

connections

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SAVE THE DATES

**SUNDAY, FEB 26
PJN ANNUAL
MEETING/POTLUCK**

**APR 30
EARTH DAY**

**TUESDAYS
MOVIES AT THE P&J
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**GLOBALIZATION FIGHT
14&15**

IRAN NEXT? 20



Plan for Earth Day

It's almost time for the Earth Day Festival. All organizations, schools or individuals doing environmental activities and/or projects are encouraged to share with the community at this year's Earth Day Festival as a vendor.

Planning has begun for Stockton's 18th annual Earth Day Festival, Sunday, April 30, 11 am to 5 pm at Victory Park. Coordinated by the Peace and Justice Network, the City of Stockton Stormwater Management Program, San Joaquin County Public Works Department and University of the Pacific, the Festival continues to

draw a larger and more diverse crowd each year, and provides an enjoyable way for the community to learn more about protecting our environment.

This year's theme is "Living with the Earth" and will again include the Family Fun Bike Ride as well as an extended bike ride for the more hearty cyclist. In addition, the Festival will be powered by solar energy.

Whether you have educational information to share, crafts to sell, school programs to demonstrate, please join us.

We are also always looking

PJN Annual Meeting/Potluck

The place to be Feb 26

Come to the PJN Annual Meeting/Potluck this year. The food is always great and the company the best in town. This is the time we make plans for the next year so come and share your ideas and meet others who care. All are welcome.

This year we will hold the Annual Meeting in our new Peace and Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd (just off the Miracle Mile) in Stockton. The addition of the Center has opened up many opportunities to Peace & Justice Network. Let's talk about ways we can use this versatile space: as a media center, a place to mobilize, to teach, to learn, and to have fun.

Don't miss the annual meeting. Sunday, February 26, from 4-7 pm, 231 Bedford Rd in Stockton. See you there.

Agenda (note that dinner is early—don't be late):

- 4:00-4:30 Introductions
- 4:30-5:15 Dinner
- 5:15-6:30 Program
- 6:30-7:00 Elections



for volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of this event. If you, a group of friends, your school or organization would like to lend a hand, we can use help in: set up and take down on the day, distribution of posters, staffing the info booth, assisting with children's

activities and more. For more information on how to take part in this increasingly important event, please call Susan Mora Loyko at 937-8791. We're looking forward to another wonderful Earth Day Festival and hope to see you there.

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From the editor

This is not war

Bruce Giudici

In war, the president is accorded special powers to protect the nation. By proclaiming efforts against terrorism a "war," President Bush has increasingly demanded powers not justifiable if the actions against terrorists were more accurately described as policing actions. Current claims by Bush in foiling terrorist plots point to cooperative international police work, not warfare. He claims credit for good police work, yet increasingly demands the powers of a dictator.

Conveniently complicating the "war president" designation for Bush is the fact that the United States has been engaged in actual warfare in Iraq, a war of Bush's

choosing which provides cover for his "war president" claim. Again convenient for Bush, the longer we sit in Iraq (or transition to Iran, then to Sudan...), the longer the claim to indefinite war powers for this president. And the further our country lurches to dictatorship.

For this reason alone, we must clarify that first, the "war on terror" has never been a war at all and therefore does not bestow any additional powers to Bush.

Second, the Iraq war must be seen for what it is—a misguided (and greedy) American attempt at nation-building that now needs international cooperation (and an American withdrawal) to restore some modicum of civility on the

Iraqi streets.

The pull back of American troops, however necessary, need not delay holding Bush responsible for his unrelated power grabs on torture, civil liberties, and unwarranted wiretaps, all illegal and impeachable in peacetime. A war on terror was not declared by Congress; some clarity must be brought to the 9/14/01 Congressional resolution authorizing Bush to defeat al Qaeda. Bush was not authorized to break the law.

In a brazen political bluff, the White House (Cheney and Rove) now want wiretapping to become a November 2006 election issue, as if a probable Republican victory will validate Bush's illegal

Bruce Giudici



acts and his mandate to continue down the road to dictatorship. Let us today support the opposition to do more than continue standing by the barn door after the latest horse has escaped. Rather than bewail the lack of opposition spine, let us today relentlessly demand that we are a nation of laws, that we will no longer be manipulated, and that we will stand for honesty and integrity in the White House. That was the Bush platform of 2000—let's hold him to it in 2006. Call your representatives—repeatedly.

The president already has the power to immediately wiretap suspected terrorists. The current law offers the president the flexibility to wiretap suspected terrorists immediately and get a court order up to three days later. The domestic spying program is a dragnet that has led to innocent Americans. The Bush administration insists that the illegal wiretapping program is only applied to suspected terrorists. Both the New York Times and the Washington Post have reported that the program is a fishing expedition that often leads to innocent Americans. On Monday, the attorney general would not confirm that the program didn't eavesdrop on innocent Americans. Despite Karl Rove's desire to turn this into an election issue, even threatening to take electoral revenge on Republicans who break with the president, Republicans and Democrats have questioned his authority. As Congresswoman Wilson points out, the administration's reluctance to come clean, "has deepened her apprehension about whom the agency is monitoring and why." It's time to hold this president accountable.

Eric Straatsma
straats@msn.com

Feedback

We've been had

Editor,

I am a retired Cab Driver in San Francisco. The cabs in San Francisco and most of the police cars are Ford Crown Victorias or Mercurys. The same thing. They are built in Ontario, Canada. I used to think they were built in Canada because of the 80 cents on the dollar. I have just learned that is not the real reason.

The big Fords and Mercurys are built in Canada so that Ford does not have to buy a health insurance policy for each of the Ford workers and their dependants because Canada has a Single Payer health program. American workers lose tens and

tens of thousands of jobs because America does not have Universal Health Care. Bush says he is working for better health care for Americans and also for more jobs here in America. That's a lie. Health and jobs are inseparable. This cabal in the White House are selling the American people down the drain. Thirty thousand Ford workers and thirty thousand G.M. workers are getting laid off in the next few years. Sixty thousand Chinese workers are getting jobs in Ford and G.M. in the next few years. Well, good for our fellow workers in China.

Now here's my plan. America cannot import tunnels and trestles. Let us, America, build a long needed rail system in our country. It will employ everyone who wants to work for many years

to bring our country to the rail standards of Asia and Europe. The cabal doesn't care about U.S. The rich with all their tax breaks have invested it, their loot in Asia. That's where the "money is to be made." Wake up. I think "we have been had."

F.W. Lee Christensen

Is the president above the law?

If Congress doesn't hold him accountable, then President Bush is telling us that this and all other presidents are above the law. Is this what we want in the USA, where we base everything on law and order? The founders of this country rebelled against King George, because in part, he was above the law.

Needed: volunteers to work at our Center weekdays. Call Maria at 467-4455 with your hours available; she will provide further information.



Connections

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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."

Forming a broad coalition against Iraq war

Jim Walsh

Across Northern California, the call has gone out: let us all come together against the Iraq War in One Big Coalition.

On February 5, 75 people from 50 organizations met in San Francisco, determined to broaden the representation in the antiwar movement and to increase the participation at mass demonstrations throughout the Bay Area, the Central Valley and the Sierra foothills. A solid majority of Americans are now against the Iraq war, they said; it is time for demonstrations and peace actions to show that the majority wants peace, not barbarism based on US government lies.

The range of people attending

was astonishingly broad: labor unions, peace and justice centers, hardcore lefties, interfaith groups, environmental organizations, Gold Star Moms, military families, Iraq Veterans against the war, the Sierra Club and more.

The group proposed a broad democratic front, united and inclusive. The Statement of Purpose says: End the war in Iraq and bring the troops home now; End US wars and US-backed occupations in Haiti, Palestine, Cuba, Afghanistan and Iran; and Shift federal spending from military "defense" to jobs, justice, Katrina relief, education and other needed social programs.

The plan is to spread the word to all organizations throughout

Northern California who might support this call. In unity is strength. Invite individuals and representatives of groups to come to another meeting on Saturday, February 25 in the Bay Area, exact time and place to be determined. Interfaith communities, student groups, regional peace centers, labor unions and all other interested groups are invited to sign up for email announcements at ppjc@peaceandjustice.org with "Broad Antiwar" in the subject line, and then to send delegates to the next meeting. At that meeting, a spring antiwar conference will be planned with the purpose of moving the antiwar movement into the mainstream of political discourse.



Speaking of blogs...Cheney shoots man and other news

Laurie Litman

Blogs are where the real news is reported.

Just as an example, yesterday evening we learned that Dick Cheney had shot his friend. While the MSM (mainstream media) continued to give the WH (white house) party line: accident, not serious, don't worry your pretty little head—the blogs picked up the story and started investigating. Questions came up about the timing of the public announcement, about why the victim was still in ICU after 24 hours, and about Cheney's DUI record. Hunters shared their insights on discrepancies in the story, a facial surgeon described what happens in the ICU in such a situation, and hunting safety rules and laws were examined. At the same time great fun was had by all with Quayle jokes, a spoof about how

Cheney had foiled a terrorist plot to release avian flu-infected quail into the U.S., and other gems, jokes, and groans.

The point here is that the blogs are the places to go for information and insight about the news of the day. In addition, the sharp analysis found on many blogs keeps the MSM on their toes and gives them new ideas and directions to investigate. This is a good thing and will eventually turn into a cooperative relationship between the two. Unfortunately, the traditional media hasn't yet caught on to the resources offered by the blogosphere and many are threatened, attempting to demonize that which they don't understand and can't control.

In addition to better media, the blogs are just coming into their own as a political organizing tool. That is where the push came

for the Alito filibuster after the powers that be in the Democratic party had capitulated. While we didn't win that one, the issue was pushed farther than it would have been if left to the Dems and we found out which senators could be trusted. Thank you to Feinstein and Boxer.

My favorite blogs this week:

<http://www.firedoglake.blogspot.com>

<http://wampum.wabanaki.net/>

<http://www.thinkprogress.com>

<http://glenngreenwald.blogspot.com/>

<http://driftglass.blogspot.com/>

<http://theheretik.us/>

<http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/>

<http://digby.blogspot.com>



MSM = truth? Check out the alternatives & decide for yourself

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 the best coverage around for many issues. 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>

<http://www.firedoglake.blogspot.com>

<http://www.wampum.wabanaki.net>

<http://www.thinkprogress.com>

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

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

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

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

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

Free Press <http://freepress.net>

<http://www.reclaimthemedias.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/>

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

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

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

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

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

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>

We're on the web too!

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

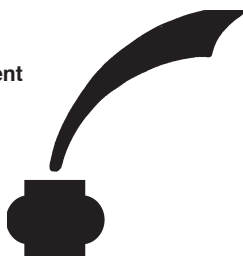
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Sen. Barbara Boxer, 1700 Montgomery St, Ste 240, San Francisco, CA 94111. 415-403-0100; 112 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202-224-3553, senator@boxer.senate.gov

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, One Post Street, Ste 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104. 415-249-0707; 331 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202-224-3841, senator@feinstein.senate.gov

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (R-District 18) 445 West Weber Ave. Suite 240, Stockton, CA 95203. 209-946-0361, 503 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-6131.

Rep. Richard Pombo (R-District 11), 2321 W March Lane, Ste 205, Stockton, CA 95207. 209-951-3091; 1519 Longworth Bldg, Washington, DC 20515. 202-225-1947, rpombo@mail.house.gov

Rep. John Doolittle (R-District 4), 2130 Professional Dr, Ste 190, Roseville, CA 95661. 916-786-5560; 1524 Longworth Bldg, Washington, CA 20515. 202-225-2511

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2841

State Sen. Michael Machado (D-District 5), 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7930; State Capitol, Rm 4035, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2407

Assemblyperson Barbara Matthews (D-District 17), 31 E Channel St, Room 306, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7479; State Capitol Room 5135, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-319-2017

Bush's immoral budget

We call it a "shoot and spend" budget. President Bush this week proposed a \$2.7 trillion budget for fiscal year 2007. He has chosen to increase spending on new weapons systems, the special forces (unconventional fighters), and other military programs. To pay for this war fighting, he has proposed draconian reductions in the civilian programs of the federal government. As reported, the \$439.3 billion allocated to the Pentagon in this budget is a 6.9 percent increase over fiscal year 2006. According to an estimate by the *Washington Post*, President Bush has increased military spending about 45 percent over the level when he took office five years ago. The budget analysis FCNL will release later this month will examine military spending in several government agencies and, as a result, may show a different and higher number. Col. Dan Smith has prepared a analysis of the military strategy behind the Bush budget: <http://www.fcnl.org/smith/budget07.htm>.

The president has proposed a budget driven by fear of "terrorists" and by the assumption that military muscle is the primary tool for creating global stability, world peace, international security, and safety for the people who live in this country. The president's budget trades off human needs here and abroad for aggressive U.S. military strategies and war. As a practical matter, these strategies have been tried and arguably have made matters worse—witness Iraq, the post-Katrina Gulf Coast, and the ascendancy of al Qaeda franchises worldwide—while making profits for war and "reconstruction" industries. Congress should not accept the president's budget choices, both for these practical reasons and for moral reasons.

Budgets reflect the moral choices of the nation. The Constitution provides Congress with the responsibility to make the final decisions on government spending. Grounded in a recognition of the failures of military strategies over the last three years, Congress should craft a budget that reflects the moral values of our people. War

Budgets reflect the moral choices of the nation....President Bush has increased military spending about 45 percent over the level when he took office five years ago.

spending drives up the mounting federal debt and diverts resources from human needs programs both here and abroad. Our observation is not—as the president charges—"isolationist." On the contrary, we urge federal spending for engagement with the world through peaceful civilian programs. Domestic programs, especially those with a proven track record of success, should not be cut back to provide yet more money for war. That's a bad deal for everyone, except the military industry. Congress should construct a federal government spending plan that reduces funding for the military and increases money for international diplomacy and efforts to build human security at home.

ACTION: Urge your members of Congress to craft a moral budget: <http://capwiz.com/fconl/issues/alert/?alertid=8461016&type=CO>

No more "Enron bookkeeping"

As he has in previous years, the president refused to include in his budget estimates the real costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, preferring to fund these military operations largely through "emergency supplemental" spending requests. That is, he does not want that spending shown in his budget. Congress has already approved \$320 billion for these two wars, and the Pentagon announced this week it will seek an additional \$70 billion in funding for this year. The 2007 budget also includes \$50 billion in "bridge" financing

to cover ongoing costs in Iraq. Congress should condition any further funding for these wars on the U.S. taking clear steps toward the withdrawal of all U.S. military troops and bases from Iraq. Action: Urge your members of Congress to reject any further funding for war not tied to a strategy for withdrawal from Iraq.

Money for prevention, not war

The president's budget includes \$439 billion for the Pentagon, but only \$35 billion in funding for the State Department and foreign assistance programs. The president has again proposed spending \$3 billion on foreign aid channeled through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but he cut funding for traditional development assistance programs. Overall, spending on diplomacy and foreign aid is at about the same level as two years ago.

ACTION: Urge Congress to pull the purse strings on the administration's accelerating militarism and shift funds toward SMART Security approaches that focus on sensible, multilateral, U.S. responses to the escalating violence in the world. Urge your representative and senators to reject the president's budget and craft a federal government spending plan that recognizes that more military spending will not bring the U.S. more security at home or abroad.

Source: FCNL legislative action message 2/7/06, Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795 <http://www.fcnl.org> (800)630-1330

Economic recovery hard for some to see

Jan Richter

We expect recessions to hurt. We don't expect good times to hurt too.

But here we are in 2006, over four years into the economic recovery that began in late 2001, and average families working families in the low-wage workforce and middle-income families have not yet recovered the ground they lost.

At the same time that the uneven recovery has been taking its toll on ordinary and needy families, Congressional leaders and the Bush administration have continued to push for tax breaks and budget cuts that will affect low-income children.

An analysis by the Congressional Budget Office documents that the newly enacted 2001 and 2003 tax-cut laws actually gave the poorest one-fifth of the country, almost 23 million households, a tax hike in 2003 (<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/70xx/doc7000/12-29-FedTaxRates.pdf>), while those with low and modest incomes got refunds from \$100 to \$300. The real winners were the million households making over \$700,000 in after-tax income. They got an additional tax cut worth \$53,300 in 2003.

Congress voted on a major budget bill that cut funding for children's health care, child care assistance, student loans, and child support enforcement. Later in February Congress will vote on another major tax bill that will provide more tax breaks that primarily benefit only one out of a hundred taxpayers.

In the first years of the 21st century, wages have failed to keep pace with inflation or productivity and job growth has failed to keep pace with the growth of the population. This is an economic recovery that has worked very well for those at the top but it has not worked for the majority of families. It has been especially cruel to those with the least.

Profits are up but the wages and incomes of average Americans

are stagnant (<http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/pm110>) or down. In constant dollars, the average household income dropped 4 percent, from \$44,389 in 1999 to \$46,129 in 2004.

Rising housing, utility, and health care costs have also made it even harder for families to get by, let alone get ahead.

Since 2000 the percentage of people with employer-provided health insurance has been falling and family health care costs have risen over 40 percent (<http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/pm110>).

The share of families with children among people seeking food assistance in the nation's cities (<http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2005/HH2005FINAL.pdf>) steadily declined from 1990 to 2002, but began to rise again in 2002, from 48 percent to 54 percent in 2005.

While some cities have been successful in reducing homelessness among families with children (<http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2005/HH2005FINAL.pdf>), many families are feeling the squeeze of rising housing costs. In 2003, 60 percent of the nation's low-income children lived in families spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing (<http://www.nlihc.org/oor2005/>).

In the United States there is not a single rural county or metropolitan area where a worker with a full-time minimum-wage job can afford even a one-bedroom unit priced at the fair market rent (<http://www.nlihc.org/oor2005/>).

Teen births are down and births to unmarried mothers, divorces and the share of single-parent families have leveled off. Workforce participation among single parents has increased, but much of the growth has been in poverty-wage jobs.

And workers have increased productivity 13.5 percent since the start of the recovery in November, 2001 but the re-

wards from a more productive workforce have been going into corporate profits, not wages.

About 22 percent of corporate income is distributed as corporate profits in most recovery periods. In this economic recovery, corporate profits have taken 35 percent of the total income growth, shortchanging wage growth (<http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/pm110>).

For many low and moderate-income families, credit card debt, often incurred to cover living expenses during a layoff or medical expenses during an expensive illness, has become the de facto safety net, as unemployment insurance, health benefits and public programs have eroded (http://www.demos.org/pubs/psn_execsummary.pdf).

The level of household debt is also the highest ever measured mortgage and consumer debt is now 115% of after-tax income, twice the level of 30 years ago. Families are paying an all-time high of 13.6% of their after-tax income to pay off their debts and the personal savings rate is negative (<http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/pm110>) for the first time since World War II.

Speaking of debt, the 2005 bankruptcy law, which went into effect October 17, makes it harder for families suffering from economic hardships to write off their debt (<http://www.faireconomy.org/press/2005/MoralBankruptcy.html>), most of which is incurred after job loss, divorce and medical crises.

The average family is struggling to make it from paycheck to paycheck, delaying or not getting needed medical care, and falling deeper in debt to cover necessities. And when families struggle, so do kids.

Source: *Connect for Kids* 1/23/06
Jan Richter is the Advocacy Director for *Connect for Kids*.

Tobacco tax for better health

Throughout history, smoking has been promoted as a symbol of aesthetic value. The film industry used it to try to enhance an actor's image. Television commercials and billboards insisted one had to smoke a particular product to be "cool." This message became deeply imbedded in the pulse of society. Today, in spite of all the adverse health effects of smoking, thousands of people continue to smoke. The cigarette smoker not only causes great personal damage, but also damage to anyone that is close enough to breathe the smoke. Children in particular continue to be helpless victims. What are we as individuals and as a society willing to do to reverse this damaging trend? A new effort offers one solution.

A host of health care advocates have joined forces to pursue a tobacco tax initiative for the November 2006 ballot. The list of sponsors for the proposed ballot initiative include the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association of California, American Heart Association, The Children's Partnership, the California Hospital Association, the California Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians, California Emergency Nurses Association, PICO California (PACT locally), Children Now, California Primary Care Association, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Association of California Nurse Leaders, Emergency and Acute Care Medical Corporation, and

the California Association of Physician Groups.

The initiative will raise approximately \$2.27 billion annually and be distributed as follows:

Treatment—52.75% (\$1.1 billion) Includes hospital emergency care services (\$828 million), nursing education (\$100 million), community clinics (\$64 million), emergency physicians (\$72 million), Steve Thompson physician education fund (\$8 million), prostate cancer treatment (\$19 million), tobacco cessation services (\$19 million).

Prevention—42.25% (\$891 million) Includes children's health insurance (\$405 million), tobacco control, education and enforcement programs (\$194 million), cancer, heart and asthma prevention and control programs (\$292 million).

Research—5% (\$105 million) Includes tobacco-related disease and cancer research.

Funding for Proposition 10 programs (\$159 million) and estimated administrative costs (\$3 million).

Locally, PACT along with the other initiative sponsors will begin gathering signatures on the weekend of February 28, 2006 at various locations throughout Stockton. Signature gathering efforts will continue through April. Any organization, group or congregation interested in helping to gather signatures or would like more information should contact the PACT office at 466-7540.



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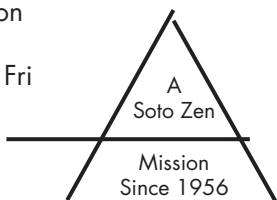
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Support CA clean money bill

In an historic vote, the California Clean Money bill passed through the Assembly by a vote of 46 to 24 on Jan 30. This Clean Money victory marked the first time a public financing bill has been passed by a floor vote of either house of the California Legislature. As reported by Capitol Notes: "AB 583, from Assemblymember Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley), would provide public funds to candidates for statewide office and the Legislature as long as they also collected a number of small dollar contributions. The amounts of public money vary by campaign (primary vs. general), by office sought, and by grassroots contributions received.

The lowest amount of taxpayer funds to be given out would be \$100,000 for a primary campaign in the Assembly; the highest amount would be \$10 million for a general election in a gubernatorial race. It also requires candidates who spend their own money to declare an amount when they register to run. The bill passed on a vote of 46-24.

"I think the voters would be more supportive of this legislative body," said Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez (D-LA), "if we made an effort to take money out of politics." The legislation received a boost in recent weeks when it was endorsed by the California Nurses Association,

fresh off their special election victory against the agenda of Governor Schwarzenegger. And the bill is similar in some respects to public financing laws already on the books in both Arizona and Maine.

ACTION: The measure now goes to the state Senate for policy and floor hearings. Contact your Senator and ask them to support the Senate version of AB583. If you would like to see the bill or learn more about Clean Money elections, visit our website at www.commoncause.org.

Source: California Common Cause release 1/31/06 <http://www.commoncause.org/CA>

Who's afraid of McCloskey?

Carl Pope

It hasn't been a good month for Congressman Richard Pombo, chair of the House Resources Committee.

First the *Los Angeles Times* broke the story on Pombo's spoiling evidence in a federal investigation of a major donor, Texas financier Charles Hurwitz, by subpoenaing evidence as a Congressman and then publishing it in the Congressional Record.

Pombo admitted the next day that he had undercut the investigation, saying he did so because the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation was a "corrupt agency." "There is no question that it was a 'hell to them' decision," Pombo admitted, and proudly announced: "I wouldn't hesitate for two seconds" to do it again. Pombo also defended his effort to help one of Jack Abramoff's clients, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, which gave Pombo \$20,000 after he arranged a meeting with the Department of the Interior.

The next day, Pombo showed up at the Ripon, California, Rotary Club, only to be confronted by intense questioning about his Abramoff connection. Apparently, Pombo had donated to charity the \$7,000 that he received directly from Abramoff but not the \$20,000 from Abramoff's clients. Pombo also had to donate \$2,000

to charity that he had received from Randy Cunningham, the former Congressman who recently pled guilty to soliciting and accepting bribes.

A few days later the *Contra Costa Times* broke the news that Pombo's chief of staff, Steve Ding, had violated House ethics rules by improperly mixing political work with his job as an official Congressional aide.

Even after this series of revelations, when House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi cited Pombo as an example of the "culture of corruption" in Washington, Pombo squeaked like stuck pig, accusing Pelosi of McCarthyism, to which the *Contra Costa Times* retorted: "the analogy leaks like a Delta levee."

But the worst news of the month for Pombo came when former Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, the maverick who challenged Richard Nixon on the Vietnam War, launched the first Earth Day, and helped write the same Endangered Species Act that Pombo is trying to gut, announced that he would take Pombo on in the Republican primary.

It will be a race to watch closely: McCloskey and Pombo are both boldly spoken—but there the resemblance ends. Pombo is crafty; McCloskey blunt. Pombo skates

close to the ethical line, or over it if he thinks the ice is solid enough; McCloskey is clean as a whistle. And McCloskey is much more the kind of Republican that thousands of the newer Republicans in Pombo's district are used to—mainstream, economically conservative, and socially liberal. He started giving Pombo fits the first day of his campaign this week, when he challenged him to twelve debates.

Pombo ducked. "We might as well debate (movie character) Austin Powers," Pombo's campaign manager Wayne Johnson replied "McCloskey's frame of reference is the '70s. That's not where the current debate is."

This may be Pombo's biggest problem—if Jack Abramoff and Randy Cunningham frame the "current debate," there is a real risk that most of the voters in Pombo's district might prefer the 1970's—when money laundering and corruption forced Richard Nixon from the White House, and bribery was still something to be ashamed off.

Political scientist Larry Sabato summarizes Pombo's peril: "Personally, I'd look at anything less than a two-to-one win (by Pombo) as a clear signal."

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carl-pope/whos-afraid-of-pete-mccl_b_14606.html 1/27/06

McCloskey: Follow the money



In a speech to the Lodi Rotary Club, former Congressman Pete McCloskey responded to press reports that incumbent Congressman Richard Pombo had raised \$1.2 million in campaign funds by year end 2005, as against McCloskey's zero.

"I intend to make Pombo's campaign funding sources and Mr. Pombo's actions in response to those sources a major issue in this campaign," McCloskey said.

He challenged Pombo to respond to the following facts:

1. Indian gaming lobbyist Jack Abramoff has recently pled guilty to felonious efforts to bribe Members of Congress.

2. Mr. Pombo and his PAC, "RICHPAC," have received more money from Abramoff, his wife and clients (\$54,500) than any other California congressperson.

3. Mr. Pombo has also received more money (over \$500,000) from Indian tribes than any other Member of the House.

4. One of Mr. Abramoff's most lucrative clients was the infamous clothing manufacturing industry in the Marianas Islands, a U.S. trust territory under the jurisdiction of Chairman Pombo's Committee on Resources. The industry, led by one Willie Tan,

paid Abramoff millions to fend off legislation which would reform applicable immigration and labor standards to the thousands of young women brought to the Marianas to work in the sweatshops there.

5. Working conditions had become so notoriously bad by 2000 that conservative Senator Frank Murkowski, (R. Alaska) was able to obtain unanimous Senate passage of a Marianas reform bill. The bill upon passage was referred to Pombo's Committee on Resources, then chaired by James Hansen (R-Utah) where it died.

6. Over a two year period Abramoff records reflect he met on at least two dozen occasions with Majority leader Tom Delay (R-Texas) seeking to prevent Marianas reform legislation and on other topics.

7. During an 8-month period in 2000, Mr. Pombo's press secretary and legislative assistant received at least a dozen tickets to Abramoff's private "skybox," on five separate occasions, the tickets being valued at \$1,000 each for inside-the-Beltway fundraising purposes.

8. On September 16, 2003, Abramoff's associate Kevin Ring, a former staff person for Congressman John Doolittle, gave Pombo's RICHPAC \$1,000. Mr. Ring also gave Mr. Pombo an additional \$3,000 between September 13, 2002, and February 18, 2005. In the fall of 2005, Mr. Ring took the 5th Amendment when questioned by Senator John McCain's Committee on Indian Affairs.

9. In January 2004, Mr. Pombo traveled to the Marianas, and on May 18, 2004, received nine campaign contributions totaling \$7,750 from the following residents of the Marianas connected with the garment industry or the government of the Marianas.

10. In January 2005, Mr. Pombo and the House Republican leadership changed the House Ethics Rules to prevent any further investigation of Tom Delay who had been three times admonished on the House Ethics Committee.

11. As of February 2006, Chairman Pombo has neither considered a bill to implement the Murkowski bill, nor has he responded to repeated requests to investigate the Abramoff influence on either the Marianas reform bill or the Indian casino industry.

"At the very least, Mr. Pombo should explain to his constituents why he has taken so much money from Mr. Abramoff, his clients, and the Indian tribes interested in casino gambling," McCloskey said.

Source: Yubanet report based on a McCloskey for Congress 2/7/06 release www.yubanet.com and www.PeteMcCloskey.com



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Thomas Abdul-Salaam has over 30 years as a management consultant & senior level management in human resources, finance, and economic development. Thomas has a MPA in Health Care Administration and Organizational Development. He is an Executive Coach, Speaker, Trainer, Mediator and TV host of *The Twin Servant of Peace Speaks* a weekly Television program dedicated to maximizing your potential. Thomas' philosophy is rooted in Appreciative Inquiry. It is the cooperative search for the best in people, organizations, and relationships. Thomas works with non-profit, public sector and business owners.

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Attorney General Gonzales defends illegal spying

Marjorie Cohn

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales was called before the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday to explain why George W. Bush's program of warrantless spying on Americans is lawful.

Before Gonzales began his testimony, the committee voted along party lines to dispense with the oath. Thus, if Gonzales were to lie, he could not be convicted or even charged with perjury, which requires the lie be made under oath. Why would the Republican senators insist that Gonzales not be sworn to tell the truth unless they expected him to lie?

Gonzales testified that Bush authorized his "Terrorist Surveillance Program" in late 2001, and has renewed it every 45 days since then. The program allows the National Security Agency to eavesdrop on telephone and computer communications of Americans in the United States if the NSA decides there is probable cause to believe that one party is a member or agent of al Qaeda or an affiliated terrorist organization, provided one party to the conversation is overseas.

The program is so highly classified that Gonzales refused to tell the senators how many US citizens' emails or phone calls had been intercepted, whether there have been abuses, and whether anyone had been disciplined for abuses.

Program designed to break law

Bush established this program to circumvent the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Congress enacted FISA in 1978 in response to the Nixon administration's abuses of national security wiretaps, which it used against its domestic opponents under the guise of conducting counterintelligence investigations. A senate committee chaired by Idaho Senator Frank Church documented the NSA's abuses that led to the enactment of FISA. FISA requires that the government convince a judge that there

is probable cause to believe the target of the surveillance is a foreign power or the agent of a foreign power. FISA specifically allows for warrantless wartime domestic electronic surveillance, but only for the first 15 days after Congress declares war.

By its express terms, FISA provides that FISA and specified provisions of the federal criminal code (which governs wiretaps for criminal investigation) are the "exclusive means by which electronic surveillance may be conducted."

FISA anticipates the need to act quickly by allowing a warrantless wiretap, provided the government applies for a FISA court order within 72 hours. However, Gonzales testified that the FISA procedure was "burdensome." He cited the paperwork as an impediment to the "nimble" gathering of intelligence. Although both the Department of Justice and the NSA have batteries of lawyers, Gonzales said we "can't afford to pose layers of lawyers" in the process.

Gonzales insisted that Bush's program complies with FISA because FISA exempts from criminal liability those who conduct electronic surveillance without following FISA procedures where such surveillance is "authorized by statute." Gonzales maintained that Congress's authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) passed shortly after the September 11, 2001, attacks was a statute that authorizes surveillance outside of FISA. He cited the Supreme Court's decision in Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, which said the AUMF allows for the detention of US citizen enemy combatants in spite of another statute governing detentions of US citizens.

However, the Hamdi Court determined that the AUMF permits the use of force only against people captured on the battlefield during the Afghanistan war. When the Bush administration asked former Senate majority leader Tom Daschle to include the words "inside the United States" in the AUMF, he refused,

and those words do not appear in the resolution.

Gonzales also said that the president's commander in chief powers allow warrantless wiretaps. But as Justice Jackson wrote in the seminal case of *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer*, the president's power is "at its lowest ebb" when he acts in defiance of "the expressed or implied will of Congress." Nowhere is Congress's intent expressed more clearly than in FISA, which comprises the exclusive scheme for electronic surveillance to gather intelligence.

Congress's October 2001 amendment of FISA in the USA Patriot Act underscores its intent that FISA remain the exclusive means for authorizing intelligence wiretapping. Gonzales was asked why the administration didn't approach Congress to amend FISA again if it needed more flexibility to fight terrorism. Gonzales said he opposes amending FISA, ironically maintaining it would interfere with the NSA program.

So, why break the law?

So why is the Bush administration loathe to obtain warrants to authorize wiretaps?

"The most logical reason for not getting a warrant is that the president's intelligence acolytes, who behave as though they graduated from the Laurel and Hardy school of data mining, have not been able to demonstrate that the people being spied upon are connected to Al Qaeda or any other terror organization," Bob Herbert wrote in yesterday's New York Times.

In other words, even the super-secret FISA court may be refusing to give Bush what he wants because he is overreaching.

A rare May 2002 opinion of the FISA court stated that in March of 2001, the government had reported misstatements in a series of FISA applications. The court modified then-Attorney General John Ashcroft's request for expanded intelligence-gathering procedures. In November 2002,

(continued next page)

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the FISA appeals court reversed the lower court and granted Ashcroft's request. Nonetheless, Bush continued his end-run around FISA with the NSA program.

Gonzales, who said the government still uses FISA in some cases, would not respond when Senator Arlen Specter asked him why he didn't take the broad NSA program to the FISA court for approval. Gonzales wouldn't say whether he tells the FISA court that information supporting a warrant request was gathered through the NSA program. And he refused to tell Specter whether the FISA court is declining to issue warrants because it is not satisfied with the NSA program.

In a February 2003 report on FISA implementation failures, the Senate Judiciary Committee uncovered several problems: "a misunderstanding of the rules governing the application procedure, varying interpretations of the law among key participants, and a break-down of communication among all those involved in the FISA application process. Most disturbing," the committee found, "is the lack of accountability that has permeated the entire application procedure."

The committee concluded that "key FBI agents and officials were inadequately trained in important aspects of not only FISA, but also fundamental aspects of criminal law."

Notably, the report determined that "in the time leading up to the 9/11 attacks, the FBI and DoJ had not devoted sufficient resources to implementing the FISA, so that long delays both crippled enforcement efforts and demoralized line agents."

At the end of the hearing, Gonzales let slip the real reason Bush set up a program to evade FISA. Gonzales said that if the government had to apply for a FISA warrant, it "can't begin surveillance based on a whim of someone at NSA."

After this, what else can Bush do?

Gonzales would not tell the senators whether Bush has authorized other secret programs besides the NSA spying. Gonzales refused to say whether the government could wiretap purely do-

mestic calls without a warrant, or whether he has the authority to search the first class mail of American citizens or to examine people's medical records. When Republican Senator John Cornyn asked him whether law enforcement could shoot down a plane with drugs, Gonzales said, "I'd have to think about that."

Gonzales declined to rule out the president's commander in chief power to torture, notwithstanding Congress's passage of the McCain Amendment on December 30. When Republican Senator Lindsey Graham asked him whether a Congressional statute that forbids abuse of prisoners could infringe on the president's commander in chief powers, Gonzales said, "It depends."

Graham was concerned that the "inherent authority of the president" theory that Gonzales set forth "could basically neuter the Congress and weaken the courts." Graham said he had "never envisioned that the AUMF would give the president carte blanche to go around FISA." Graham worried that it "would be harder for the next president to get a use of force resolution." He said, "When a nation is at war, you need checks and balances more than ever."

Bruce Fein, a former Justice Department official in the Reagan administration, predicted that Bush's theory could be used to authorize internment camps for groups of US citizens the president deems suspicious.

Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) said, "Our greatest fear is that



this president will go far beyond" the NSA program and "comb through thousands of ordinary Americans' email."

Although Gonzales continually waved the 9/11 flag in his defense of the NSA program, the Washington Post reported Sunday that nearly all of the thousands of Americans' calls that have been intercepted have revealed nothing pertinent to terrorism.

After the non-partisan Congressional Research Service issued a 44-page analysis that concluded the NSA program was unlawful, House Intelligence Committee chair Rep. Pete Hoekstra insisted on legislative research that is "free of partisan or other bias."

Former Colorado Senator Gary Hart, a member of the Church Committee in the 1970s, said, "What we're experiencing now, in my judgment, is a repeat of the Nixon years. Then it was justified by civil unrest and the Vietnam war. Now it's terrorism and the Iraq war."

When Senator Charles Grassley asked Gonzales if he thought it was incredible that they were having the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Gonzales replied, "I think we have a good story to tell."

Source: *truthout* / Perspective 2/7/06 Marjorie Cohn <http://truthout.org/contactmc.php> is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, President-elect of the National Lawyers Guild, and the US representative to the executive committee of the American Association of Jurists.

Senators response to domestic spying

"The administration cannot unilaterally assume that they have the answers to get around or go over a law.... The balance must be preserved between the executive branch and the legislature."
—Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE)

When I voted for [the authorization of the use of military force], I never envisioned that I was giving the president or any other president the ability to go around FISA carte blanche."
—Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

"We make the laws. If you believe you need new laws, then come and tell us."
—Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

These senators, and several others, were reacting this week to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' defense of the president's decision to authorize a secret domestic spying program by the National Security Agency (NSA).

Under the secret domestic spying program, the NSA has been monitoring, without court approval, thousands of e-mails and phone calls involving people in the U.S. for at least the past four years. This domestic surveillance program is so secret that on Monday the attorney general refused even to provide the date when the president first authorized it. Most troubling though is the fact that the program clearly violates at least one federal law, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

Asked by senators why the administration did not seek congressional approval for this program, Gonzales responded, "The short answer is that we didn't think we needed to, quite frankly." The administration argues that the congressional resolution authorizing the use of military force to chase down the perpetrators of the attacks of September 11, 2001 provides the legal basis for ignoring federal laws and authorizing the covert surveillance program.

The president also claims that his inherent authority as Commander-In-Chief to fight

potential enemies of the U.S. as he sees fit provides another legal basis for his actions.

Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee, said simply that this argument "is not sound." Sen. Lindsey Graham agreed, "In all honesty, Mr. Attorney General, the argument that you're making is very dangerous."

These senators were joined in their pointed questioning of the attorney general by Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH), Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS), and all Democratic members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Because Republicans hold a majority in both chambers of Congress and thus on all congressional committees, these Republican senators will be critical to any effort to challenge the president's failure to uphold the constitutional balance of powers and his refusal to consult Congress and the courts in devising and implementing this domestic surveillance program.

The president believes he is above the law. Members of Congress should be encouraged to challenge the legal basis for any domestic spying program and to defend the separation of powers that is an essential component of our democracy.

FCNL has collected a number of resources on the NSA program, the expansion of domestic surveillance programs since September 11, 2001, and the broader constitutional issues at the heart of this debate. Follow this link for further readings on the subject. http://www.fcnl.org/civil_liberties/nsa_spying106.htm

Source: FCNL release 2/9/06 Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795 <http://www.fcnl.org> (800)630-1330



Justice Alito confirmed ...now what

Today, pro-choice Americans are faced with the greatest threat to our right to choose—anti-choice control of the U.S. Congress and an anti-choice President. It is time to make our voices heard!

Help women get birth control at Wal-Mart's pharmacies

Wal-Mart refuses to stock the "morning-after" pill—a back-up birth control option that prevents unintended pregnancy if taken soon after sex. But the company has told the media that it is giving its policy "a lot of thought." You have a real opportunity to encourage Wal-Mart to do the right thing and change its policy. Call Wal-Mart on their toll-free line at 1-800-WAL-MART (1-800-925-6278).

Thank your senator for opposing Alito

With the confirmation of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, President Bush and his anti-choice allies now have enough votes on the Court to further dismantle a woman's right to choose. Despite this loss, we hope you take a moment to thank those senators who stood up for the values of privacy and freedom by voting against Bush's divisive nominee.

Please thank our senators for voting against Alito. Both Senators Boxer and Feinstein acted in favor of the aborted filibuster opposing Alito and voted against Alito on the floor. Thanks to activists like you, we've already generated nearly 200,000 petitions, letters, and phone calls to the Senate. By taking action today, you'll help show that pro-choice Americans firmly oppose President Bush's plan to pack the Supreme Court with anti-choice justices.

Help Pass the Plan B Act

We've waited long enough. It's time to put an end to the Food and Drug Administration's delay on making the morning-after pill available over the counter.

Today, urge your lawmakers to support a new bill called the "Plan B for Plan B Act." The legislation would give the FDA 30 days to approve or deny the application for the "morning-after pill" Plan B®. If the agency continues to drag its feet, the application is assumed to be approved—and women will finally have easier access to this important means of preventing unintended pregnancy.

A report from the independent Government Accountability Office confirms that political figures played a role in blocking Plan B®'s application. It should

not take an act of Congress to get a federal agency to do its job, but that's what it's come to with the Bush administration in charge. Don't let women wait one more day. Take action to urge your representative to support the "Plan B for Plan B Act."

Urge the FDA to improve access to the morning-after pill

American women have waited more than two years for the FDA to decide whether women can purchase the morning-after pill over the counter. The Bush administration explicitly promised the U.S. Senate that the FDA would stop dragging its feet and issue a decision by September 1.

By constantly delaying the decision, Bush's FDA is allowing a small number of anti-birth control zealots to prescribe policy for women's birth control options. Help us tell the FDA that Americans don't appreciate anti-choice politics getting in the way of sound science and women's access to birth control. Sign our petition to the FDA today by going to the website listed below.

For more information on these campaigns and more, go to <http://prochoiceaction.org/>

Source: <http://prochoiceaction.org/> 2/12/06

Birth control Day of Action

• 98% of American women have used a form of birth control during their reproductive lives.

• 98% is an overwhelming majority.

• 98% is our call to national leaders: Stop blocking women's access to birth control.

Americans are tired of attacks on abortion. We should all be working together to prevent unintended pregnancy and reduce the need for abortion in the first place. This is the message we're sending to national and state leaders in the next phase of our Prevention First campaign: A national "Challenge for Common Ground" to support access to birth control on March 7. We want you to be a part of this Day of Action.

On March 7 we want you to be a part of NARAL Pro-Choice America's Prevention First national Day of Action that calls on state and federal leaders to support women's access to birth control.

Why a campaign to promote responsible family planning?

Because we believe that women should be empowered to prevent unintended pregnancy, not punished for being responsible. Instead of divisive attacks on women's reproductive freedom, we are asking for lawmakers to unify behind common-sense measures to prevent unintended pregnancy and reduce the need for abortion.

The hypocrisy of taking away a woman's right to choose while also taking away her ability to prevent pregnancy is outrageous. Pharmacists are refusing to fill prescriptions for birth control. Unproven and scientifically inaccurate "abstinence-only" programs are being forced on our kids by the Bush administration. And politically motivated delays at the FDA are blocking over-the-counter access to the "morning-after" pill.

With an overwhelming majority of the American public on our side, we can do more than just shut down these anti-birth-control measures. We can make real progress for women's access to contraception.

Here's what we're asking our leaders to do through our national Day of Action:

1. Pass the Real Education About Life Act ("REAL": S.368/H.R.2553) to set up the first-ever federal sex-education program for young people.

2. Pass the Access to Legal Pharmaceuticals Act ("ALPhA": S.809/H.R.1652) to ensure that a woman receives her prescription contraception, in spite of rogue pharmacists who want to give them lectures instead.

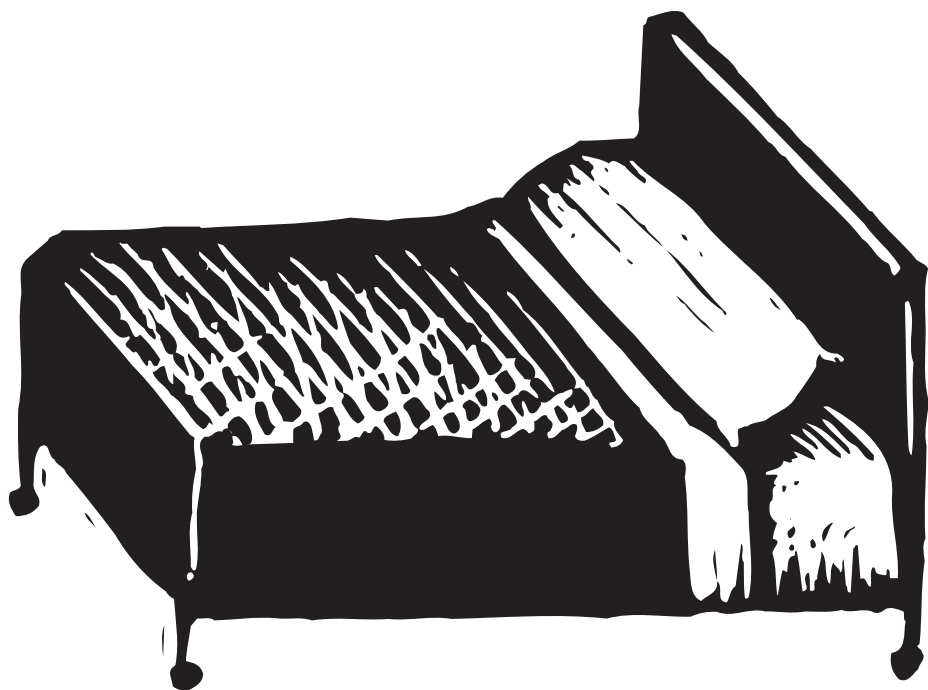
3. Pass the Equity in Prescription Insurance Contraceptive Coverage Act ("EPICC": S.1214/H.R.4651) to ensure that prescription birth control is covered equally with other prescription drugs.

4. Pass the Compassionate Assistance for Rape Emergencies Act ("CARE": S.1264/H.R.2928) to ensure that survivors of sexual assault are offered emergency contraception in the emergency room.

5. Pass the Prevention First Act (S.20/H.R. 1709) to increase funds for family-planning services, ensure contraceptive equity in health-insurance plans, and improve women's access to emergency contraception, among other things.

ACTION: This is the plan. Now we want you to be a part of this call to our country's leaders. 1) Go to http://prochoiceaction.org/campaign/natl_prev1st_021006/ for more information. 2) Call your representative to support the bills listed above. 3) And organize locally. If we don't mobilize to maintain our democracy, we will lose it.

Source: NARAL release 2/10/06
2006 NARAL Pro-Choice America,
1156 15th Street NW, Washington,
D.C. 20005



Polls show many Americans simply dumber than Bush

Paul Craig Roberts

Two recent polls, a *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll and a *New York Times*/CBS News poll, indicate why Bush is getting away with impeachable offenses. Half of the US population is incapable of acquiring, processing and understanding information. Much of the problem is the media itself, which serves as a disinformation agency for the Bush administration. Fox "News" and right-wing talk radio are the worst, but with propagandistic outlets setting the standard for truth and patriotism, all of the media is affected to some degree.

Despite the media's failure, about half the population has managed to discern that the US invasion of Iraq has not made them safer and that the Bush administration's assault on civil liberties is not a necessary component of the war on terror. The problem, thus, lies with the absence of due diligence on the part of the other half of the population.

Consider the *New York Times*/CBS poll. Sixty-four percent of the respondents have concerns about losing civil liberties as a result of anti-terrorism measures put in place by President Bush. Yet, 53 percent approve of spying without obtaining court warrants "in order to reduce the threat of terrorism."

Why does any American think that spying without a warrant has any more effect in reducing the threat of terrorism than spying with a warrant? The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which Bush is disobeying, requires the executive to obtain from a secret panel of federal judges a warrant for spying on Americans. The purpose of the law is to prevent a president from spying for partisan political reasons. The law permits the president to spy first (for 72 hours) and then come to the court for permission. As the court meets in secret, spying without a warrant is no more effective in reducing the threat of terrorism than spying with a warrant.

Instead of explaining this basic truth, the media has played along with the Bush administration and

formulated the question as a trade-off between civil liberties and protection from terrorists. This formulation is false and nonsensical.

Why does the media enable the Bush administration to escape accountability for illegal behavior by putting false and misleading choices before the people?

The LA Times/Bloomberg poll has equally striking anomalies. Only 43 percent said they approved of Bush's performance as president. But a majority believe Bush's policies have made the US more secure.

It is extraordinary that anyone would think Americans are safer as a result of Bush invading two Muslim countries and constantly threatening two more with military attack. The invasions and threats have caused a dramatic swing in Muslim sentiment away from the US. Prior to Bush's invasion of Iraq, a large majority of Muslims had a favorable opinion of America. Now only about 5 percent do.

A number of US commanders in Iraq and many Middle East experts have told the American public that the three year-old war in Iraq is serving both to recruit and to train terrorists for al Qaeda, which has grown many times its former size. Moreover, the US military has concluded that al Qaeda has succeeded in having its members elected to the new Iraqi government.

We have seen similar developments both in Egypt and in Pakistan. In the recent Egyptian elections, the radical Muslim Brotherhood, despite being suppressed by the Egyptian government, won a large number of seats. In Pakistan elements friendly or neutral toward al Qaeda control about half of the government. In Iraq, Bush's invasion has replaced secular Sunnis with Islamist Shia allied with Iran.

And now with the triumph of Hamas in the Palestinian election, we see the total failure of Bush's Middle Eastern policy. Bush has succeeded in displacing secular moderates from Middle Eastern governments and replacing them

with Islamic extremists. It boggles the mind that this disastrous result makes Americans feel safer!

What does it say for democracy that half of the American population is unable to draw a rational conclusion from unambiguous facts? Americans share this disability with the Bush administration.

According to news reports, the Bush administration is stunned by the election victory of the radical Islamist Hamas Party, which swept the US-financed Fatah Party from office. Why is the Bush administration astonished?

The Bush administration is astonished because it stupidly believes that hundreds of millions of Muslims should be grateful that the US has interfered in their internal affairs for 60 years, setting up colonies and puppet rulers to suppress their aspirations and to achieve, instead, purposes of the US government.

Americans need desperately to understand that 95 percent of all Muslim terrorists in the world were created in the past three years by Bush's invasion of Iraq.

Americans need desperately to comprehend that if Bush attacks Iran and Syria, as he intends, terrorism will explode, and American civil liberties will disappear into a thirty year war that will bankrupt the United States.

The total lack of rationality and competence in the White House and the inability of half of the US population to acquire and understand information are far larger threats to Americans than terrorism. America has become a rogue nation, flying blind, guided only by ignorance and hubris. A terrible catastrophe awaits.

Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal editorial page and Contributing Editor of National Review.

Source: *Information Clearinghouse article 1/29/06* <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article11696.htm>



Is Bush lying? check his lips

Early February, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman admitted that when President Bush said during his State of the Union address that he had a plan to cut America's dependence on Middle East oil by 75 percent by 2025, he didn't really mean it...literally.

Here are some other statements by Bush that are not to be taken literally:

Bush, 4/20/04:

"Now, by the way, any time you hear the United States government talking about wiretap, it requires—a wiretap requires a court order. Nothing has changed, by the way. When we're talking about chasing down terrorists, we're talking about getting a court order before we do so."

Bush, 6/10/04

Q: Given—given recent developments in the CIA leak case, particularly Vice President Cheney's discussions with the investigators, do you still stand by what you said several months ago, a suggestion that it might be difficult to identify anybody who leaked the agent's name?

Bush: That's up to—

Q: And, and, do you stand by your pledge to fire anyone found to have done so?

Bush: Yes.

Bush, 9/15/05:

"And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes, to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives."

Bush, 1/11/06:

"[W]hen an American President says something, he better mean it...in order to be able to have credibility in this world, when we speak, we better mean what we say."

So, you're on notice: don't take Bush at his word. He may just be using words as a metaphor to represent something completely different.

Source: <http://thinkprogress.org/2006/02/02/dont-take-bush-literally/2/2/06>

Help Rosemarie Lane community garden grow

Beth Luna

Last year, when Rev. Bob Hailey said he wished that the vacant land surrounding his church be put to good use, Adrian Nickols was among those who heard him. He recognized the need for a community garden and suggested this to Rev. Hailey. With his approval, he did the basic work of promotion and helped bring direction to the garden project.

In his words, "We have created a large community garden to grow food for the homeless and others in need." He thought ahead. "There will be workshops, a demonstration garden and the opening of the land for individuals and families wanting a garden plot."

Among those who were a driving force, during its first year ('05) were Stephanie Omste and Ray Ledesma. As a team, they now formed the basic framework for the '06 growing season.

Stephanie is a teacher at One Achievement alternative school through the San Joaquin County Office of Education. She says, "Ray Ledesma has been invaluable in his partnership with our school. His expertise has allowed the Community Garden to be a true service and learning activ-



looks good. I take great satisfaction in providing my students with a 'hands on' activity that allows them to participate and to maintain positive community relations. It provides a sense of community for my class."

The great need now, for this season, is more garden tools. How can the students and other volunteers work without hoes, rakes, shovels, or spades? Also a rototiller, either provided on loan or as a gift, would be a great help. On Saturdays, Ray Ledesma is there to gratefully receive. Also, that is the day to sign up for a garden plot. This community garden has no steady source of financial support and depends on the generosity of those who love

an example of this - when he met and married Karen, a volunteer gardener. Now they are expecting a junior gardener. Roxanne adds her comments. "I would like to see the community garden become a place where people like to spend time; a gathering place to visit and feel at ease."

People have asked: How does the church congregation feel about this? Do they go to work in the garden too? Rev. Haley apologizes for them. He says, "Most of the parish are in their upper years or are disabled so they can't do the physical part." He adds, "But they took up an offering to help." Beverly Cisneros and others urge that it is important to get more people involved. Everyone agrees that a community garden is a great idea.

Into year two

Now, the Garden is starting its second season; how can we do it better? The vision is to open the land to many small plots, available to those who love gardening and to save a portion of it to supply the needy and those who are disabled. Adrian Nickols has guided the Rosemarie Lane Community Garden from its inception. He started with a field of weeds. At the end of the season there was corn, tomatoes, peppers and beans—a place to be proud of. For the coming year, he would like to find some one else to take his place because his schedule is over-flowing. If you are interested, please call the Peace and Justice Center at 467-4455. We will get you in contact with the Garden Project.



ity for my students. My students benefit from his knowledge and the garden benefits from my student's enthusiasm and dedication." There are 15 to 20 students in this class. "I am not certain the garden would have been so well maintained last year without our partnership."

She says, "We do plan to continue with the garden through the next academic year. The future

the land. As Rev. Bob Haley says, "We are stewards of the land."

Joy, one of our volunteers, suggested that we seek a sponsor for the garden. Another idea was to qualify for a grant. However, as she says, she is full of ideas with no one to implement them. Rosemary Atkinson says, "I'd like to see the garden bring people together who would not know each other." Adrian, himself, is

Keep our voice in enviro decisions

The National Environmental Policy Act is a landmark environmental law that has protected America's natural heritage for more than 30 years. NEPA requires federal agencies to study and disclose the environmental effects of their actions and to review major projects for potential environmental and public health impacts. The law also ensures that the public is included in decisions concerning proposed federal projects. When enforced, NEPA protects local communities and promotes sound, inclusive decisionmaking.

As part of the effort to undercut NEPA, a House Resources Committee task force issued a draft report late last year—without input from Democratic task force members—calling for fundamental changes to the law that could easily be used as a springboard for anti-NEPA legislation this spring. Specifically, the report recommends restricting the public's ability to participate in and challenge an agency's decisionmaking process, and requiring that "reasonable alternatives" to federal projects be supported by sizable studies. Both of these provisions would tilt the scale in favor of industry over the American public.

Action: While the public comment period expired February 6, you can show your support for NEPA by contacting Rep. Pombo, urging him to reconsider the draft report's recommendations. Rep. Pombo as House Resource Committee Chair is a committee member and as such, has considerable power in this process.

The most important letter—yours

Subject: Don't weaken NEPA
Dear Rep. Pombo;

I am very concerned that the recommendations made by the National Environmental Policy Act Task Force would weaken NEPA in profound and fundamental ways. NEPA is the best tool Americans have to learn how federal projects may affect

them. It also is the best tool the federal government has to examine proposed projects and obtain public input. By making sure that the public is informed and that alternatives are considered, NEPA has stopped some unwise and harmful projects and made countless projects better.

Even though the draft report acknowledges that public participation is fundamental to NEPA's success, the task force has made several recommendations that would dramatically limit public involvement in the NEPA process. Specifically the recommendations would 1) add mandatory timelines for the completion of NEPA documentation and only allow for occasional extensions; 2) place significant restrictions on a citizen's ability to participate in the public process and to challenge an agency's decisionmaking; and 3) require that "reasonable alternatives," including those proposed by individual citizens or community groups, be supported by "feasibility and engineering studies," which could require significant technical and financial resources.

I urge you to reject any recommendations to amend NEPA and embark on drastic regulatory changes that would reduce public participation. Thoughtful analysis and review of NEPA have long recognized a need, however, to improve NEPA implementation. Requiring monitoring of project impacts, improving management oversight and providing agency staff with adequate training and resources are all good ideas that should be considered and would not require amending NEPA or its regulations.

I strongly urge you and the task force to reconsider its recommendations.

Sincerely,

Source: NRDC Action alert 1/26/06
Natural Resources Defense Council,
40 West 20th St, NY, NY 10011 <http://www.nrdc.org>



US oil development ignores global warming danger

In the first phase of a planning process for the development of low quality fossil fuels in the western United States which ended Feb 1, the Bush administration has entirely omitted consideration of global warming. "The proposal to open huge areas of public land in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming to tar sands and oil shale development would create vast quantities of new greenhouse gas pollution and destroy biologically and recreationally important areas," said Kassie Siegel, Climate, Air and Energy Program Director for the Center for Biological Diversity. "It is scandalous that that the Bush administration is attempting to omit global warming from the list of issues under consideration."

The development of oil shale and tar sands in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming was fast-tracked by the Oil Shale, Tar Sands, and Other Strategic Unconventional Fuels Act of 2005 (Section 369(d)(2) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005), which requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the agency charged with management of the public lands affected, to complete a draft environmental impact statement within 18 months and a final regulation establishing a leasing program for tar sands and oil shale within six months thereafter. The law does not require that the leasing program include any particular area or amount of land or resources.

Oil production from tar sands and oil shale involves open pit mining over large areas and is one of the most environmentally destructive forms of energy production in existence today. The areas proposed for oil shale development in the Piceance and Washakie Basins in Colorado, the Uintah Basin in Utah, and the Green River and Washakie Basins in Wyoming, and the areas proposed for tar sands development on the Colorado Plateau in Utah are biologically-rich and diverse areas with extraordinary wilderness and recreation value. Endangered, threatened and rare species in the planning

area include the bald eagle, the Colorado pike minnow, the boreal toad, and plants including the Dudley Bluffs bladderpod and twinpod and the parachute beardtongue. Numerous wilderness study areas and "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" also occur in the planning areas.

After open-pit strip mining, extraction of low-quality crude oil from oil shale and tar sands requires extraordinary amounts of energy, heat and water, resulting in further impacts to water quality and supply as

well as extra energy use and air pollution. Because of this resource-intensive process, the greenhouse gas emissions from tar sands production are three times that of conventional oil production. Oil shale production, which is still largely experimental, may be even more energy intensive.

Global warming not considered

February's comment deadline marks the close of the first phase of a required environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in which the government must disclose and analyze the full environmental impacts of the proposed development. The BLM published in December 2005 a list of major issues it planned to consider and solicited public comment. Greenhouse gas emissions and global warming were conspicuously absent from the list of issues proposed for consideration, despite the fact that tar sands and oil shale production would create more greenhouse gas pollution than nearly any other type of energy production. The omission is typical of the Bush administration's tactics of denying and suppressing the best available scientific information on climate change.

Global warming is accelerating much more rapidly than projected even just a few years ago. Increased intensity of hurricanes battering the United States, more extreme and prolonged heat waves which caused thousands

of deaths in Europe, and more pronounced droughts are a few of the many impacts attributed to global warming. According to the World Health Organization, global warming is already causing 154,000 deaths per year.

Global warming is emerging as one of the leading threats to all species worldwide. This month, a study published in the preeminent scientific journal *Nature* linked the extinction of dozens of amphibian species in Central and South America to global warming. Other researchers have estimated that up to one third of the species included in a study of 20 percent of the world's surface area may be committed to extinction because of global warming by the year 2050.

The Arctic has experienced global warming particularly early and intensely, where average winter temperatures have already increased by 10 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas, and are projected to rise by 18 degrees Fahrenheit or more by the end of this century. The Arctic sea ice is rapidly melting away, and ice-dependent species like the polar bear are expected to become extinct if greenhouse gas emissions are not greatly reduced.

"Fast-tracking the development of low quality oil shale and tar sands which create three times or more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional oil development is near the top of a long list of irrational, dangerous, and irresponsible energy and global warming policies from the Bush administration in 2005," said Siegel. "Development of oil shale and tar sands is not part of a climate-safe future for the United States or the world."

Source: Center for Biological Diversity release 2/1/06 www.biologicaldiversity.org The Center for Biological Diversity is non-profit organization dedicated to protecting imperiled species and their habitats by combining scientific research, public organizing, and advocacy.

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Another world is possible

The World Social Forum

Mike Rhodes

Under the unifying slogan of "Another World is Possible," tens of thousands of participants came to the World Social Forum (WSF) in Venezuela to build a powerful movement against neoliberalism, war, and imperialism. Having the WSF in Venezuela this year highlighted the achievements and the advances made by the progressive movement in South America. With left, indigenous, or socialist leaders elected in Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina, there is a great deal of enthusiasm and hopefulness about this region's ability to determine its own destiny.

The WSF is organized in a decentralized format that encourages grassroots participation. This is accomplished through a series of workshops and forums that bring together political activists from throughout the world to give them the opportunity to share experiences and build social networks. Each day, during the six days of activities (January 24-29, 2006), there were hundreds of forums, discussions, and meetings to choose from.

The opening event at this year's WSF was a march with over 60,000 participants demonstrating against war and imperialism. There were large delegations from all over South America - including Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, and of course Venezuela.

While the majority of participants at this year's WSF were from South America, there were a substantial number of US citizens participating. San Francisco-based Global Exchange, for example, has a delegation of about 200. Representatives and delegations from US labor unions, anti-war, and faith based groups were at the march and participated at the forum.

Several hundred Cubans were at the front of the march, chanting in solidarity with the WSF theme that another world is possible. Representatives from Puerto Rico, Haiti, Canada, and

Australia also had a presence at the march. In addition to the delegates who identified with their country of origin at the march, many participants marched behind the banners of grassroots organizations working on human rights issues, environmental justice, or women's rights.

Origins

The WSF was set up as the grassroots alternative to the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Davos, Switzerland by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. While the WSF is not intended to eliminate the street demonstrations that have confronted the WEF, it does provide a an opportunity for grassroots activists to envision and build a new future which is an alternative to the global domination of US imperialism and corporate interests. The regional WSF in Caracas was one of three being held throughout the world. The others are being held in Pakistan and Mali.

Venezuela president Hugo Chavez, speaking at a large stadium to WSF participants, spoke about the Bolivarian revolution which is uniting the countries in South America into an economic/political block that can better represent the interest of this region's people. He also addressed the problem of cultural and informational domination by corporate control of the mass media. Chavez said that a new television network (Telesur), independent of corporate interests, has been established and is now broadcasting throughout the region. He called on leaders in the region to establish an economic block that will be a counterbalance to U.S. corporate economic interests....

The word used time and again by US participants to describe the experience at this year's WSF is "hope." The opportunity to meet with other participants from 140 countries around the world reinforced the forum's theme that Another World is Possible. Laura Wells, who is a Green Party candidate for Controller in California (see: <http://www.laurawells.org/>), saw hope and was inspired by the fact that Venezuela used to be a two party system, but now Hugo Chavez, who describes himself as a socialist, and is outside of the two party system, is president. Wells said "a series of incidents happened in this country that led to a radical change in government." She believes that conditions can change in the United States, as a result of one crisis or another, and that we need to be ready to seize the opportunity. Building the Green Party and running for Controller in this years election, when viewed in the context of the huge changes taking place in Venezuela and South America, is a strategy that makes more sense to her now than ever before.

The WSF has the ability to bring progressives from social and political movements, intellectuals, and grassroots activists from all over the world to come together as an alternative to globalization and the neoliberal agenda. The question is—can the WSF shift gears and move the left to develop a unified strategy and tactics that will counter this system which has created so much inequality, poverty, and war? Perhaps the better question is—does the WSF even want to move beyond providing an opportunity for people to come together to discuss issues and network?

If the WSF continues to bring 100,000 people together each year and give them hope and inspiration, that is a good thing. It is unknowable whether attempting to develop a strategy to counter US imperialism would improve the WSF or if the effort would be divisive and lead to the organizations ruin. What we do know is that the next WSF will be held in January 2007 in Kenya. There is also talk about having a regional WSF in the United States.

For more information about the World Social Forum, see www.forumsocialmundial.org.br



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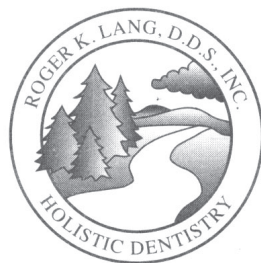


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Bechtel v. Bolivia: the people win

The Cochabamba water revolt — which began exactly six years ago this month — ended January 19 when Bechtel, one of the world's most powerful corporations, formally abandoned its legal effort to take \$50 million from the Bolivian people. Bechtel made that demand before a secretive trade court operated by the World Bank, the same institution that coerced Bolivia to privatize the water to begin with. Faced with protests, barages of e-mails, visits to their homes, and years of damaging press, Bechtel executives finally decided to surrender, walking away with a token payment equal to thirty cents. That retreat sets a huge global precedent.

The Cochabamba Water Revolt

In January 2000 the people of Cochabamba, Bolivia woke up one morning to discover that their public water system had been taken over by a mysterious new private company, Aguas del Tunari. The World Bank had coerced Bolivia to privatize its water, as a condition of further aid. The new company, controlled by Bechtel, the California engineering giant, announced its arrival with a huge overnight increase in local water bills. Water rates leapt by an average of more than fifty percent, and in some cases much higher. Bechtel and its Spanish co-investor, Abengoa, priced water beyond what many families here could afford.

The people demanded that the rate hikes be permanently reversed. The Bolivian government refused. Then the people demanded that the company's contract be canceled. The government sent out police and soldiers to take control of the city and declared a state martial law.

In the face of beatings, of leaders being taken from their houses in the middle of the night, of a 17-year-old boy being shot and killed by the army — in the face of it all, the people did not back down. In April of 2000 Bechtel's company was forced to leave and the people won back control of their water.

Bechtel Fights Back

Eighteen months later Bechtel and Abengoa sought revenge, filing a \$50 million legal action against Bolivia in the World Bank's trade court — the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). It was a legal forum tailor-made for Bechtel. The people of Cochabamba would be tried in Washington, in English, and in a process so secret that no member of the public or press would be allowed to know when the tribunal met, who testified before it, or what they said. Bechtel claimed it was suing for both its losses and the profits it wasn't allowed to make. Records would later show that Bechtel and its associates had spent less than \$1 million in Bolivia.

The People vs. Bechtel

What Bechtel did not count on was the firestorm of public protest that it would face.

More than 300 organizations from 43 countries joined in a citizens petition to the World Bank demanding that the case be opened to public scrutiny and participation. Activists in Washington DC protested at the home of the head of Bechtel's water company. Hundreds of articles and dozens of documentaries were published and produced worldwide, making Bechtel and its Bolivian water takeover a poster child of corporate greed and abuse.

Bechtel — a corporation so powerful that it won a billion-dollar, no-bid Bush administration contract to rebuild Iraq — found it all more than even it could take. Last June, Bechtel and its associates raised the white flag and began negotiating a deal to drop their case — for a token payment of two bolivianos (thirty cents). Sources close to the negotiations say that Bechtel's CEO, Riley Bechtel, personally intervened to bring the case to and end, weary of the ongoing damage to the corporation's reputation. Bechtel officials flew to Bolivia this week to sign the surrender and collect their two coins.

Bechtel's surrender

Bechtel's surrender settlement is historic. The World Bank's system of closed-door trade courts has received more than 200 cases like Bechtel's. The WTO and NAFTA trade courts have their own pile of corporate cases. In no other, however, has a major corporation backed down as a result of public pressure.

The public victory over Bechtel is a direct hit against the ever-tightening spider web of global trade rules. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, coerce poor countries into privatization arrangements as a condition of aid. Corrupt and incompetent governments sit down behind closed doors with multinational corporations and cut bad deals. A year later, or a decade later, the people finally realize what has happened. They demand a reversal and the companies warn, "Mess with the deal and we will take you to court — and we will win."

One thing that corporations know how to do well is math. When Bechtel and its associates did the math on Cochabamba they concluded that the cost to the company's public reputation was greater than whatever payment they hoped to take from the pockets of Bolivia's poor. Once again, it is clear that the economic rules of the game can be changed. Six years ago the people of Cochabamba won their revolt over water with courage and commitment. Today we have all won the water revolt's second and final round, with a persistence that was truly global and that could not be stopped. Another world is indeed possible.

For more information on the Cochabamba Water Revolt visit The Democracy Center's Web site section dedicated to it: <http://democracyctr.org/bechtel/>.

Source: *The Democracy Center release 1/19/06 The Democracy Center, P.O. Box 22157 San Francisco, CA 94122* <http://www.democracyctr.org>



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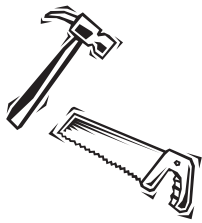
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Dealing with wolves

John Morearty

In the Pace e Bene nonviolence training we heard the tale of Saint Francis of Assisi and the Wolf of Gubbio. It may well be a true story; at least the people in the town of Gubbio in central Italy believe it, as they heard it from their grandparents—they are leaders in the European peace movement, and in the 1970s declared their town a nuclear free zone. Indeed, back in 1873 a crypt was unearthed in Gubbio with the bones of a large wolf.

Here's the way I tell the story.

It seems that back in the time of Francis, the early 1200s, Gubbio was assailed by a most ferocious wolf. He lived in the nearby forest, perhaps his habitat had been reduced by the clearing of woodlands so he had less wild game to eat, but in any case he began to emerge and attack the people as they went out to work their fields. He even devoured their children. The farmers took to carrying swords and spears, as if to war. It was terrible.

One day Francis came by, and people clustered around him.

"Oh, Francis, please help us! They say you have a way with animals—can you save us from this dreadful wolf?"

Francis said he'd see what he could do, and he and brother Bernard went out to the fields.

"Aren't you taking weapons to defend yourselves? The wolf will eat you!" cried the people.

"No, we don't do that," said Francis.

Sure enough, the wolf came bounding out of the forest, jaws a-dripping.

"Stop, brother wolf!" said Francis, making a bold sign of the cross. "Sit down here, I want to talk with you." The wolf sat down.

"Now, brother wolf, I must tell you, what you have been doing is terrible. It is simply wrong. You have been attacking the people of the town, even though they have

done you no harm. You have even—brother wolf, you know it is true—you have even eaten some of their children."

The wolf licked his chops, remembering. They were such tasty little children!

"No, brother wolf! Just think! What if those children had been your very own cubs, how would you feel? You know how you and your mate cared for your cubs, you remember how your own parents cared for you when you were a cub. Just consider how those farmers must feel!"

The wolf remembered, and hung his head.

"But brother wolf," Francis went on gently, "I think I understand how you feel. I think I know why you did these things."

The wolf looked up at him.

"It's because you were hungry, isn't it? You were just so hungry! Hungry and desperate, you needed food, and so?"

The wolf perked up his ears and began thumping his tail on the ground. This human understood!

"Brother wolf, I'd like to propose a solution here which will make everyone happy. (In centuries to come, they would call it win-win.) If you will promise not to harm the people of Gubbio any more, I will ask them to feed you plenty of food, every single day. Will you do that?"

The wolf's eyes widened with joy, he stood up, wagged his tail vigorously, and timidly licked Francis' hand. "Come on, brother wolf!"

Francis and the wolf headed back to town. When the people saw them coming they covered back; there is a wonderful medieval painting which shows Francis outside the walls of the town, the wolf tamely bowing to him, and the people standing back in a semi-circle, a safe fifty yards away.

"Good people," said Francis, "you can see that brother wolf

and I have practiced empathy, we have successfully engaged in nonviolent conflict resolution, and have cultivated mutual compassion like bodhisattvas. We have a proposal." He explained, and the people were delighted. "Yes, of course we will feed him! We have plenty of scraps, he can have porridge, yes, we will do that!"

So Francis blessed his Brother Wolf and his brothers and sisters of Gubbio, and he and Bernard went on their way. And the sweet wolf and the people of Gubbio lived together in harmony for many long years. The children scratched the wolf's head, rubbed his ears, stroked his back and even his belly, and the wolf took the smaller children for rides around the village. On moonlit nights they howled together, and laughed. It was pace e bene, as brother Francis and sister Clare used to greet each other—peace and all good.

Well, it's a charming story. Does it have anything to teach us?

In these times, our world is certainly beset with wolfish behavior, and worse—not to slander wolves! Hard-working farmers around the globe are attacked in their fields by bankers, seed and chemical conglomerates, NAFTA-CAFTA and a host of other "free" trade agreements, so that tilling their crops feels like war. Miners work on federal holidays in wretchedly regulated mines, like Sago, West Virginia, unprotected by labor unions, and their workplace becomes their tomb. Factory workers who have given their skills and sweat to the company are thrown out on the street, as the corporation moves to Mexico or China, pays workers dirt wages, and destroys their land, water and air. All over America, people live in dread of getting sick because they have no health insurance, or because their insurance is controlled by



John Morearty

a thousand greedy corporations who keep raising the premiums and saying, Sorry, you're not covered for that.

And the children! Going hungry to bed, trained by TV, movies and video games to revel in violence, raised to be killers and cannon fodder in a world where their gifts and talents find little useful work, because War (both bloody and virtual) Pays Better. And there is so much useful work begging to be done, if only the society would turn from its wolfish warlike ways and invest its wealth in seven generations of peace.

So what's to be done with the wolves, in the world and in our own hearts?

First, Francis and his companion Bernard went disarmed.

Then he spoke firmly to the wolf, in the name of a sacred sign, said STOP—and called the wolf his "brother."

He told the wolf in plain language that what he had been doing was wrong, immoral and cruel.

He urged the wolf to practice empathy, to feel for the parents of the children he had eaten, by

remembering how he loved his own cubs, and how his parents had loved him.

Francis in turn felt for the wolf—he understood the terrible hunger that had driven the wolf to his terrible acts, and asked Brother Wolf gently if that was so.

He invented a win-win solution, and proposed it to the wolf.

With Brother Wolf at his side he approached the wolf's "enemies," and proposed the solution.

When they agreed, he gave them his blessing.

And the former enemies lived together in peace, eating together and howling at the moon.

Pace e bene!

Note: The Stockton Pace e Bene nonviolence training team will offer another nonviolence workshop in the late spring or early summer. For more information call Paula LeVeck, 465-5387, pjveck@sbcglobal.net.

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White House Press Conference:

During the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on the White House-approved employment of highly secret surveillance or wire tapping of selected telephone calls originating from abroad, questions of legality were raised as well as violations of the search and seizure clause of the Constitution's fourth amendment. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales spent a full day sparring with several democratic senators determined to make the case that unwarranted wire taps were prohibited by the Constitution and therefore illegal. General Gonzales, as he was frequently referred to, made no concessions to the unwarranted surveillance as a breach of the Constitution, in violation of the fourth amendment. After eight hours of bobbing and weaving, as Senator Charles Schumer described the General's behavior, Gonzales consistently responded that he was unable to provide "operational details" about the administration's "terrorist surveillance program."

Following the Judiciary Committee hearing on the secret surveillance/unwarranted wiretapping, President Bush was advised by Karl Rove, his mentor and primary strategist, to lay out his iron clad case before the White House Press Corps: time to go on the offensive with the "inherited power" argument in time of war. Prior to the press conference, Bush had a practice round with General Gonzales and a handful of selected staffers. The president was given an index card list of soft ballers and others considered to be Bush friendly.

Press Conference

As the press assembles in the press room, the president appears from the rear entrance and steps jauntily to the platform to greet the correspondents with his signature good humor.

President: I want to thank you for being here and giving me the opportunity to set the record straight about the war on world wide terrorism and my responsibility to protect America with all means available. It has

come to my attention that we don't all agree on the legality of electronic surveillance in time of war. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales spent eight hours representing the administration's position on the inherent power of the presidency in time of war. Now is your time to express your concerns.

Press: Mr. President, I'm not here to rain on your parade but whatever became of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction? They seemed to have dropped off the radar screen.

President: It's OK. I brought my umbrella ...heh heh. Vice President Dick Cheney has been tracking the WMD for the past three years. He assures me that it is only a question of time before they are located. When that happens the cynics and critics of my administration will have much humble pie to consume. Never mind the yolk on their faces. Next question Billie boy.

Billy boy: Vice President Cheney seems to be the only member of your administration that is steadfast in the belief that Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein were in cahoots prior to 9-11. Would you care to comment?

President: The Vice President has been a loyal member of this administration as well as my father's before me. He is like a member of the Bush family. I learned long ago that if you discount what Dick Cheney believes, you do so at your peril. Enough said? Next question Jimbo.

Jimbo: If you had to do it all over again, would you have exercised the war option in Iraq? Any regrets, great or small?

President: Good question, Jimbo. When I'm on the road to democracy and freedom in Iraq and the Middle East, there can be no turning back. Doing the right thing is never easy but not doing the right thing can only bring misery and a lifetime of regrets. However long it takes we will stay the course. Next question
Chunky.

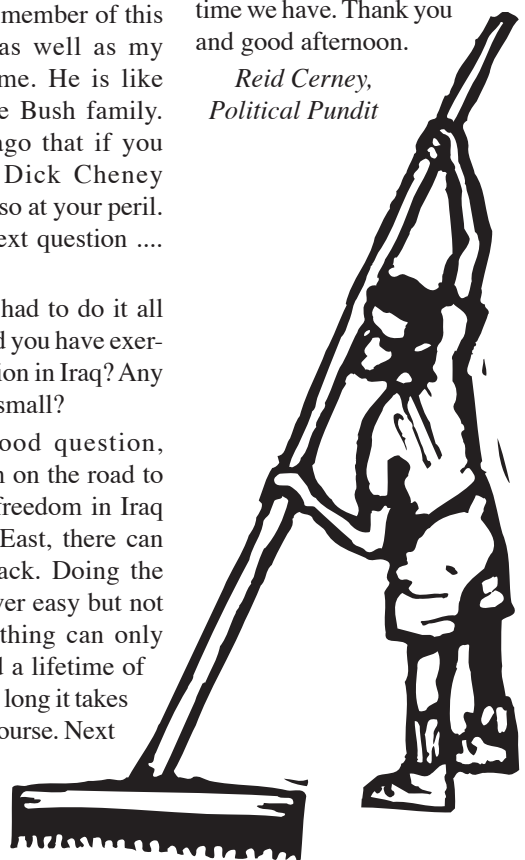
Chunky: What's your take on Cindy Sheehan and her appearance at your State of the Union address wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with an anti-war statement about the number of American military personnel killed in Iraq?

President: I think that most Americans regard her as a publicity seeker who gives aid and comfort to the enemy. She has a mission over which I lose no sleep. Last question, Slick.

Slick: What do you say to those who accuse you of breaking the law for conducting unwarranted wiretap surveillance in breach of FISA's statute that prohibits unwarranted wiretap surveillance?

President: I understand their concerns. I have no doubt that FISA would not only approve, but encourage our terrorist surveillance program. The terrorist enemies are out there lurking and ready to exploit any lapse in our intelligence gathering operation which is instrumental in the defense of our national security. In the time of war, taking the time to get warrants may be all the time terrorists need to wreak havoc on America. My job is to prevent that from happening. I will do my job. That's all the time we have. Thank you and good afternoon.

*Reid Cerney,
Political Pundit*



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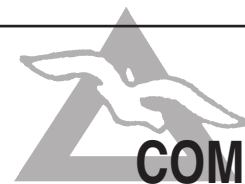
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Tuesday Film Night

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Feb. 21

The Future of Food

This eye-opening documentary sheds light on a shadowy relationship between agriculture, big business and government. Director Deborah Koons Garcia reveals the unappetizing truth about genetically modified foods: You could unknowingly be serving them for dinner.

Feb. 28

Super Size Me

On the heels of recent lawsuits against McDonald's, director Morgan Spurlock takes a hilarious and often terrifying look at the effects of fast food on the human body. Spurlock spends a month of eating nothing but McDonald's food, ordering everything on the menu at least once and "super-sizing" his order if asked.

Mar. 7

42 Up

In 1964, director Michael Apted recorded the future ambitions of a group of 7-year-old children for the documentary 7 Up, revisiting them for an interview every seven years. Now that his subjects are 42, new elements -- including careers, marriages, children, deaths and adultery -- have entered the picture. The film offers a fascinating look at the group's failures and successes, pasts and futures, realized goals and unexpected detours.

Mar. 14

Ashtanga, New York

Yoga enthusiasts take their practice to a higher level in this fitness documentary that reveals the power of Ashtanga, a high-energy regimen that works the mind, body and soul and promotes strength and healing. Filmed around the same time that tragedy struck the city of New York on September 11, 2001, Ashtanga, NY shows how yogis and other practitioners helped a populace find peace during a terrible and taxing time for the city's denizens.

Mar. 21

After Stonewall

Melissa Etheridge narrates this documentary that explores the progress and challenges of the post-Stonewall lesbian/gay rights movement through archival footage and interviews with leaders such as Barbara Gittings, Armistead Maupin, Jewelle Gomez and Dorothy Allison. The film chronicles key events from 1970 to the end of the 20th century, including sexual liberation, conflicts with the feminist movement, AIDS and political organization.

Mar. 28

Arguing the World

This captivating documentary closely examines the climate of the Cold War. At a time when people listened to what great thinkers had to say, Irving Howe, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer and Irving Kristol were considered four of the most brilliant and influential minds of their time. As the political powerhouses and rulers of this era tried to exert their ideals and agenda on the world, these men tried to make radical changes with their own thoughts.

Coming:

Apr. 11—Bush's Brain

Apr. 18—Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train

Apr. 25—Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Peig Fairbrook wins Susan B. Anthony award

We are pleased to announce that Peig Fairbrook received the Susan B. Anthony Award for Creative Arts this year. With her many talents, positive attitude, and sly wit, Peig embodies the spirit of Susan B.

A long-time friend of peace and justice, Peig has worked her entire life to make a better world. As a young girl in Ireland, she was involved with a family project, Concern, now a large international aid organization.

You will find Peig's influence everywhere in our community. She is on the Public Arts Commission, helping to make Stockton a more livable place. She personally makes the hundreds (thousands?) of scones each year at the Anderson Y Strawberry Breakfast. She created the library quilts now



hanging at the Stockton Public Library. She has been a board member for the Association of Retarded Citizens, Anderson Y, Peace & Justice Network, Women of Action, and other local organizations. She was a founding member of Special Olympics in Stockton and also started the Pacific Experience at UOP.

For many years, Peig was

the well-loved resident artist at UOP's Pacific Family Camp. For the past couple of summers she has taken those skills to a camp for children with AIDS. She says, "Art can be healing, can communicate complex feelings, can help people to see more clearly, can increase self-esteem."

Other Susan B winners this year include: Jimi Choice, Nadine Coleman, Leslie Crow, Peggy Guttieri, John Matthews, Gayle McBride, Linda Patrick, Bobbie Wallinger, and Carolyn Walters. Congratulations to all.

Campaign for Common Ground

On Monday, February 27, 7:00 p.m., the Steering Committee will meet at Family Resource and Referral Center, 509 W Weber Ave in Stockton. On the agenda will be the General Plan to be discussed later this spring. Steering Committee meetings are open to every county resident who is interested. No prior knowledge or experience necessary.

This is a grassroots, community campaign and input is needed from every neighborhood. We are planning for small groups to meet with each of the Stockton Planning Commissioners. If you would like to volunteer to be a part of a group, please contact Rosemary at 478-4380. A brochure is being prepared for supporters to use when talking to their friends, neighbors, and groups about our alternative General Plan. Stay tuned.

We have no word yet as to when the Planning Commission public hearings will begin. Call CCG answering machine to keep up-to-date. 478-1060

Meet at Peace and Justice Center

California Prison Moratorium Project

This is a group focused on advocating community action and advocacy in obtaining real community resource for our families. We demand that real public safety be addressed through community opportunities such as: educating our children and families, not incarcerating them; creating and promoting jobs with a prevailing wage, not prison jobs; promoting and creating real business opportunities that generate real tax base revenues for our communities, not government-funded structures to cage the poor, our families. We want to promote affordable housing, not more cages, to promote health care for all that includes rehabilitation.

Spending millions upon millions on runaway prisons and jail expansions will never bring safety to our community. It cages

the poor, strips families of real community resources and creates severe poverty. This runaway incarceration budget is out of control. Tell your elected officials: public safety is in education, sustainable jobs and healthy families.

Currently we are organizing to hold a Public Town Hall meeting with elected officials in San Joaquin County. Your input is vital. We have been meeting sporadically due to limited space but we now have a place, thanks to the Peace & Justice Center just off the Miracle Mile at 231 Bedford (behind SF Floral).

We meet on the 1st Saturday of each month from 10 to 12 noon and the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 5:30 to 7 pm. For more information contact Debbie Reyes at 559-916-4370

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March Calendar

Feb 4 - Apr 2

75th annual Robert T. McKee Student Art Exhibition, Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton (in Victory Park). 940-6315

Feb 6 - Mar 4

Donald Harvie watercolor, M-F 10-5, Sat 11-3 Tidewater Gallery, 223 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. 463-4033

Thurs-Sat Feb 17-18

Stockton Civic Theatre presents Don't Dress for Dinner, 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.

Fri, Feb 17

Pacific Jazz Ensemble, 7:30 pm Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP 946-2116

Sat, Feb 18

UOP resident artist Linda Wang violin, 7:30 pm Recital Hall, UOP 946-2116

Sun, Feb 19

Friends of Chamber Music presents the Gryphon Trio from Canada. 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. \$25, UOP/Delta students free, other students \$5 with ID. 946-0540

Wed, Feb 22

New School Aikido Healing Dance open house, 6:30 pm 8909 Thronton Rd #6, Stockton. Free. 951-8085

Thur, Feb 23

UOP, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Scholastic Entertainment presents Color Me Dark stage production of Patricia McKissack's, award winning book. 7 pm Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP \$20 adults, \$10 children 946-2867

Fri, Feb 24

San Joaquin Delta College Big Band Jazz concert. 7:30 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, \$5-7.50. 954-5110.

Feb 24-26 & Mar 3-5

Dark of the Moon play, San Joaquin Delta College Studio Theatre, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton Fri-Sat 8pm, Sun 2 pm. 954-5110

Sun, Feb 26

Peace and Justice Network Annual Meeting and Potluck. All are welcome. This is a big one, in a big year. Potluck, discussion and a great time at a new venue. 4-7 pm. Peace & Justice Center. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

UOP Symphonic Wind Ensemble concert, 2:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP. 946-2116

Thur-Sun, Mar 2-5

The Mikado by Gilbert & Sullivan, directed by James Haffner. Thur-Sat 8pm, Sun 2pm \$15 general admission, \$8 students, \$5 seniors. Long Theatre, UOP. 946-2867

Thur, Mar 2

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

Stockton Sister Cities Association and Stockton Arts Commission presents documentary film "To: Iloilo and Battambang," directed by Stockton based Sophoan Sorn. 6 pm Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium, Stockton. Tickets 430-9547

Stockton Symphony with pianist Audrey Andrist. Smetana, Grieg, Schumann. 8 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, \$15-42. 50% student discount. 951-0196

Sat, Mar 4

CA Prison Moratorium Project meeting (see p 18), 10-12 noon. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 559-916-4370

Stockton Symphony with pianist Audrey Andrist (see Mar 2) 6 pm.

Thur, Mar 9

Health Care for All San Joaquin group meeting, 6-8 pm. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Second Thursdays.

Fri, Mar 10

Stockton Symphony String Quartet free concert, 12 pm, Hotel Stockton, 139 E. Weber, Stockton. Free. 951-0196

Wed, Mar 15

San Joaquin Delta College Big Band Jazz concert. 7:30 pm. SJ Delta College Tillie Lewis Theatre, \$5-7.50. 954-5110.

CA Prison Moratorium Project meeting (see p 18), 5:30-7 pm. 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 559-916-4370

Mon, Mar 20

Pacific Arts Woodwind Quintet concert, 7:30 pm, UOP Recital Hall 946-2344

Thur, Mar 16

San Joaquin Delta College Symphonic Band concert. 7:30 pm. SJ Delta College Atherton Auditorium, \$5-7.50. 954-5110.

Weekly

Tuesdays

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

Tai Chi, 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

Tai Chi, 2:30-4, Northeast Community Center, 2885 E. Harding Way & Golden Gate.

Monthly

Second Mon

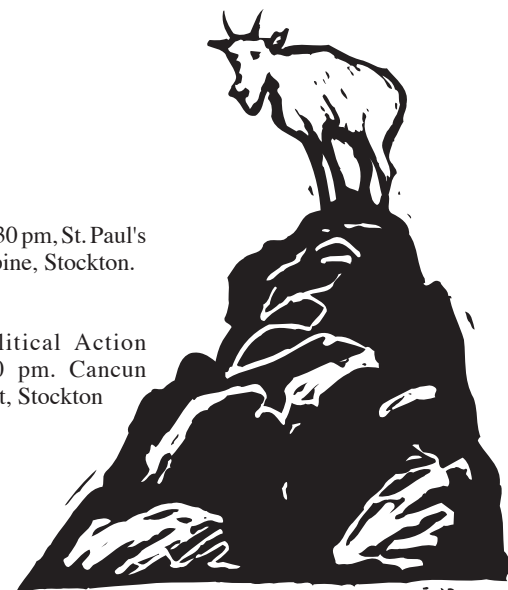
PFLAG meeting, 7-9 pm, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 209-870-3339.

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



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February—Black History Month series
 2,3,4 Hotel Rwanda
 9,10,11 Woman, Thou Art Loosed
 11 @ 10 pm So I Married an Axe Murderer
 16,17,18 Hustle and Flow (in the Summit)
 23,24,25 The Gospel (in the Summit)

March—Women's History Month series
 2 Shop Girl
 3 North Country
 4 Real Women Have Curves
 23,24,25 March of the Penguins
 30,21 Rent

April
 1 Rent
 6,7,8 Original Blues Brothers
 13,14,15 Brokeback Mountain

French series
 20 The Piano Teacher
 21 Sex is Comedy
 22 A Very Long Engagement
 27,28,29 Memiors of a Geisha

May
 4,5,6 Monster
 6 @ 10 pm Dazed and Confused

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Talking It Through is now two half-hour shows.

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Iran crisis: 'Diplomacy' a launch pad for missiles

Norman Solomon

The current flurry of Western diplomacy will probably turn out to be groundwork for launching missiles at Iran. Air attacks on targets in Iran are very likely. Yet many anti-war Americans seem eager to believe that won't happen.

Illusion #1: With the US military bogged down in Iraq, the Pentagon is in no position to take on Iran.

But what's on the horizon is not an invasion—it's a major air assault, which the American military can easily inflict on Iranian sites. (And if the task falls to the Israeli military, it is also well-equipped to bomb Iran.)

Illusion #2: The Bush administration is in so much political trouble at home - for reasons including its lies about Iraqi WMDs - that it wouldn't risk an uproar from an attack on Iran.

But the White House has been gradually preparing the domestic political ground for bombing Iran. As the Wall Street Journal reported days ago, "in recent polls a surprisingly large number of Americans say they would support US military strikes to stop Tehran from getting the bomb." Above those words, the Journal's headline - "US Chooses

Diplomacy on Iran's Nuclear Program"—trumpeted the Bush administration's game plan. It's a time-honored scam: When you're moving toward aggressive military action, emphasize diplomacy. Donald Rumsfeld proclaimed at a conference in Munich on Saturday that—to put a stop to Iran's nuclear program—the world should work for a "diplomatic solution." Yet the next day, the German daily newspaper Handelsblatt reports, Rumsfeld said in an interview: "All options including the military one are on the table." Top US officials, inspired by the royal "W," aren't hesitating to speak for the world. Over the weekend, Condoleezza Rice said: "The world will not stand by if Iran continues on the path to a nuclear weapons capability." Meanwhile, Rumsfeld declared: "The Iranian regime is today the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. The world does not want, and must work together to prevent, a nuclear Iran." Translation: First we'll be diplomatic, then we can bomb.

Illusion #3: The US won't attack Iran because that would infuriate the millions of Iran-allied Shiites in Iraq, greatly damaging the US war effort there.

But projecting rationality onto the Bush administration makes little sense at this point. The people running US foreign policy have their own priorities, and avoiding carnage is not one of them.

Non-proliferation doesn't rank very high either, judging from Washington's cozy relationships



with the nuclear-weapons powers of Israel, India and Pakistan. Unlike Iran, none of those countries are signatories to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Only Iran has been allowing inspections of its nuclear facilities - and it is Iran that the savants in Washington are now, in effect, threatening to bomb.

With sugar-plum visions of Iran's massive oil and natural-gas reserves dancing in their heads, the Washington neo-cons evidently harbor some farfetched hopes of bringing about the overthrow of the Iranian regime. But in the real world, an attack on Iran would strengthen its most extreme factions and fortify whatever interest it has in developing nuclear arms.

"The US will not solve the nuclear problem by threatening military strikes or by dragging Iran before the UN Security Council," Iran's 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi wrote in the January 19 edition of the Los Angeles Times, in

an op-ed piece co-authored by Muhammad Sahimi, a professor of chemical engineering at the University of Southern California. "Although a vast majority of Iranians despise the country's hard-liners and wish for their downfall, they also support its nuclear program because it has become a source of pride for an old nation with a glorious history."

The essay added: "A military attack would only inflame nationalist sentiments. Iran is not Iraq. Given Iranians' fierce nationalism and the Shiites' tradition of martyrdom, any military move would provoke a response that would engulf the entire region, resulting in countless deaths and a ruined economy not only for the region but for the world. Imposing UN sanctions on Iran would also be counterproductive, prompting Tehran to leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its 'additional protocol.' Is the world ready to live with such prospects?"

While calling for international pressure against Iran's serious violations of human rights, Ebadi and Sahimi said that "Iran is at least six to 10 years away from a nuclear bomb, by most estimates. The crisis is not even a crisis. There is ample time for political reform before Iran ever develops the bomb."

Last Friday, the Iranian Student News Agency quoted Iran's former president Muhammad Khatami, who urged the Iranian government to offer assurances that the country's nuclear program is only for generating electricity. "It is necessary to act wisely and with tolerance so that our right to nuclear energy will not be abolished," he said.

Though he failed to develop much political traction for reform during his eight years as president, Khatami was a moderating force against human-rights abuses. His demagogic successor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is a menace to human rights and

peace. But it's by no means clear that Ahmadinejad can count on long-term support from the nation's ruling clerics.

The man he defeated in the presidential runoff last summer, former president Hashemi Rafsanjani, wields significant power as head of the government's Expediency Council. Though he has a well-earned reputation as a corrupt opportunist, Rafsanjani is now a beacon of enlightenment compared to Ahmadinejad.

In early January, a pair of Iran scholars—Dariush Zahedi and Ali Ezzatyar, based at the University of California in Berkeley—wrote an *LA Times* piece making this point: "Contrary to popular belief, the traditional conservative clerical establishment is apprehensive about the possibility of violence inside and outside Iran. It generally opposes an aggressive foreign policy and, having some intimate ties with Iran's dependent capitalist class, is appalled at the rapid slide of the economy since Ahmadinejad's inauguration. The value of Tehran's stock market has plunged \$10 billion, the nation's vibrant real estate market has withered and capital outflows are increasing."

And the scholars added pointedly: "The history of US-Iran relations shows that the more Washington chastises Tehran for its nuclear ambitions, the more it plays into the hands of the radicals by riling up fear and nationalist sentiment."

Right now, the presidents of Iran and the United States are thriving on the belligerency of the other. From all indications, a military assault on Iran would boost Ahmadinejad's power at home. And it's a good bet that the US government will do him this enormous favor. Unless we can prevent it.

Norman Solomon is the author of the new book War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death. For information, go to: WarMadeEasy.com <<http://www.WarMadeEasy.com>>.

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