It puzzles the mind when Dionne pronounces that the "Bush era ended definitively on Friday, Sept. 2, the day Bush first toured the Gulf States after Hurricane Katrina. The utter failure of federal relief efforts had by then become clear." You may not have been the first responder, but Dionne might have credited you for the many trips you have since made to the gulf states, as well as your splendid address in the French Quarter's Jackson Square.

As though one Washington Post columnist's diatribe isn't enough unpleasantness, along comes David Broder with a depressing economic forecast. According to Broder, "In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, credible private experts are forecasting a federal budget deficit of \$500 billion for this year, a sharp reminder of the fiscal folly of the current government." Broder expresses his concern that our children and grandchildren will pay a continuing price for the refusal of our leaders to face the reality of an out-of-control budget." Doom and gloom, Mr. President. That's what David Broder is all about. Best to ignore him and his arguments as you have done so successfully with other political pundits of his bent.

Finally, I implore you not to be discouraged by the current unfavorable ratings in your direction and leadership. Opinion polls are as transitory as the weather. I am confident that you will stay the course no matter where it leads.

*Reid Cerney,
political pundit*

The learning curve

Donald Rumsfeld is giving President Bush his daily briefing.

Rumsfeld concludes by reporting, "Yesterday, 3 Brazilian soldiers were killed."

"OH NO! the President exclaims. "That's terrible!"

His staff sits stunned at this display of emotion, nervously watching as the President sits, head in hands.

Finally, the President looks up and asks, "How many is a brazillion?"

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P&J Tuesday Film Nights

7:00 pm, PJN Center, 231 Bedford Road, Stockton

Nov. 22

A Place Called Chiapas

One of the poorest regions in Mexico, the southern province of Chiapas drew worldwide attention in 1994 when a militant political faction, the Zapatista National Liberation Army, staged a major uprising. Featuring a rare on-camera interview with the mysterious Subcomandante Marcos, filmmaker Nettie Wild's documentary investigates the rebel movement and attempts to quash the Zapatistas.

Nov. 29—Two short films

Susan B. Anthony: Rebel for the Cause

Interviews, illustrations, photographs and dramatizations document the life and legacy of suffragist Susan B. Anthony in this A&E biography. The trailblazing feminist leader persevered in the face of mockery, threats, insults and arrest to realize her ambition: voting rights for women.

Keys to Good Government: Wall builders

According to pundit David Barton, the recipe for good government may lie in rediscovering the ethical tenets on which America's great democracy was based. The modern electorate practically takes for granted the corruption plaguing the republic—a scenario the founding fathers would never have envisioned. This documentary outlines the steps to restoring a sound and principled government.

Dec. 6, 7 & 8—Trilogy

Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance

Koyaanisqatsi marks Godfrey Reggio's debut as a film director/producer. It is the first installment of the Qatsi trilogy. The title is a Hopi Indian word meaning "life out of balance." This film is an apocalyptic vision of the collision of two worlds: urban life and technology vs the environment. Philip Glass composed the score.

Powaqqatsi

Powaqqatsi, the second installment in the Qatsi trilogy, is a celebration of the human-scale endeavor—the craftsmanship, spiritual worship, labor and creativity—that defines a particular culture. It's a celebration of rareness but also an observation of how these societies move to a universal drumbeat.

Naqoyqatsi

Completing the trilogy begun with Koyaanisqatsi ("life out of balance") and then Powaqqatsi ("life in transformation"), Naqoyqatsi chronicles the most significant occurrence of the last 5,000 years—the transition from a natural environment to a "new" nature, a technological reality. The Hopi term naqoy means war, qatsi means life—this is the war of ordinary daily living.

Dec. 13

Mojados: Through the Night

Director Tommy Davis follows four migrants from rural Mexico on their harrowing journey across the desert into the States. Their 120-mile trek is filled with peril as they evade the border patrol, endure temperature extremes, contend with dehydration and face the all-too-real possibility that their quest for a better life could end in death.

Dec. 20

It's a Wonderful Life

Christmas classic. Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, Frank Capra, angels getting their wings, mean old man Potter. Christmas party after.

Dec. 27

Milagro Beanfield War

Nothing has changed in Milagro, New Mexico, for 300 years. Then, one day, Joe Mondragon kicks the off-limits community water pipe and begins to irrigate the cracked, dry ground that was once his father's beanfield. The developers of a new luxury recreation area are none too pleased and a culture clash ensues between Milagro's colorful, quirky residents and the authorities. The film is based on the novel by John Nichols.

New Dance Company and friends performance

New Dance Company celebrates its 15th year with performances on Friday, December 2nd, and Saturday, December 3rd, at 8pm at the new Empire Theatre (formerly the Stockton Royal) at 1825 Pacific Ave on the Miracle Mile.

The evening program includes choreography by Ana Frenes-Sobaszkiwicz, Lisa Rie and invited guest artists, Valerie Gnassounou and Bay Area dancer/choreographer, Erin Parsley. Exciting live music by talented local musicians will accompany several dances.

New Dance Company was founded in 1989 by Bethany King

and Kathleen Torian-Taylor with the hopes of making contemporary dance a visible and stable part of the artistic community of Stockton. The repertory company is a community-based, nonprofit organization that features modern dance and promotes healthy attitudes about technique/training for dancers.

Tickets can be purchased at the Empire Theatre Box Office before the performances. Call 943-7469 or check StocktonEmpireTheatre.com for information. All tickets \$10.00. For additional information, call 464-0855 or PO Box 4713 Stockton, CA 95204.

Thanksgiving morning, Nov 24

Run and Walk for Hunger

Starts & finishes at Stockton Ports Waterfront Baseball Park (corner Fremont and Lincoln Streets in downtown Stockton)

7:00 to 8:25 am, Registration
8:20 am Opening Ceremonies
8:30 5K (3.1 mile) Run and Walk
9:30 Kid's (9 & under) 1/2 mile Run/Walk
10:30 am Closing Ceremonies

This will be a fun, energetic fundraiser for Seniors First Meals on Wheels and the Emergency Food Bank. The 5K, 3.1 mile Run and Walk begins at the Stockton Ports Ball Park, and traverses both sides

of the Deepwater Channel on paved roads, a scenic course. Kids (9 & under) Run/Walk at 9:30. Awards will be presented (for the 5K Run only) for top three places each age group. Snacks and libations before, during and after the event.

So, get up and get going, get some exercise before that big feast—and help end hunger in our county!

For more information or pledge brochure, call Seniors First (Meals on Wheels)-(209) 644-5000 or the Emergency Food Bank, (209) 464-7369, or email: tviall_msn.com.

Resources for educators

Reach and Teach (<http://www.reachandteach.com/content/>) provides resources for educators and tools for activists, focused on peace and social justice. They have a store in Daly City, by San Francisco Nonviolent Peaceforce, or online at <http://nvpf.org/np/english/welcome.asp.html>

Nonviolent Peaceforce is a federation of over 90 member organizations from around the world. In partnership with local groups, unarmed Nonviolent Peaceforce Field Team members apply proven strategies to protect human rights,

deter violence, and help create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work. The mission of the Nonviolent Peaceforce is to build a trained, international civilian peaceforce committed to third-party nonviolent intervention.

They have been active in Sri Lanka for two years already, and are expanding to Uganda, Colombia and other countries.

Nonviolent Peaceforce will do a free public presentation in San Francisco on December 7, 7 pm San Francisco Unitarian Church. jankaye@juno.com

ACLU meeting at the Center

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) will be meeting at the new Peace and Justice Center on Monday, December 12 at 7:30 pm at 231 Bedford Rd in Stockton. Please come early at 7 pm for light refreshments and the chance to socialize.

Save the date

The 31st Annual Susan B. Anthony Banquet to honor Women of Achievement in San Joaquin County will be held Wednesday, February 15th. This is your opportunity to join other community leaders in recognizing outstanding women in our community. If you would like to nominate someone, contact the commission through Nancy at nmoldoch@yahoo.com.

Nominate a Peace Maker

The Mediation Center of San Joaquin County is currently accepting applications for their annual Peace Maker Celebration for spring 2006. The Center is looking for individuals who have made personal contributions in making the lives of our community more peaceful. To obtain a nominee application contact the Center at 474-8794, or download one at www.MediatorsRus.org.

Conserve oaks and woodlands

- Learn about our local oaks.
- Network with others.
- Be directly involved with local efforts to protect and conserve our precious oak resources.

Presentations to include biology and ecology of oaks and oak woodlands in the Sierras; recent state laws to protect California oak woodlands; local conservation.

Free. December 15, 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Amador Senior Center, 229 New York Ranch Rd, Jackson. Sponsored by the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Council. 209-257-1851 x105, or strangeaqua@volcano.net

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December Calendar

Nov 23–Dec 15-18

Stockton Civic Theatre presents Amahl and the Night Visitors & The Gift of the Magi, Thurs 7:30 pm, Fri/Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. 2312 RoseMarie Lane, Stockton. \$20 adult, \$18 senior, \$15 student, \$8 child. 473-2424.

Dec 2–8

UOP Theatre presents Dancing at Lughnasa, all shows 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. DeMarcus Brown Studio Theatre, UOP, Stockton. \$12/\$5. 946-2474.

Sun, Nov 20

Classical music recital at the Haggin Museum, featuring world renowned clarinetist Patricia Shands and pianist Dmitriy Cogan, performing Poulenc, Horovitz and Caviani. 3 pm, Victory Park, 1201 N Pershing Ave. 940-6300

UOP Symphonic Wind Ensemble & University Concert Band, 2:30pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP, Stockton.

Mon, Nov 21

Community meeting to discuss purchase of KUOP. 7pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 464-3326

Tue, Nov 22

Hospice of San Joaquin Tree of Lights event. 6 pm, Main entrance to Delta College, Yokuts & Pacific. 957-3888 Donations support care for terminally ill patients and their families.

Candlelight vigil for peace—"we pray we may become people of peace, so war will end." Catholic Cathedral of Annunciation, Lincoln/Rose, Stockton. All welcome! 464-3326, 462-3340

Thu, Nov 24

Thanksgiving day Morning 5K Run/Walk, sponsored by the Emergency Food Bank and Seniors First/Meals on Wheels. Event for the whole family. 8:30 am. From the downtown ballpark through Weber Point. 464-7369

Wed, Nov 30

Music with Morearty, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 7-9 pm. Free. Light refreshments.

Thur, Dec 1

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd., Stockton. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

Holiday Band & Choir Concert, SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Ave, 7:30pm. \$7.50/\$5, 954-5110

Fri & Sat, Dec 2 & 3

Peaceful Holiday Gift Fair, NOTE: different vendors each weekend—attend both. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Friday 4–9 pm, Saturday 10–3. Gifts, food, fun. 467-1439 (see page 1).

New Dance Company—Making Contemporary Dance in Stockton (see page 18). New choreograph and dance pieces in the Empire Theatre (former Royal theatre on the Miracle Mile) 8 pm All seats \$10. Reception following opening night performance.

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe play. SJ Delta College Lewis Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Friday 10 am & 12 pm; Saturday 11, 1 & 3 pm, \$10/\$7.50. 954-5110

Fri, Dec 2

UOP Symphony Orchestra & University Choruses, "A Classical Christmas at the Cathedral" Handels Messiah Part I, Ohrwall: Gaudete. 7:30pm, Cathedral of the Annunciation, Stockton.

Children's Museum Family Winter Workshop, Visit with Santa and build wooden gifts. Pizza, salad and soda. \$26 for family of 4, \$7 per person. 402 W. Weber Ave, Stockton. 465-4386 for reservations.

Sat, Dec 3

SJDC Choir Concert, St Johns Church in Lodi. 7:30 pm \$12/\$10 954-5110

Festival of Lights—Children's activities, Santa, Ice on the Delta skate sessions, ending with the lighted boat parade 6 pm, Weber Point Events Center. 937-8206

Sun, Dec 4

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe play. SJ Delta College Lewis Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, 11 am, 1 pm & 3 pm, \$10/\$7.50. 954-5110

Thur, Dec 8

Tamale dinner "Navidad en El Valle," benefit sponsored by El Concilio, proceeds to fund Christmas food baskets and children's toys. 5 pm, Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium, 525 N Center, Stockton. \$10. 547-2882

Delta College Improvisation Theatre, 8 pm. Studio Theatre. Free. 954-5110

New Pacific Trio performance, Linda Wang violin, Nina Flyer cello, Sonia Leong piano. 7:30 pm. UOP Recital Hall.

Fri, Dec 9

Non-violence training, Friday 6-9 pm, Saturday 9-5. Catholic Cathedral of the Annunciation, Lincoln/Rose, Stockton. \$15 includes morning snack and lunch. Registration: 465-4043.

Fri & Sat, Dec 9 & 10

Peaceful Holiday Gift Fair, NOTE: different vendors each weekend—attend both. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Friday 4–9 pm, Saturday 10–3. Gifts, food, fun. 467-1439 (see page 1).

Dec 9 & 11

"Holiday Treasures, Stockton Symphony & Chorale with soprano Amy Hansen, Delta College Atherton Theater, 5151 Pacific Ave. 951-0196

Sat, Dec 10

Delta College Improvisation Theatre, 8 pm. Studio Theatre. Free. 954-5110

Dec 16 & 17

Capitol Ballet's "Nutcracker." Fri-7:30 pm, Sat 2 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Theater, 5151 Pacific Ave, \$15-\$20 adult, \$10 senior/12 & under. Sugar plum party \$5. Advance ticket purchase suggested 954-5110

Sat & Sun, Dec 17 & 18

Nutcracker by the Ballet San Joaquin Ballet New York & Professional Organization for Performing Artists. 7:30 pm Sat, Matinees 1:30 pm Sat & Sun. Hope Theatre, 242 E Main St, Stockton. 337-HOPE

Wed, Dec 21

First Annual Winter Solstice celebration held by Peace & Justice Network. Music, friends, celebrate. Please attend. Potluck dinner. 6 pm. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455

Tue, Dec 27

Candlelight vigil for peace—"we pray we may become people of peace, so war will end." Catholic Cathedral of Annunciation, Lincoln/Rose, Stockton. All welcome! 464-3326, 462-3340

Thur, Jan 5

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd., Stockton. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

From Violence to Wholeness

The nonviolence workshop, offered with great success to a full house by the Peace and Justice Network in October, is being repeated. It can deepen one's understanding of nonviolent peacemaking and develop skills to practice nonviolent peacemaking in everyday life.

Place: Catholic Cathedral of the Annunciation, Lincoln/Rose, Stockton.

Time: Friday, December 9, 6 pm to 9 pm (including dinner) and Saturday, December 10, 9 am to 5 pm (including morning snack and lunch).

Maximum participants: 12, with attendance the entire time required.

Cost: \$15. (Some partial scholarships available.)

Info and registration: Linda Whittock, 465-4043.

November 30



Music with Morearty

John Morearty will sing, lead sing-alongs, teach Tibetan chanting, play Japanese bamboo flutes, and read from his poetry and his memoirs-in-progress. (He will not dance, swallow swords, nor juggle flaming torches.)

Drumming by Jean-Claude Crhi from Cameroon on the djembe

Admission FREE, light refreshments

John's chapbook of poems and two music CDs available for sale

Wednesday, Nov 30, 7–9 pm
Peace and Justice Center,
231 W. Bedford Road, Stockton
Info: 464-3326

Fri, Jan 6

Children's Museum Family Kid Print, Make a calendar. 5:30 - 7:30 pm. Pizza, salad and soda. \$26 for family of 4, \$7 per person. 402 W. Weber Ave, Stockton. 465-4386 for reservations.

Jan 13 & 15

Puccini's Tosca—Stockton Opera Association. Saturday 7:30 pm, Sunday 2pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. \$25-\$30. 946-2474.

Tues, Jan 24

John McCutcheon Concert, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$15. 467-4455 (see page 1).

Wed, Feb 15

Susan B. Anthony Awards. Save the date.

Weekly

Tuesdays

Stockton City Council Meeting, every Tuesday at City Hall, 5:30 pm. <http://www.stocktongov.com/clerk/pages/CouncilAgenda.htm>

TaiChi, 6-8 pm, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E Harding Way.

First & Third Fridays

Poetry, 8:30–10:30 pm Latte Lounge, 235 E Miner Ave. 466-6224.

Saturdays

Birding Field Trips with S.J. Audubon Society. www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Tai Chi Chuan at the Confucius Church on Lafayette St., 8:30 am–11:am. (209) 952-8582.

Sundays

TaiChi, 2:30–4, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E. Harding Way & Golden Gate.

Monthly

Second Mon

PFLAG meeting, 7-9 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 209-870-3339.

Second Tues

Audubon Society, 7:30 pm, St. Paul's Church, 2220 W Alpine, Stockton.

Third Thur

Hispanics for Political Action meeting, 6:30-8:30 pm. Cancun Restaurant, Weber St, Stockton

Talking It Through

Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

The Real Reality Show is hosted by Margee Ensign every Monday evening at 6pm

Talking It Through is hosted by Adrian Nichols and Sammy Nunez every Monday evening at 6:30pm

SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26

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ons...Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon." As we now know, the intelligence community was far from certain. Yet the Vice President had been convinced.

On September 8, 2002, he was even more emphatic about Saddam. He said, "[We] do know, with absolute certainty, that he is using his procurement system to acquire the equipment he needs in order to enrich uranium to build a nuclear weapon." The intelligence community was deeply divided about the aluminum tubes, but Vice President Cheney was absolutely certain.

One month later, on the eve of the watershed vote by Congress to authorize the war, President Bush said it even more vividly. He said, "Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes ... which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year. And if we allow that to happen, a terrible line would be crossed ... Saddam Hussein would be in a position to pass nuclear technology to terrorists."

In fact, as we now know, the intelligence community was far from convinced of any such threat. The Administration attempted to conceal that fact by classifying the information and the dissents within the intelligence community until after the war, even while making dramatic and excessive public statements about the immediacy of the

danger.

In October 2002, the intelligence agencies jointly issued a National Intelligence Estimate stating that "most agencies" believed that Iraq had restarted its nuclear program after inspectors left in 1998, and that, if left unchecked, Iraq "probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade."

The State Department's intelligence bureau, however, said the "available evidence" was inadequate to support that judgment. It refused to predict when "Iraq could acquire a nuclear device or weapon."

About the claims of purchases of nuclear material from Africa, the State Department's intelligence bureau said that claims of Iraq seeking to purchase nuclear material from Africa were "highly dubious." The CIA sent two memorandums to the White House stressing strong doubts about those claims.

But the following January, in 2003, the President included the claims about Africa in his State of the Union Address, and conspicuously cited the British government as the source of that intelligence.

Information about nuclear weapons was not the only intelligence distorted by the Administration. On the question of whether Iraq was pursuing a chemical weapons program, the Defense Intelligence Agency concluded in September 2002 that "there is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or whether Iraq has—or will - establish its chemical warfare agent

production facilities."

That same month, however, Secretary Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Saddam has chemical weapons stockpiles.

He said, "We do know that the Iraqi regime has chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction," that Saddam "has amassed large clandestine stocks of chemical weapons." He said that "he has stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons," and that Iraq has "active chemical, biological and nuclear programs." He was wrong on all counts.

Yet the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate actually quantified the size of the stockpiles, stating that "although we have little specific information on Iraq's CW stockpile, Saddam probably has stocked at least 100 metric tons and possibly as much as 500 metric tons of CW agents—much of it added in the last year." In his address to the United Nations on February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell went further, calling the 100 to 500 metric ton stockpile a "conservative estimate."

Secretary Rumsfeld made an even more explicit assertion in his interview on "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" on March 30, 2003. When asked about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, he said, "We know where they are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat."

The Administration's case for war based on the linkage between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda was just as misguided.

Significantly here as well, the Intelligence Estimate did not find a cooperative relationship between Saddam and al Qaeda. On the contrary, it stated only that such a relationship might develop in the future if Saddam was "sufficiently desperate"—in other words, if America went to war. But the estimate placed "low confidence" that, even in desperation, Saddam would give weapons of mass destruction to al Qaeda.

A year before the war began, senior al Qaeda leaders themselves had rejected a link with Saddam. The *New York Times* reported last June that a top al Qaeda planner and recruiter captured in March 2002 told his questioners last year that "the idea of working with Mr. Hussein's government had been discussed among al Qaeda leaders, but Osama bin Laden had rejected such proposals." According to the *Times*,

The American people deserve the truth. It's time for the President to stop passing the buck and for him to be held accountable.

an al Qaeda chief of operations had also told interrogators that it did not work with Saddam.

Mel Goodman, a CIA analyst for 20 years, put it bluntly: "Saddam Hussein and bin Laden were enemies. Bin Laden considered and said that Saddam was the socialist infidel. These were very different kinds of individuals competing for power in their own way and Saddam Hussein made very sure that al Qaeda couldn't function in Iraq."

In February 2003, investigators at the FBI told the *New York Times* they were baffled by the Administration's insistence on a solid link between al Qaeda and Iraq. One investigator said: "We've been looking at this hard for more than a year and you know what, we just don't think it's there."

But President Bush was not deterred. He was relentless in playing to America's fears after the devastating tragedy of 9/11. He drew a clear link—and drew it repeatedly—between al Qaeda and Saddam.

On September 25, 2002, at the White House, President Bush flatly declared: "You can't distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror."

In his State of the Union Address in January 2003, President Bush said, "Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda," and that he could provide "lethal viruses" to a "shadowy terrorist network."

Two weeks later, in his Saturday radio address to the nation, a month before the war began, President Bush described the ties in detail, saying, "Saddam Hussein has long-standing, direct and continuing ties to terrorist networks..."

He said: "Senior members of Iraqi intelligence and al Qaeda have met at least eight times since the early 1990s. Iraq has sent bomb-making and document-forgery experts to work with al Qaeda. Iraq has also provided al Qaeda with chemical and biological weapons training. An al Qaeda operative was sent to Iraq several times in the late 1990s for help in acquiring poisons and gases. We also know that Iraq is harboring

a terrorist network headed by a senior al Qaeda terrorist planner. This network runs a poison and explosive training camp in northeast Iraq, and many of its leaders are known to be in Baghdad."

Who gave the President this information? The NIE? Scooter Libby? Chalabi?

In fact, there was no operational link and no clear and persuasive pattern of ties between the Iraqi government and al Qaeda. A 9/11 Commission Staff Statement in June of 2004, put it plainly: "Two senior bin Laden associates have adamantly denied that any ties existed between al Qaeda and Iraq. We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States." The 9/11 Commission Report stated clearly that there was no "operational" connection between Saddam and al Qaeda. That fact should have been abundantly clear to the President. Iraq and al Qaeda had diametrically opposing views of the world.

The Pentagon's favorite Iraqi dissident, Ahmed Chalabi, is actually proud of what happened. "We are heroes in error," Chalabi said in February 2004. "As far as we're concerned, we've been entirely successful. That tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important. The Bush Administration is looking for a scapegoat. We're ready to fall on our swords, if he wants."

What was said before does matter. The President's words matter. The Vice President's words matter. So do those of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and other high officials in the Administration. And they did not square with the facts.

The Intelligence Committee agreed to investigate the clear discrepancies, and it's important that they get to the bottom of this, and find out how and why President Bush took America to war in Iraq. Americans are dying. Already more than 2000 have been killed, and more than 15,000 have been wounded.

The American people deserve the truth. It's time for the President to stop passing the buck and for him to be held accountable.

Source: truthout.org 11/10/05 *truthout* / Statement

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