

Original: http://projectcensored.org/censored_2006/

Link here: http://blog.lege.net/content/Project_Censored_Media_Democracy_in_Action.html

PROJECT CENSORED

The News That Didn't Make The News

"Project Censored is one of the organizations that we should listen to, to be assured that our newspapers and our broadcasting outlets are practicing thorough and ethical journalism."
-Walter Cronkite

Real News

» [Home](#) » [Store](#) » [Top 25 of 2006](#) » [Top 25 Archive](#) » [Internships](#) » [About Us](#) » [Events](#) » [E-Mail Sign Up](#) » [Nominate A Story](#) » [Resources](#) » [Conference in November](#)

Top 25 Censored Stories of 2006

[#1 Bush Administration Moves to Eliminate Open Government](#)

[#2 Media Coverage Fails on Iraq: Fallujah and the Civilian Death](#)

[#3 Another Year of Distorted Election Coverage](#)

[#4 Surveillance Society Quietly Moves In](#)

[#5 U.S. Uses Tsunami to Military Advantage in Southeast Asia](#)

[#6 The Real Oil for Food Scam](#)

[#7 Journalists Face Unprecedented Dangers to Life and Livelihood](#)

[#8 Iraqi Farmers Threatened By Bremer's Mandates](#)

[#9 Iran's New Oil Trade System Challenges U.S. Currency](#)

[#10 Mountaintop Removal Threatens Ecosystem and Economy](#)

[#11 Universal Mental Screening Program Usurps Parental Rights](#)

[#12 Military in Iraq Contracts Human Rights Violators](#)

[#13 Rich Countries Fail to Live up to Global Pledges](#)

[#14 Corporations Win Big on Tort Reform, Justice Suffers](#)

[#15 Conservative Plan to Override Academic Freedom in the Classroom](#)

[#16 U.S. Plans for Hemispheric Integration Include Canada](#)

[#17 U.S. Uses South American Military Bases to Expand Control of the Region](#)

[#18 Little Known Stock Fraud Could Weaken U.S. Economy](#)

[#19 Child Wards of the State Used in AIDS Experiments](#)

[#20 American Indians Sue for Resources; Compensation Provided to Others](#)

[#21 New Immigration Plan Favors Business Over People](#)

[#22 Nanotechnology Offers Exciting Possibilities But Health Effects Need Scrutiny](#)

[#23 Plight of Palestinian Child Detainees Highlights Global Problem](#)

[#24 Ethiopian Indigenous Victims of Corporate and Government Resource Aspirations](#)

[#25 Homeland Security Was Designed to Fail](#)

Chapter 1

The Top Censored Stories of 2004 to 2005

#1 Bush Administration Moves to Eliminate Open Government

Source:

Common Dreams, September 14, 2004. Press release.

Title: “ New Report Details Bush Administration Secrecy”

Author: Karen Lightfoot

<<http://www.commondreams.org/news2004/0914-05.htm>>

<http://www.democrats.reform.house.gov/story.asp?ID=692&Issue=Open+Government>>

Faculty Evaluator: Yvonne Clarke, MA

Student Researcher: Jessica Froiland

Throughout the 1980s, Project Censored highlighted a number of alarming reductions to government access and accountability (see Censored 1982 #6, 1984 #8, 1985 #3 and 1986 #2). It tracked the small but systematic changes made to existing laws and the executive orders introduced. It now appears that these actions may have been little more than a prelude to the virtual lock box against access that is being constructed around the current administration.

“The Bush Administration has an obsession with secrecy,” says Representative Henry Waxman, the Democrat from California who, in September 2004, commissioned a congressional report on secrecy in the Bush Administration. “It has repeatedly rewritten laws and changed practices to reduce public and congressional scrutiny of its activities. The cumulative effect is an unprecedented assault on the laws that make our government open and accountable.”

Changes to Laws that Provide Public Access

to Federal Records

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) gives citizens the ability to file a request for specific information from a government agency and provides recourse in federal court if that agency fails to comply with FOIA requirements. Over the last two decades, beginning with Reagan, this law has become increasingly diluted and circumvented by each succeeding administration.

Under the Bush Administration, agencies make extensive and arbitrary use of FOIA exemptions (such as those for classified information, privileged attorney-client documents and certain information compiled for law enforcement purposes) often inappropriately or with inadequate justification. Recent evidence shows agencies making frivolous (and sometimes ludicrous) exemption claims, abusing the deliberative process privilege, abusing the law enforcement exemption, and withholding data on telephone service outages.

Quite commonly, the Bush Administration simply fails to respond to FOIA requests at all. Whether this is simply an inordinate delay or an unstated final refusal to respond to the request, the requesting party is never told. But the effect is the same: the public is denied access to the information.

The Bush Administration also engages in an aggressive policy of questioning, challenging and denying FOIA requesters' eligibility for fee waivers, using a variety of tactics. Measures include narrowing the definition of “representative of news media,” claiming information would not contribute to public understanding.

Ten years ago, federal agencies were required to release documents through FOIA—even if technical grounds for refusal existed—unless “foreseeable harm” would result from doing so. But, according to the Waxman report, an October 2001 memo by Attorney General John Ashcroft instructs and encourages agencies to withhold information if there are any technical grounds for withholding it under FOIA.

In 2003, the Bush Administration won a new legislative exemption from FOIA for all National Security Agency “operational files.” The Administration’s main rationale for this new exemption is that conducting FOIA searches diverts resources from the agency’s mission. Of course, this rationale could apply to every agency. As NSA has operated subject to FOIA for decades, it is not clear why the agency now needs this exemption.

The Presidential Records Act ensures that after a president leaves office, the public will have full access to White House documents used to develop public policy. Under the law and an executive order by Ronald Reagan, the presumption has been that most documents would be released. However, President Bush issued an executive order that establishes a process that generally blocks the release of presidential papers.

Changes to Laws that Restrict Public Access

to Federal Records

The Bush Administration has dramatically increased the volume of government information concealed from public view. In a March 2003 executive order, President Bush expanded the use of the national security classification. The order eliminated the presumption of disclosure, postponed or avoided automatic declassification, protected foreign government information, reclassified some information, weakened the panel that decides to exempt documents from declassification and adjudicates classification challenges, and exempted vice presidential records from mandatory declassification review.

The Bush Administration has also obtained unprecedented authority to conduct government operations in secret, with little or no judicial oversight. Under expanded law enforcement authority in the Patriot Act, the Justice Department can more easily use secret orders to obtain library and other private records, obtain “sneak-and-peek” warrants to conduct secret searches, and conduct secret wiretaps. In addition, the Bush Administration has used novel legal interpretations to expand its authority to detain, try, and deport individuals in secret. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Bush Administration has asserted unprecedented authority to detain anyone whom the executive branch labels an “enemy combatant” indefinitely and secretly. It has authorized military trials that can be closed not only to the public but also to the defendants and their own attorneys. And the Administration has authorized procedures for the secret detention and deportation of aliens residing in the United States.

Congressional Access to Information

Compared to previous administrations, the Bush Administration has operated with remarkably little congressional oversight. This is partially attributable to the alignment of the parties. The Republican majorities in the House and the Senate have refrained from investigating allegations of misconduct by the White House. Another major factor has been the Administration’s resistance to oversight. The Bush Administration has consistently refused to provide to members of Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and congressional commissions the information necessary for meaningful investigation and review of the Administration’s activities.

For example, the Administration has contested in court the power of the Government Accountability Office to conduct independent investigations and has refused to comply with the rule that allows members of the House Government Reform Committee to obtain information from the executive branch, forcing the members to go to court to enforce their rights under the law. It has also ignored and rebuffed numerous requests for information made by members of Congress attempting to exercise their oversight responsibilities with respect to executive branch activities, and repeatedly withheld information from the investigative commission established by Congress to investigate the September 11 attacks.

Update Rep. Waxman's companion bill, HR 5073 IH, the Restore Open Government Act of 2004, was not heard by Congress before the Winter Recess in December, and the bill was not reintroduced in the Opening Session in January 2005. However, on February 16, after the commencement of the 109th Congress, John Comyn (R-Tex.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) introduced a bill entitled the Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National Government Act of 2005, S. 394 (the Comyn-Leahy bill), which according to their joint statement "is designed to strengthen laws governing access to government information, particularly the Freedom of Information Act." On the same day, an identical bill, H.R. 867, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Tex.).¹

For more information on Rep. Waxman's legislation and work on open government, site, please visit www.democrats.reform.house.gov.

NOTE

1. St. Petersburg Times (Florida), February 18, 2005, "Improving access to information."

#2 Media Coverage Fails on Iraq:

Fallujah and the Civilian Deathtoll

part 1: Fallujah— War Crimes Go Unreported

Sources:

Peacework, December 2004–January 2005

Title: "The Invasion of Fallujah: A Study in the Subversion of Truth"

Authors: Mary Trotochaud and Rick McDowell

World Socialist Web Site, November 17, 2004

Title: "U.S. Media Applauds Destruction of Fallujah"

Author: David Walsh

The NewStandard, December 3, 2004

Title: "Fallujah Refugees Tell of Life and Death in the Kill Zone"

Author: Dahr Jamail

Faculty Evaluators: Bill Crowley, Ph. D., Sherril Jaffe, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Brian K. Lanphear

Over the past two years, the United States has conducted two major sieges against Fallujah, a city in Iraq. The first attempted siege of Fallujah (a city of 300,000 people) resulted in a defeat for Coalition forces. As a result, the United States gave the citizens of Fallujah two choices prior to the second siege: leave the city or risk dying as enemy insurgents. Faced with this ultimatum, approximately 250,000 citizens, or 83 percent of the population of Fallujah, fled the city. The people had nowhere to flee and ended up as refugees. Many families were forced to survive in fields, vacant lots, and abandoned buildings without access to shelter, water, electricity, food or medical care. The 50,000 citizens who either chose to remain in the city or who were unable to leave were trapped by Coalition forces and were cut off from food, water and medical supplies. The United States military claimed that there were a few thousand enemy insurgents remaining among those who stayed in the city and conducted the invasion as if all the people remaining were enemy combatants.

Burhan Fasa'a, an Iraqi journalist, said Americans grew easily frustrated with Iraqis who could not speak English. "Americans did not have interpreters with them, so they entered houses and killed people because they didn't speak English. They entered the house where I was with 26 people, and shot people because [the people] didn't obey [the soldiers'] orders, even just because the people couldn't understand a word of English." Abu Hammad, a resident of Fallujah, told the Inter Press Service that he saw people attempt to swim across the Euphrates to escape the siege. "The Americans shot them with rifles from the shore. Even if some of them were holding a white flag or white clothes over their head to show they are not fighters, they were all shot." Furthermore, "even the wound[ed] people were killed. The Americans made announcements for people to come to one mosque if they wanted to leave Fallujah, and even the people who went there carrying white flags were killed." Former residents of Fallujah recall other tragic methods of killing the wounded. "I watched them [U.S. Forces] roll over wounded people in the street with tanks... This happened so many times."

Preliminary estimates as of December of 2004 revealed that at least 6,000 Iraqi citizens in Fallujah had been killed, and one-third of the city had been destroyed.

Journalists Mary Trotochaud and Rick McDowell assert that the continuous slaughter in Fallujah is greatly contributing to escalating violence in other regions of the country such as Mosul, Baquba, Hilla, and Baghdad. The violence prompted by the U.S. invasion has resulted in the assassinations of at least 338 Iraqis who were associated with Iraq's "new" government.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq, and more specifically Fallujah, is causing an incredible humanitarian disaster among those who have no specific involvement with the war. The International Committee for the Red Cross reported on December 23, 2004 that three of the city's water purification plants had been destroyed and the fourth badly damaged. Civilians are running short on food and are unable to receive help from those who are willing to make a positive difference. Aid organizations have been repeatedly denied access to the city, hospitals, and refugee populations in the surrounding areas.

Abdel Hamid Salim, spokesman for the Iraqi Red Crescent in Baghdad, told Inter Press Service that none of their relief teams had been allowed into Fallujah three weeks after the invasion. Salim declared that "there is still heavy fighting in Fallujah. And the Americans won't let us in so we can help people."

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour voiced a deep concern for the civilians caught up in the fighting. Louise Arbour emphasized that all those guilty of violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws must be brought to justice. Arbour claimed that all violations of these laws should be investigated, including “the deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, the killing of injured persons and the use of human shields.”

Marjorie Cohn, executive vice president of the National Lawyers Guild, and the U.S. representative to the executive committee of the American Association of Jurists, has noted that the U.S. invasion of Fallujah is a violation of international law that the U.S. had specifically ratified: “They [U.S. Forces] stormed and occupied the Fallujah General Hospital, and have not agreed to allow doctors and ambulances to go inside the main part of the city to help the wounded, in direct violation of the Geneva Conventions.”

According to David Walsh, the American media also seems to contribute to the subversion of truth in Fallujah. Although, in many cases, journalists are prevented from entering the city and are denied access to the wounded, corporate media showed little concern regarding their denied access. There has been little or no mention of the immorality or legality of the attacks the United States has waged against Iraq. With few independent journalists reporting on the carnage, the international humanitarian community in exile, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent prevented from entering the besieged city, the world is forced to rely on reporting from journalists embedded with U.S. forces. In the U.S. press, we see casualties reported for Fallujah as follows: number of U.S. soldiers dead, number of Iraqi soldiers dead, number of “guerillas” or “insurgents” dead. Nowhere were the civilian casualties reported in the first weeks of the invasion. An accurate count of civilian casualties to date has yet to be published in the mainstream media.

part 2: Civilian Death Toll Is Ignored

Sources:

The Lancet, October 29, 2004

Title: “Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq”

Authors: Les Roberts, Riyadh Lafa, Richard Garfield, Jamal Khudhairi and Gilbert Burnham

The Lancet, October 29, 2004

Title: “The War in Iraq: Civilian Casualties, Political Responsibilities”

Author: Richard Horton

The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 4, 2005

Title: “Lost Count”

Author: Lila Guterman

FAIR, April 15, 2004

Title: "CNN to Al Jazeera: Why Report Civilian Deaths?"

Author: Julie Hollar

Faculty Evaluator: Sherril Jaffe, Ph.D.

Student Researcher: Melissa Waybright

In late October, 2004, a peer reviewed study was published in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, concluding that at least 100,000 civilians have been killed in Iraq since it was invaded by a United States-led coalition in March 2003. Previously, the number of Iraqis that had died, due to conflict or sanctions since the 1991 Gulf War, had been uncertain. Claims ranging from denial of increased mortality to millions of excess deaths have been made. In the absence of any surveys, however, they relied on Ministry of Health records. Morgue-based surveillance data indicate the post-invasion homicide rate is many times higher than the pre-invasion rate.

In the present setting of insecurity and limited availability of health information, researchers, headed by Dr. Les Roberts of Johns Hopkins University, undertook a national survey to estimate mortality during the 14.6 months before the invasion (Jan 1, 2002, to March 18, 2003) and to compare it with the period from March 19, 2003, to the date of the interview, between Sept 8 and 20, 2004. Iraqi households were informed about the purpose of the survey, assured that their name would not be recorded, and told that there would be no benefits or penalties for refusing or agreeing to participate.

The survey indicates that the death toll associated with the invasion and occupation of Iraq is in reality about 100,000 people, and may be much higher. The major public health problem in Iraq has been identified as violence. However, despite widespread Iraqi casualties, household interview data do not show evidence of widespread wrongdoing on the part of individual soldiers on the ground. Ninety-five percent of reported killings (all attributed to U.S. forces by interviewees) were caused by helicopter gunships, rockets, or other forms of aerial weaponry.

The study was released on the eve of a contentious presidential election—fought in part over U.S. policy on Iraq. Many American newspapers and television news programs ignored the study or buried reports about it far from the top headlines. "What went wrong this time? Perhaps the rush by researchers and *The Lancet* to put the study in front of American voters before the election accomplished precisely the opposite result, drowning out a valuable study in the clamor of the presidential campaign." (Lila Guterman, *Chronicle of Higher Education*)

The study's results promptly flooded though the worldwide media—everywhere except the United States, where there was barely a whisper about the study, followed by stark silence. "The *Lancet* released the paper on October 29, the Friday before the election, when many reporters were busy with political stories. That day the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* each dedicated only about 400 words to the study and placed the stories inside their front section, on pages A4 and A11, respectively. (The news media in Europe gave the study much more play; many newspapers put articles about it on their front pages.)

In a short article about the study on page A8, the New York Times noted that the Iraqi Body Count, a project to tally civilian deaths reported in the news media, had put the maximum death count at around 17,000. The new study, the article said, “is certain to generate intense controversy.” But the Times has not published any further news articles about the paper. The Washington Post, perhaps most damagingly to the study’s reputation, quoted Marc E. Garlasco, a senior military analyst at Human Rights Watch, as saying, “These numbers seem to be inflated.” Mr. Garlasco says now that he hadn’t read the paper at the time and calls his quote in the Post “really unfortunate.” (Lila Guterman, Chronicle of Higher Education).

Even so, nobody else in American corporate media bothered to pick up the story and inform our citizens how many Iraqi citizens are being killed at the hands of a coalition led by our government. The study was never mentioned on television news, and the truth remains unheard by those who may need to hear it most. The U.S. government had no comment at the time and remains silent about Iraqi civilian deaths. “The only thing we keep track of is casualties for U.S. troops and civilians,” a Defense Department spokesman told The Chronicle.

When CNN anchor Daryn Kagan did have the opportunity to interview the Al Jazeera network editor-in-chief Ahmed Al-Sheik—a rare opportunity to get independent information about events in Fallujah—she used the occasion to badger Al-Sheik about whether the civilian deaths were really “the story” in Fallujah. CNN’s argument was that a bigger story than civilian deaths is “what the Iraqi insurgents are doing” to provoke a U.S. “response” is startling. “When reports from the ground are describing hundreds of civilians being killed by U.S. forces, CNN should be looking to Al Jazeera’s footage to see if it corroborates those accounts—not badgering Al Jazeera’s editor about why he doesn’t suppress that footage.” (MediaWatch, Asheville Global Report)

Study researchers concluded that several limitations exist with this study, predominantly because the quality of data received is dependent on the accuracy of the interviews. However, interviewers believed that certain essential characteristics of Iraqi culture make it unlikely that respondents would have fabricated their reports of the deaths. The Geneva Conventions have clear guidance about the responsibilities of occupying armies to the civilian population they control. “With the admitted benefit of hindsight and from a purely public health perspective, it is clear that whatever planning did take place was grievously in error. The invasion of Iraq, the displacement of a cruel dictator, and an attempt to impose a liberal democracy by force have, by themselves, been insufficient to bring peace and security to the civilian population.

The illegal, heavy handed tactics practiced by the U.S. military in Iraq evident in these news stories have become what appears to be their standard operating procedure in occupied Iraq. Countless violations of international law and crimes against humanity occurred in Fallujah during the November massacre.

Evidenced by the mass slaughtering of Iraqis and the use of illegal weapons such as cluster bombs, napalm, uranium munitions and chemical weapons during the November siege of Fallujah when the entire city was declared a “free fire zone” by military leaders, the brutality of the U.S. military has only increased throughout Iraq as the occupation drags on.

According to Iraqis inside the city, at least 60 percent of Fallujah went on to be totally destroyed in the siege, and eight months after the siege entire districts of the city remained without electricity or water. Israeli style checkpoints were set up in the city, prohibiting anyone from entering who did not live inside the city. Of course non-embedded media were not allowed in the city.

update: Since these stories were published, countless other incidents of illegal weapons and tactics being used by the U.S. military in Iraq have occurred.

During “ Operation Spear” on June 17th, 2005, U.S.-led forces attacked the small cities of Al-Qa’im and Karabla near the Syrian border. U.S. warplanes dropped 2,000 pound bombs in residential areas and claimed to have killed scores of “ militants” while locals and doctors claimed that only civilians were killed.

As in Fallujah, residents were denied access to the city in order to obtain medical aid, while those left inside the city claimed Iraqi civilians were being regularly targeted by U.S. snipers.

According to an IRIN news report, Firdos al-Abadi from the Iraqi Red Crescent Society stated that 7,000 people from Karabla were camped in the desert outside the city, suffering from lack of food and medical aid while 150 homes were totally destroyed by the U.S. military.

An Iraqi doctor reported on the same day that he witnessed, “ crimes in the west area of the country... the American troops destroyed one of our hospitals, they burned the whole store of medication, they killed the patient in the ward... they prevented us from helping the people in Qa’im.”

Also like Fallujah, a doctor at the General Hospital of al-Qa’im stated that entire families remained buried under the rubble of their homes, yet medical personnel were unable to reach them due to American snipers.

Iraqi civilians in Haditha had similar experiences during “ Operation Open Market” when they claimed U.S. snipers shot anyone in the streets for days on end, and U.S. and Iraqi forces raided homes detaining any man inside.

Corporate media reported on the “ liberation” of Fallujah, as well as quoting military sources on the number of “ militants” killed. Any mention of civilian casualties, heavy-handed tactics or illegal munitions was either brief or non-existent, and continues to be as of June 2005.

For additional information:

For those interested in following these stories, it is possible to obtain information by visiting the English Al-Jazeera website at <http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>, my website at www.dahriamailiraq.com, The World Tribunal on Iraq at www.worldtribunal.org, Peacework Magazine at www.afsc.org/pwork/0412/041204.htm , and other alternative/independent news websites.

#3 Another Year of Distorted Election Coverage

Source:

In These Times, 02/15/05

Title: " A Corrupted Election"

Authors: Steve Freeman and Josh Mitteldorf

Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 26, 2005

Title: " Jim Crow Returns To The Voting Booth"

Authors: Greg Palast, Rev. Jesse Jackson

www.freepress.org, Nov. 23, 2004

Title: " How a Republican Election Supervisor Manipulated the 2004 Central Ohio Vote"

Authors: Bob Fittrakis, Harvey Wasserman

Faculty Evaluator: Ann Neel, MA

Student Researcher: Mike Osipoff

Political analysts have long counted on exit polls to be a reliable predictor of actual vote counts. The unusual discrepancy between exit poll data and the actual vote count in the 2004 election challenges that reliability. However, despite evidence of technological vulnerabilities in the voting system and a higher incidence of irregularities in swing states, this discrepancy was not scrutinized in the mainstream media. They simply parroted the partisan declarations of "sour grapes" and "let's move on" instead of providing any meaningful analysis of a highly controversial election.

The official vote count for the 2004 election showed that George W. Bush won by three million votes. But exit polls projected a victory margin of five million votes for John Kerry. This eight-million-vote discrepancy is much greater than the error margin. The overall margin of error should statistically have been under one percent. But the official result deviated from the poll projections by more than five percent—a statistical impossibility.

Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International, the two companies hired to do the polling for the Nation Election Pool (a consortium of the nation's five major broadcasters and the Associated Press), did not immediately provide an explanation for how this could have occurred. They waited until January 19, the eve of the inauguration.

Edison and Mitofsky's "inaugural" report, "Evaluation of Edison/Mitofsky Election System 2004," stated that the discrepancy was "most likely due to Kerry voters participating in the exit polls at a higher rate than Bush voters." The media widely reported that this report proved the accuracy of the official count and a Bush victory. The body of the report, however, offers no data to substantiate this position. In fact, the report shows that Bush voters were more likely to complete the survey than Kerry voters. The report also states that the difference between exit polls and official tallies was far too great to be explained by sampling error, and that a systematic bias is implicated.

The Edison and Mitofsky report dismisses the possibility that the official vote count was wrong, stating that precincts with electronic voting systems had the same error rates as precincts with punch-card systems. This is true. However, it merely points to the unreliability of punch-card and electronic systems, both of which are slated for termination under the Helping America Vote Act of 2002. According to the report, only in precincts that used old-fashioned, hand-counted paper ballots did the official count and the exit poll data fall within the normal margin of error.

Also, the report shows, the discrepancy between the exit polls and the official count was considerably greater in the critical swing states. And while this fact is consistent with allegations of fraud, Mitofsky and Edison suggest, without providing any data or theory to back up their claim, that this discrepancy is somehow related to media coverage.

In precincts that were at least 80 percent for Bush, the average within-precinct error (WPE) was a whopping 10.0 percent—the numerical difference between the exit poll predictions and the official count. Also, in Bush strongholds, Kerry received only about two-thirds of the votes predicted by exit polls. In Kerry strongholds, exit polls matched the official count almost exactly (an average WPE of 0.3).

This exit poll data is a strong indicator of a corrupted election. But the case grows stronger if these exit poll discrepancies are interpreted in the context of more than 100,000 officially logged reports of irregularities and possible fraud during Election Day 2004.

Bush campaign officials compiled a 1,886-name “caging list,” which included the names and addresses of predominantly black voters in the traditionally Democratic Jacksonville, Florida. While Bush campaign spokespersons stated that the list was a returned mail log, they did not deny that such a list could be used to challenge voters on Election Day. In fact, the county elections supervisor says that he could see no other purpose for compiling such a list.

In Franklin County Ohio, Columbus voters faced one of the longest ballot lines in history. In many inner city precincts, voters sometimes had three-hour waits to get to the poll before being required to cast ballots within five minutes, as demanded by the Republican-run Board of Elections. Seventy-seven out of the county’s 2,866 voting machines malfunctioned on Election Day. One machine registered 4,258 votes for Bush in a precinct where only 638 people voted. At least 125 machines were held back at the opening of the polls, and another 68 were never deployed. While voters were rushed through the process, 29 percent of the precincts had fewer voting machines than in the 2000 election despite a 25 percent increase in turnout.

Taken together, these problems point to an election that requires scrutiny. Even if the discrepancy between exit polls and actual vote counts is simply a fluke, other flaws and questionable practices in the voting process make one wonder whether or not the people’s voice was actually heard and if we are truly a working democracy.

Update by Josh Mitteldorf: Some news is too important to report. People might get upset, and the smooth functioning of our democracy would be jeopardized. Thus the media has collectively done the responsible thing, and refrained—at great cost to themselves, be assured—from publicizing doubts about the legitimacy of the 2004 election, in order to help assure the “orderly succession of power.”

Unfortunately, some internet sites such as Commondreams.org and Freepress.org do not realize their obligations to the commonwealth, and have thus been less responsible in maintaining silence. And there’s an upbeat radio voice from Vermont, Thom Hartmann, who would be fun to listen to if only he didn’t insist on relating so many discomfiting truths.

But so long as you stay away from these isolated derelicts, you will be gratified to receive a reassuringly consistent story line: George Bush won the 2004 election fair and square. It's time to stop asking pointless questions. Get with the program!

Update by Greg Palast and Reverend Jessie Jackson: There are conspiracy nuts out there on the Internet who think that John Kerry defeated George Bush in Ohio and other states. I know, because I wrote "Kerry Won" for TomPaine.com two days after the election.

"Kerry Won" was the latest in a series coming out of a five-year investigation, begun in November 2000, for BBC Television Newsnight and Britain's Guardian papers, dissecting that greasy sausage called American electoral democracy.

On November 11, a week after TomPaine.com put the report out on the Net, I received an email from the New York Times Washington Bureau. Hot on the investigation of the veracity of the vote, the Times reporter asked me pointed questions:

Question #1: Are you a "sore loser" ?

Question #2: Are you a "conspiracy nut" ?

There was no third question. Investigation of the vote was, apparently, complete. The next day, their thorough analysis of the evidence yielded a front-page story, "VOTE FRAUD THEORIES, SPREAD BY BLOGS, ARE QUICKLY BURIED."

Here's a bit of what the Paper of Record failed to record.

In June 2004, well before the election, my co-author of "Jim Crow" Rev. Jesse Jackson brought me to Chicago. We had breakfast with Vice-Presidential candidate John Edwards. The Reverend asked the Senator to read my report of the "spoilage" of Black votes—one million African Americans who cast ballots in 2000 but did not have their votes register on the machines.

Edwards said he'd read it over after he'd had his bagel. Jackson snatched away his bagel. No read, no bagel. A hungry Senator was genuinely concerned—these were, after all, Democrats whose votes did not tally, and he shot the information to John Kerry. A couple of weeks later, Kerry told the NAACP convention that one million African-American votes were not counted in 2000, but in 2004 he would not let it happen again.

But he did let it happen again. More than a million votes in 2004 were cast and not counted.

As a reporter, it's not my job to help the Democratic Party learn to tie its shoes. And, as a nonpartisan journalist, I'm not out to expose the Republican Party's new elaborate campaign to prevent voters from voting—but I must report it. However, editors and news producers in my home country, the USA, seem less than interested. Indeed, they are downright hostile to reporting this story of the shoplifting of our democracy.

America has an apartheid voting system, denying African-Americans, Hispanics and American Natives the assurance their ballots will count. Worse, America has an apartheid media which denies racial disenfranchisement a seat at the front of the news bus.

It was in November 2000 I first ran into the U.S. news lord's benign neglect of the "new Jim Crow" methods of denying citizens of color their vote. While working with the British Guardian papers just days before the 2000 presidential election, I discovered that Governor Jeb Bush and his Secretary of State, Katharine Harris, had wrongly purged tens of thousands of Black citizens from voter rolls as "felons" — when in fact their only crime had been V.W.B.: Voting While Black.

Nothing appeared in the U.S. press. However, I admit that the Florida purge story was picked up by the New York Times ... four years later.

Just before the November 2004 election, BBC television Newsnight discovered new, confidential "caging lists" which we got our hands on from inside the Republican National Committee headquarters. These were rosters of thousands of minority voters targeted to prevent them from voting on election day: a violation of federal law. It was big news in Europe and South America. In the USA, there was nothing except an attack on BBC's report by ABC's web site. ABC's only listed source for their attack on the BBC was the Republican Party.

The story of the purge of Black voters, the million missing Black ballots cast but not counted, the caging lists, and other games used to deny the vote to the dark-skinned and the poor, would have been buried long ago if not for BBC Television, Harper's Magazine (may it last a thousand years), Britain's Guardian and Observer, The Nation, the op-ed editors at the San Francisco Chronicle and Seattle Post-Intelligencer and, provocatively, Hustler Magazine. Even if ignored or actively 'dissed' by U.S. "mainstream" media, the story will be continue to be reported, due to the passionate insistence of Reverend Jackson, from a thousand pulpits.

Thanks to GeorgeBush.com for capturing the 'caging lists.' And bless the blogs, for they shall set the truth free: TomPaine.com, Buzzflash, Working-for-Change and other Internet sites carried the story over the electronic Berlin Wall.

Finally, my gratitude to our indefatigable investigative team, particularly Oliver Shykles and Matt Pascarella for their work on this story—on which they continue today—and to Meirion Jones, producer nonpareil at BBC television's Newsnight.

For Additional Documentation of Voter Fraud 2004 See Chapters 2 and 3.

#4 Surveillance Society Quietly Moves In

Sources:

Information Management Journal, Mar/Apr 2004

Title: "PATRIOT Act's Reach Expanded Despite Part Being Struck Down"

Author: Nikki Swartz

LiP Magazine, Winter 2004

Title: " Grave New World"

Author: Anna Samson Miranda

Capitol Hill Blue, June 7, 2004

Title: " Where Big Brother Snoops on Americans 24/7"

Authors: Teresa Hampton and Doug Thompson

Faculty Evaluator: John Steiner, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Sandy Brown, Michelle Jesolva

" While the evening news rolled footage of Saddam being checked for head lice, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 was quietly signed into law." 1

On December 13, 2003, President George W. Bush, with little fanfare and no mainstream media coverage, signed into law the controversial Intelligence Authorization Act while most of America toasted the victory of U.S. forces in Iraq and Saddam's capture. None of the corporate press covered the signing of this legislation, which increases the funding for intelligence agencies, dramatically expands the definition of surveillable financial institutions, and authorizes the FBI to acquire private records of those individuals suspected of criminal activity without a judicial review. American civil liberties are once again under attack.

History has provided precedent for such actions. Throughout the 1990s, erosions of these protections were taking place. As part of the 1996 Anti-Terrorism bill adopted in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, the Justice Department was required to publish statistics going back to 1990 on threats or actual crimes against federal, state and local employees and their immediate families when the wrongdoing related to the workers' official duties. The numbers were then to be kept up to date with an annual report.² Members of congress, concerned with the threat this type of legislation posed to American civil liberties, were able to strike down much of what the bill proposed, including modified requirements regarding wiretap regulations.

The " atmosphere of fear" generated by recent terrorist attacks, both foreign and domestic, provides administrations the support necessary to adopt stringent new legislation. In response to the September 11 attacks, new agencies, programs and bureaucracies have been created. The Total Information Office is a branch of the United States Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. It has a mission to " imagine, develop, apply, integrate, demonstrate and transition information technologies, components and prototype, closed-loop, information systems that will counter asymmetric threats by achieving total information awareness." ³ Another intelligence gathering governmental agency, The Information Awareness Office, has a mission to gather as much information as possible about everyone in a centralized location for easy perusal by the United States government. Information mining has become the business of government.

In November 2002, the New York Times reported that the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) was developing a tracking system called " Total Information Awareness" (TIA), which was intended to detect terrorists through

analyzing troves of information. The system, developed under the direction of John Poindexter, then-director of DARPA's Information Awareness Office, was envisioned to give law enforcement access to private data without suspicion of wrongdoing or a warrant.⁴ The "Total Information Awareness" program's name was changed to "Terrorist Information Awareness" on May 20, 2003 ostensibly to clarify the program's intent to gather information on presumed terrorists rather than compile dossiers on U.S. citizens.

Despite this name change, a Senate Defense Appropriations bill passed unanimously on July 18, 2003, expressly denying any funding to Terrorist Information Awareness research. In response, the Pentagon proposed The Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange, or MATRIX, a program devised by longtime Bush family friend Hank Asher as a pilot effort to increase and enhance the exchange of sensitive terrorism and other criminal activity information between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. The MATRIX, as devised by the Pentagon, is a State run information generating tool, thereby circumventing congress' concern regarding the appropriation of federal funds for the development of this controversial database. Although most states have refused to adopt these Orwellian strategies, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Florida have all jumped on the TIA band wagon.

Yet, somehow, after the apparent successful dismantling of TIA, expressed concern by Representatives Mark Udall of Colorado, Betty McCollum of Minnesota, Ron Paul of Texas and Dennis Moore of Kansas, and heightened public awareness of the MATRIX, the Intelligence Authorization Act was signed into law December 13, 2003.⁵

On Thursday, November 20, 2003 Minnesota Representative Betty McCollum stated that, "The Republican Leadership inserted a controversial provision in the FY04 Intelligence Authorization Report that will expand the already far-reaching USA Patriot Act, threatening to further erode our cherished civil liberties. This provision gives the FBI power to demand financial and other records, without a judge's approval, from post offices, real estate agents, car dealers, travel agents, pawnbrokers and many other businesses. This provision was included with little or no public debate, including no consideration by the House Judiciary Committee, which is the committee of jurisdiction. It came as a surprise to most Members of this body."⁶

According to LiP Magazine, "Governmental and law-enforcement agencies and MATRIX contractors across the nation will gain extensive and unprecedented access to financial records, medical records, court records, voter registration, travel history, group and religious affiliations, names and addresses of family members, purchases made and books read."⁷

Peter Jennings, in an ABC original report, explored the commercial applications of this accumulated information. Journalist and author Peter O'Harrow, who collaborated with ABC News on the broadcast "Peter Jennings Reporting: No Place to Hide," states "... marketers—and now, perhaps government investigators—can study what people are likely to do, what kind of attitudes they have, what they buy at the grocery store."⁸ Although this program aired on prime-time mainstream television, there was no mention of the potential for misuse of this personal information network or of the controversy surrounding the issues of privacy and civil liberties violations concerning citizens and civil servants alike. Again, the sharing of this kind of personal information is not without precedent.

On November 12, 1999, Clinton signed into law the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, which permits financial institutions to share personal customer information with affiliates within the holding company. The Intelligence Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2004 expands the definition of a surveillable financial institution to include real estate agencies, insurance companies, travel agencies, Internet service providers, post offices, casinos and other businesses as well. Due to massive corporate mergers and the acquisition of reams of newly acquired information, personal consumer data has been made readily available to any agency interested in obtaining it, both commercial and governmental.

With the application of emerging new technologies such as Radio Frequency Identification chips or RFIDs, small individualized computer chips capable of communicating with a receiving computer, consumer behavior can literally be tracked from the point of purchase to the kitchen cupboard, and can be monitored by all interested parties.

Update by Anna Miranda: The United States is at risk of turning into a full-fledged surveillance society. The tremendous explosion in surveillance-enabling technologies, combined with the ongoing weakening in legal restraints that protect our privacy mean that we are drifting toward a surveillance society. The good news is that it can be stopped. Unfortunately, right now the big picture is grim.—ACLU⁹

The PATRIOT Act

Fifteen 'sunset' provisions in the PATRIOT Act are set to expire at the end of 2005. One amendment, the "library provision" went before Congress in June. Despite President Bush's threat to veto, lawmakers, including 38 Republicans, voted 238 to 187 to overturn the provision, which previously allowed law enforcement officials to request and obtain information from libraries without obtaining a search warrant. Although inspectors still have the "right" to search library records, they must get a judge's approval first.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales informed Congress in April that this provision has never been used to acquire information, although the American Library Association recently reported that over 200 requests for information were submitted since the PATRIOT Act was signed into law in October 2001.

The overturning of the library provision has been seen as a small victory in the fight to reclaim privacy rights. Rep. Saunders, who was responsible for almost successfully having the provision repealed last year, commented that "conservative groups have been joining progressive organizations to call for changes."¹⁰

The MATRIX

The fight to the right for privacy continues to wage on with more successes, as the MATRIX program was officially shut down on April 15, 2005. The program, which consisted of 13 states—and only had four states remaining prior to its closure, received \$ 12 million in funding from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security. By utilizing a system called FACTS (Factual Analysis Criminal Threat Solution), law enforcement officials from participating states were able to share information with one another and utilized this program as an investigative tool to help solve and prevent crimes. According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, "Between July 2003 and April 2005, there have been 1,866,202 queries to the FACTS application."¹¹ However, of these queries, only 2.6 percent involved terrorism or national security.

Although the MATRIX has been shut down, Florida law enforcement officials are pursuing continuing the program and rebuilding it. Officials have sent out a call for information from vendors beginning a competitive bidding process.

RFID Technology and the REAL ID Act

On May 10, 2005, President Bush secretly signed into law the REAL ID Act, requiring states within the next three years to issue federally approved electronic identification cards. Attached as an amendment to an emergency spending bill funding troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, the REAL ID Act passed without the scrutiny and debate of Congress.

One of the main concerns of the electronic identification card is identity theft. The Act mandates the cards to have anti-counterfeiting measures, such as an electronically readable magnetic strip or RFID chip. Privacy advocates argue that RFID chips can be read from "unauthorized" scanners allowing third parties or the general public to gather and/or steal private information about an individual. Amidst growing concerns about identity theft, the REAL ID Act has given no consideration to this drawback.

Other privacy concerns regarding the electronic identification card is the use of information by third parties once they've scanned the cards and accessed the information. At this time, the Act does not specify what can be done with the information. A company or organization scanning your identification card could potentially sell your personal information if strict guidelines on what to do with the information are not mandated.

Inability to conform over the next three years will leave citizens and residents of the United States paralyzed. Identification cards that do not meet the federally mandated standards will not be accepted as identification for travel, opening a bank account, receiving social security checks, or participating in government benefits, among other things.

Notes

1. LiP Magazine. <http://www.lipmagazine.org/>.
2. The Washington Post December 01, 1997, Final Edition.
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_Information_Awareness.
4. Electronic Privacy Information Center <http://www.epic.org/privacy/profiling/tia/>. Information Awareness Office, See HR 2417.
5. Ibid.
6. Congressional Record: November 22, 2003 pg.E2399.
http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2003_cr/h112203.html.
7. LiP Magazine. <http://www.lipmagazine.org/>.
8. ABC News. <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Primetime/story>.
9. <http://www.aclu.org/Privacy/PrivacyMain.cfm>.
10. <http://bernie.house.gov/documents/articles/20050406114413.asp>.

11. http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/press_releases/20050415_matrix_project.html.

#5 U.S. Uses Tsunami to Military Advantage in Southeast Asia

Sources:

Jane's Foreign Report (Jane's Defence), February 15, 2005

Title: " U.S. Turns Tsunami into Military Strategy"

The Irish Times, February 8, 2005

Title: " U.S. Has Used Tsunami to Boost Aims in Stricken Area"

Author: Rahul Bedi

Inter Press Service, January, 18 2005

Title: " Bush Uses Tsunami Aid to Regain Foothold in Indonesia"

Author: Jim Lobe

Faculty Evaluator: Tony White, Ph. D., Craig Winston, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Ned Patterson

The tragic and devastating power of 2004's post holiday tsunami was plastered across the cover of practically every newspaper around the world for the better part of a month. As the death toll rose by the thousands every day, countries struggled to keep pace with the rapidly increasing need for aid across the Indian Ocean Basin.

At the same time that U.S. aid was widely publicized domestically, our coinciding military motives were virtually ignored by the press. While supplying our aid (which when compared proportionately to that of other, less wealthy countries, was an insulting pittance), we simultaneously bolstered military alliances with regional powers in, and began expanding our bases throughout, the Indian Ocean region.

Long viewed as a highly strategic location for U.S. interests, our desire to curtail China's burgeoning economic and military might is contingent upon our control of this area. In the months following the tsunami, writes Rahul Bedi in *The Irish Times*, the U.S. revived the Utapao military base in Thailand it had used during the Vietnam War. Task force 536 is to be moved there to establish a forward positioning site for the U.S. Air Force.

During subsequent tsunami relief operations, the U.S. reactivated its military co-operation agreements with Thailand and the Visiting Forces Agreement with the Philippines. U.S. Navy also vessels utilized facilities in Singapore, keeping with previous treaties. Further, the U.S. marines and the navy arrived in Sri Lanka to bolster relief measures despite the tsunami-hit island's initial reluctance to permit their entry.

The U.S. also stepped up their survey of the Malacca Straits, over which China exercises considerable influence, and through which 90 percent of Japan's oil supplies pass. The United States has had trouble expanding its military influence in the region largely due to suspicions by Indonesia and Malaysia that the U.S. is disguising imperial aims under the goal of waging war against terror. The two countries have opposed an American plan to tighten security in the vital Malacca Straits shipping lanes, which might have involved U.S. troops stationed nearby.

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that U.S. relief to the tsunami-affected region would assist the war against terror and introduce "American values to the region." The Bush Administration is also reviving its hopes of normalizing military ties with Indonesia, writes Jim Lobe for *InterPress Service*. The world's most populous Muslim nation, its strategically located archipelago, critical sea lanes, and historic distrust of China have made it an ideal partner for containing Beijing.

During a January 2005 visit to Jakarta, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz told reporters, "I think if we're interested in military reform here, and certainly this Indonesian government is and our government is, I think we need to possibly reconsider a bit where we are at this point in history moving forward."

According to an article in the *Asheville Global Report*, the following month the U.S. State Department made a decision to renew the International Education and Military Training (IMET) program for Indonesia, despite considerable human rights issues.

According to Bedi, Washington has long wanted a naval presence in Trincomalee, eastern Sri Lanka, or alternatively in Galle, further south, to shorten the supply chain from its major regional military base in distant Diego Garcia, which the British Ocean Territory leased to the U.S. in 1966 for the length of fifty years. The use of these bases would ring China, giving the U.S. added control over that country's activities.

Diego Garcia's geostrategic location in the Indian Ocean and its full range of naval, military and communications facilities gives it a critical role supporting the U.S. Navy's forward presence in the North Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean Region. However, because of the bases' remoteness and the fact that its lease from Britain expires in 2016, the U.S. seeks an alternative location in the region. "Clearly these new bases will strengthen Washington's military logistical support in the region," says Professor Anuradha Chenuy at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. She went on to emphasize that an alternative to the Diego Garcia base must be found soon, as the lease from Britain will soon expire.

Long before the tsunami struck, an article dated April 21, 2003, by Josy Joseph on *Rediff.com* explained that a classified report commissioned by the United States Department of Defense expresses a desire for access to Indian bases and military infrastructures. The United States Air Force specifically wants to establish bases in India. The report, entitled "Indo-U.S. Military Relations: Expectations and Perceptions," was distributed amongst high-ranking U.S. officials and a handful of senior members within the Indian government. It continues on about the Defense Department's desire to have "access closer to areas of instability." 1

The report says, “ American military officers are candid in their plans to eventually seek access to Indian bases and military infrastructure. India’s strategic location in the centre of Asia, astride the frequently traveled Sea Lanes Of Communication (SLOC) linking the Middle East and East Asia, makes India particularly attractive to the U.S. military.”

The report also quotes U.S. Lieutenant Generals as saying that the access to Indian bases would enable the U.S. military “ to be able to touch the rest of the world” and to “ respond rapidly to regional crisis.” A South Asia Area Officer of the U.S. State Department has been quoted as saying, “ India’s strategic importance increases if existing U.S. relationships with Asia fail.”

Post-tsunami U.S. actions in the Indian Ocean illustrate its intention to move this agenda forward sooner rather than later.

Note

1. Joseph, Josy; “ Target Next: Indian Military Bases” ; rediff.com, April 21, 2003; and Lobe, Jim; “ Skepticism over renewed military ties with Indonesia” ; Asheville Global Report, March 10–16, 2005.

#6 The Real Oil for Food Scam

Sources:

Harper’s Magazine, December 2004

Title: “ The UN is Us: Exposing Saddam Hussein’s silent partner”

Author: Joy Gordon

<http://www.harpers.org/TheUNisUS.html>

Independent/UK, December 12, 2004

Title: “ The oil for Food ‘Scandal’ is a Cynical Smokescreen”

Author: Scott Ritter

<http://www.commondreams.org/views04/1212-23.htm>

Faculty Evaluator: Robert McNamara, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Deanna Murrell

The U.S. has accused UN officials of corruption in Iraq's oil for food program. According to Joy Gordon and Scott Ritter the charge was actually an attempt to disguise and cover up long term U.S. government complicity in this corruption. Ritter says, "this posturing is nothing more than a hypocritical charade, designed to shift attention away from the debacle of George Bush's self-made quagmire in Iraq, and legitimize the invasion of Iraq by using Iraqi corruption and not the now-missing weapons of mass destruction, as the excuse." Gordon arrives at the conclusion that, "perhaps it is unsurprising that today the only role it seems the United States expects the UN to play in the continuing drama of Iraq is that of scapegoat."

According to Gordon the charges laid by the U.S. accounting office are bogus. There is plenty of evidence of corruption in the "oil-for-food" program, but the trail of evidence leads not to the UN but to the U.S. "The fifteen members of the Security Council—of which the United States was by far the most influential—determined how income from oil proceeds would be handled, and what the funds could be used for." Contrary to popular understanding, the Security Council is not the same thing as the UN. It is part of it, but operates largely independently of the larger body. The UN's personnel "simply executed the program that was designed by the members of the Security Council."

The claim in the corporate media was that the UN allowed Saddam Hussein to steal billions of dollars from oil sales. If we look, as Gordon does, at who actually had control over the oil and who's hands held the money, a very different picture emerges. "If Hussain did indeed smuggle \$6 billion worth of oil in the 'the richest rip off in world history,' he didn't do it with the complicity of the UN. He did it on the watch of the U.S. Navy." explains Gordon.

Every monetary transaction was approved by the U.S. through its dominant role on the Security Council. Ritter explains, "the Americans were able to authorize a \$1 billion exemption concerning the export of Iraqi oil for Jordan, as well as legitimize the billion-dollar illegal oil smuggling trade over the Turkish border." In another instance, a Russian oil company "bought oil from Iraq under 'oil for food' at a heavy discount, and then sold it at full market value to primarily U.S. companies, splitting the difference evenly between [the Russian company] and the Iraqis. This U.S. sponsored deal resulted in profits of hundreds of millions of dollars for both the Russians and the Iraqis, outside the control of 'oil for food.' It has been estimated that 80 percent of the oil illegally smuggled out of Iraq under 'oil for food' ended up in the United States."

Not only were criminals enriched in this nefarious scheme, it also ended up sabotaging the original purpose of "oil for food." Gordon explains, "How Iraq sold its oil was also under scrutiny, and the United States did act on what it perceived to be skimming by Hussain in these deals. The solution that it enacted, however, succeeded in almost bankrupting the entire Oil for Food Program within months."

Harebrained Security Council policy not only succeeded in enriching the dishonest, it also virtually destroyed the program. According to Gordon, the U.S. and UK attempted to prevent kickbacks resulting from artificially low prices: "Instead of approving prices at the beginning of each sales period (usually a month), in accordance with normal commercial practices, the two allies would simply withhold their approval [of the price] until after the oil was sold—creating a bizarre scenario in which buyers had to sign contracts without knowing what the price would be." The result was "oil sales collapsed by forty percent, and along with them the funds for critical humanitarian imports."

What we have here, according to Gordon and Ritter, is a bare-faced attempt by criminals to shift blame to the innocent. Gordon concludes, "Little of the blame can credibly be laid at the feet of 'the UN bureaucracy.' Far more of the fault lies with policies and decisions of the Security Council in which the United States played a central role."

Update by Joy Gordon: The accusations against the Oil for Food Program have served as a springboard for general attacks on the credibility of the United Nations as a whole, as well as personal attacks on Kofi Annan. For the most part the mainstream media has seized on the accusations and repeated them, without doing any of the research that would give the discussion more integrity. For example, “the United Nations” is criticized for “its” failures, and the Secretary General is then blamed because these events “happened on his watch.” What was not mentioned at all for the first year of media coverage is that “the UN” is made up of several different parts, and that the part that designed and oversaw the Oil for Food Program was the Security Council, whose decisions cannot be overridden or modified in any way by the Secretary General. Not only that, while the most vitriolic accusations against the UN have come from the United States, the U.S. is in fact the most dominant member of the Security Council. The U.S. agreed to all the decisions and procedures of the Oil for Food Program that are now being so harshly criticized as “failures of the United Nations.”

The mainstream press, for the most part, has repeated that the Oil for Food Program lacked accountability, oversight, or transparency. What is most striking about this is that the elaborate structure of oversight that was in fact in place—and is never mentioned at all—is so easily available. It is on the program’s web site in complete detail along with huge amounts of information, making the program in fact highly transparent. Yet the mainstream press coverage reflects none of this.

Last fall we saw the beginnings of some acknowledgement of the U.S. responsibility for Iraq’s ongoing smuggling, as some Democrats introduced evidence in hearings that all three U.S. administrations knew of and supported Iraq’s illicit trade with Jordan and Turkey, two key U.S. allies. The press picked that up, but little else.

Since my article came out, there has been a good deal of press coverage from public radio stations and from foreign press. In addition, I have testified twice before Congressional committees, where the members of Congress were incredulous to hear that in fact the program operated very differently than they had been told—even though the information I provided them was obvious, basic, publicly available, and easily accessible.

For additional information:

Organizations actively addressing these issues include the UN Association and the UN Foundation.

Information about the accusations against the program can be found at the following sites: <http://www.oilforfoodfacts.org/>

UN web site on Oil for Food program: <http://www.un.org/Depts/oip/>

The Volcker Committee investigating the accusations: <http://www.iic-offp.org/>

#7 Journalists Face Unprecedented Dangers to Life and Livelihood

Sources:

www.truthout.org, Feb. 28, 2005

Title: "Dead Messengers: How the U.S. Military Threatens Journalists"

Author: Steve Weissman

http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/022405A.shtml

Title: "Media Repression in 'Liberated' Land"

InterPress Service, November 18, 2004

Author: Dahr Jamail

<http://www.ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=26333>

Faculty Evaluator: Elizabeth Burch, Ph.D.

Student Researcher: Michelle Jesolva

According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)1, 2004 was the deadliest year for reporters since 1980, when records began to be kept. Over a 12-month span, 129 media workers were killed and 49 of those deaths occurred in the Iraqi conflict. According to independent journalist Dahr Jamail, journalists are increasingly being detained and threatened by the U.S.-installed interim government in Iraq. When the only safety for a reporter is being embedded with the U.S. military, the reported stories tend to have a positive spin. Non-embedded reporters suffer the great risk of being identified as enemy targets by the military.

The most blatant attack on journalists occurred the morning of April 8, 2004, when the Third Infantry fired on the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad killing cameramen Jose Couso and Taras Protsyuk and injuring three others. The hotel served as headquarters for some 100 reporters and other media workers. The Pentagon officials knew that the Palestine Hotel was full of journalists and had assured the Associated Press that the U.S. would not target the building. According to Truthout, the Army had refused to release the records of its investigation. The Committee to Protect Journalists, created in 1981 in order to protect colleagues abroad from governments and others who have no use for free and independent media, filed suit under the Freedom of Information Act to force the Army to release its results. The sanitized copy of the releasable results showed nothing more than a Commander inquiry.

Unsatisfied with the U.S. military's investigation, Reporters Without Borders, an international organization that works to improve the legal and physical safety of journalists worldwide, conducted their own investigation. They gathered evidence from journalists in the Palestine Hotel at the time of the attacks. These were eye witness accounts that the military neglected to include in their report. The Reporters Without Borders report also provided information disclosed by others embedded within the U.S. Army, including the U.S. military soldiers and officers directly involved in the attack. The report stated that the U.S. officials first lied about what had happened during the Palestine Hotel attack and then, in an official statement four months later, exonerated the U.S. Army from any mistake of error in judgment. The investigation found that the soldiers in the field did

not know that the hotel was full of journalists. Olga Rodriguez, a journalist present at the Palestine Hotel during the attack, stated on KPFA's Democracy Now! that the soldiers and tanks were present at the hotel 36 hours before the firing and that they had even communicated with the soldiers.

There have been several other unusual journalist attacks, including:

% March 22, 2003: Terry Lloyd, a reporter for British TV station ITN, was killed when his convoy crossed into Iraq from Kuwait. French cameraman Frederic Nerac and Lebanese interpreter Hussein Osman, both in the convoy, disappeared at the same time.²

% June, 2003: According to Dahr Jamail, within days of the 'handover' of power to an interim Iraqi government in 2003, al-Jazeera had been accused of inaccurate reporting and was banned for one month from reporting out of Iraq. The ban was later extended to "indefinitely" and the interim government announced that any al-Jazeera journalist found reporting in Iraq would be detained. Corentin Fleury, a French freelance photographer, and his interpreter Bahktiyar Abdulla Hadad, were detained by the U.S. military when they were leaving Fallujah before the siege of the city began. They were both held in a military detention facility outside of the city and were questioned about the photos that were taken of bomb-stricken Fallujah. Fleury was released after five days but his interpreter, Bahktiyar Abdulla Hadad, remained.

% April 8, 2004: The same day of the attack on the Palestine Hotel, Truthout writes, the U.S. bombed the Baghdad offices of Abu Dhabi TV and Al-Jazeera while they were preparing to broadcast, killing Al-Jazeera correspondent Tariq Ayyoub. August 17, 2004: Mazen Dana was killed while filming (with permission) a prison, guarded by the U.S. military in a Baghdad suburb. According to Truthout's Steve Weissman, the Pentagon issued a statement one month later claiming that the troops had acted within the rules of engagement.³

% March 4, 2005: Nicola Calipari, one of Italy's highest ranking intelligence officials, was shot dead by U.S. troops. He was driving with Italian journalist Guiliana Sgrena, who had just been released from captivity and was on her way to Baghdad's airport. Sgrena survived the attack. She stated in an interview with Amy Goodman on KPFA's Democracy Now! that the troops "shot at us without any advertising, any intention, any attempt to stop us before" and they appeared to have shot the back of the car.⁴

In all cases, little investigation has been conducted, no findings have been released and all soldiers involved have been exonerated.

At the World Economic Forum, on a panel titled: "Will Democracy Survive the Media?," Eason Jordan, a CNN news chief, commented that the U.S. commanders encourage hostility toward the media and fail to protect journalists, especially those who choose not to embed themselves under military control. According to Truthout, during a discussion about the number of journalists killed during the Iraq war, Jordan stated that he knew of 12 journalists who had not only been killed by U.S. troops, but had been targeted. Jordan also insisted that U.S. soldiers had deliberately shot at journalists. After the forum, Jordan recanted the statements and was forced to resign his job of 23 years at CNN.

As a matter of military doctrine, the U.S. military dominates, at all costs, every element of battle, including our perception of what they do. The need for control leads the Pentagon to urge journalists to embed themselves within the military, where they can go where they are told and film and tell stories only from a pro-American point of view. The Pentagon offers embedded

journalists a great deal of protection. As the Pentagon sees it, non-embedded eyes and ears do not have any military significance, and unless Congress and the American people stop them, the military will continue to target independent journalists. Admirals and generals see the world one way, reporters another; the clash leads to the deaths of too many journalists.

Update by Steve Weissman: When Truthout boss Marc Ash asked me earlier this year to look into the Pentagon's killing of journalists, many reporters believed that the military was purposely targeting them. But, as I quickly found, the crime was more systemic and in many ways worse. As far as anyone has yet proved, no commanding officer ever ordered a subordinate to fire on journalists as such. Not at Baghdad's Palestine Hotel in April 2003. Not at the Baghdad checkpoint where soldiers wounded Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena and killed her Secret Service protector in March 2005. And not anywhere else in Iraq or Afghanistan.

How, then, did the U.S. military end up killing journalists?

It started with a simple decision—the Pentagon's absolute refusal to take any responsibility for the lives of journalists who chose to work independently rather than embed themselves in a British or American military unit. Despite repeated requests from Reuters and other major news organizations, Pentagon officials still refuse to take the steps needed to reduce the threat to independent journalists:

1. The military must be forced to respect the work that independent journalists do, protect them where possible, and train soldiers to recognize the obvious differences between rocket launchers and TV cameras.

2. Commanders need to pass on information about the whereabouts of journalists with a direct order not to shoot at them.

3. When soldiers do kill journalists, the Pentagon needs to hold them responsible, something that no military investigation has yet done.

4. When the military tries to forcibly exclude journalists and otherwise prevent “hostile information” about its operations, such as its destruction of Falujah, Congress and the media need to step in and force the Pentagon to back off.

One other problem needs urgent attention. Military intelligence regularly monitors the uplink equipment that reporters use to transmit their stories and communicate by satellite phone. But, as the BBC's Nik Gowing discovered, the electronic intelligence mavens make no effort to distinguish between journalistic communications and those of enemy forces. All the sensing devices do is look for electronic traffic between the monitored uplinks and known enemies.

In Gowing's view, this led the Americans to order a rocket attack on the Kabul office of the Arab broadcaster Al Jazeera, whose journalists kept regular contact with the Taliban as part of their journalistic coverage.

To date, neither Congress nor the military have done what they need to do to protect unembedded journalists and the information they provide. More shamefully, the mass media continues to underplay the story.

But, for those who want it, reliable information is easily available, either from the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters without Borders, or the International Federation of Journalists.

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3. Democracy Now! March 23, 2005, Wounded Spanish Journalist Olga Rodriguez describes the U.S. Attack on the Palestine Hotel that killed two of her colleagues.
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#8 Iraqi Farmers Threatened By Bremer's Mandates

Sources:

Grain, October 2004

Title: "Iraq's New Patent Law: A Declaration of War against Farmers"

Authors: Focus on the Global South and GRAIN

TomPaine.com, October 26, 2004

Title: "Adventure Capitalism"

Author: Greg Palast

The Ecologist, February 4, 2005

Title: "U.S. Seeking to Totally Re-engineer Iraqi Traditional Farming System into a U.S.-style Corporate Agribusiness"

Author: Jeremy Smith

Faculty Evaluator: John Wingard, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Cary Barker

In his article "Adventure Capitalism," Greg Palast exposes the contents of a secret plan for "imposing a new regime of low taxes on big business, and quick sales of Iraq's banks and bridges—in fact, 'ALL state enterprises'—to foreign operators." This economy makeover plan, he claims, "goes boldly where no invasion plan has gone before."

This highly detailed program, which began years before the tanks rolled, outlines the small print of doing business under occupation. One of the goals is to impose intellectual property laws favorable to multinationals. Palast calls this "history's first military assault plan appended to a program for toughening the target nation's copyright laws."

It also turns out that those of us who may have thought it was all about the oil were mostly right. "The plan makes it clear that—even if we didn't go in for the oil—we certainly won't leave without it."

In an interview with Palast, Grover Norquist, the "capo di capi of the lobbyist army of the right," makes the plans even more clear when he responds, "The right to trade, property rights, these things are not to be determined by some democratic election." No, these things were to be determined by the Coalition Provisional Authority, the interim government lead by the U.S.

Before he left his position, CPA administrator Paul Bremer, "the leader of the Coalition Provisional Authority issued exactly 100 orders that remade Iraq in the image of the Economy Plan." These orders effectively changed Iraqi law.

A good example of this business invasion involves agriculture. The details of this part of the "market make-over" are laid out in the Grain website article called "Iraq's new Patent Law: a declaration of war against farmers."

"Order 81" of the 100 is entitled "Patent, Industrial Design, Undisclosed Information, Integrated Circuits and Plant Variety." According to Grain staff writers, this order "made it illegal for Iraqi farmers to re-use seeds harvested

from new varieties registered under the law.” Plant Variety Protection (PVP) is the tool used for defining which seeds are re-useable and which are not. PVP “is an intellectual property right or a kind of patent for plant varieties which gives an exclusive monopoly right on planting material to a plant breeder who claims to have discovered or developed a new variety. So the “protection” in PVP has nothing to do with conservation, but refers to safeguarding of the commercial interests of private breeders (usually large corporations) claiming to have created the new plants.”

Dovetailing with this order is a plan to “re-educate farmers” in order to increase their production. As part of a \$107 million “project” facilitated by Texas A&M, farmers will be given equipment and new high-yielding PVP protected seeds. Jeremy Smith from the Ecologist points out that, “After one year, farmers will see soaring production levels. Many will be only too willing to abandon their old ways in favor of the new technologies. Out will go traditional methods. In will come imported American seeds.” Then, based on the new patent laws, “any ‘client’ (or ‘farmer’ as they were once known) wishing to grow one of their seeds, ‘pays a licensing fee for each variety.’”

Smith explains that “Under the guise of helping Iraq back on its feet, the U.S. setting out to re-engineer the country’s traditional farming system into a U.S.-style corporate agribusiness.” In that traditional system, “97 percent of Iraqi farmers used their own saved seed or bought seed from local markets.” He continues, “Unfortunately, this vital heritage and knowledge base is now believed lost, the victim of the current campaign and the many years of conflict that preceded it.”

Of course, this project will also introduce “new chemicals—pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, all sold to the Iraqis by corporations such as Monsanto, Cargill and Dow.”

As Grain staff writers point out, “over the past decade, many countries of the South have been compelled to adopt seed patent laws through bilateral treaties” with the U.S. The Iraqi situation, however, is different in that “the adoption of the patent law was not part of negotiations between sovereign countries. Nor did a sovereign law-making body enact it as reflecting the will of the Iraqi people.” Essentially, the U.S. has reneged on its promise of freedom for the Iraqi people. The actions of the U.S. clearly show that the will of the Iraqi people is not relevant. Paul Bremer’s 100 orders make sure it will stay that way. Grain argues “Iraq’s freedom and sovereignty will remain questionable for as long as Iraqis do not have control over what they sow, grow, reap and eat.” Palast says poignantly, “The free market paradise in Iraq is not free.”

Update by Greg Palast: In February 2003, White House spokesman Ari Fleisher announced the preparations for “Operation Iraqi Liberation” —O.I.L.

I can’t make these things up.

I'm not one of those people who believes George Bush led us into Iraq for the oil but, from the documents I've obtained, it's clear that we sure as hell aren't leaving without it.

At BBC Television Newsnight, which has granted me journalistic asylum from the commercially-crazed madhouse of the American news market, we ran Fleisher's announcement of operation O.I.L. (later corrected to Operation Iraqi Freedom—OIF!). More importantly, we ran a series of stories—which I also developed for Harper's Magazine in the USA—on the pre-invasion plans to slice up and sell off Iraq's assets, “especially the oil,” in the terms of one State Department secret document.

After we got our hands on the confidential document to “Move Iraq's Economy Forward” —i.e. sell off its oil—we at BBC put General Jay Garner on the air. Garner, whom the president appointed as viceroy over the newly-conquered Iraq, confirmed the plan to sell off Iraq's oil—and his refusal to carry out the deed. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld fired him and smeared him for his dissent. This was big, big news in Europe where I reported it—but in the U.S. the story was buried.

We later discovered that the plan to sell off Iraq's oil was replaced by another confidential plan. This one, 323 pages long and literally written by oil industry consultants, was obtained by BBC and Harper's after a protracted legal war with the State Department. We discovered, interestingly, that this industry plan to create a state oil company favorable to OPEC was first conceived in February 2001. In other words, invasion was in the works, including stratagems for controlling Iraq's oil, within week's of George Bush's first inauguration and well before the September 11 attack.

The discovery of this plan for Iraq's oil, received exactly zero coverage by the U.S. “mainstream” press. Only Harper's Magazine gave it full play along with those wonderful internet sites (Buzzflash, Guerrilla News, WorkingForChange, CommonDreams, Altnet and more) that cussedly insist on printing news from abroad not approved by the Powers That Be.

Bless them. They, Project Censored, and Harper's, have my deepest thanks for bringing my words back home.

Want to see the television you're not supposed to see? The British Broadcasting Corporation has graciously kept my reports available as Internet video archives. Go to www.GregPalast.com and click on the “Watch BBC” buttons for the stories effectively censored by the U.S. news lords and the Bush Administration's chorus of journalist castrati.

Finally, I must give special thanks to our team's special investigator on Iraq, Leni von Eckardt, to brilliant BBC producer Meirion Jones, to the stalwart

editors of Harper's Magazine who withstood legal threats to publish the story, and to TomPaine.com, which has always provided a refuge for the best investigative reporting American newspapers won't print.

#9 Iran's New Oil Trade System Challenges U.S. Currency

Source:

GlobalResearch.ca, October 27

Title: "Iran Next U.S. Target"

Author: William Clark

Faculty Evaluator: Phil Beard, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Brian Miller

The U.S. media tells us that Iran may be the next target of U.S. aggression. The anticipated excuse is Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program. William Clark tells us that economic reasons may have more to do with U.S. concerns over Iran than any weapons of mass destruction.

In mid-2003 Iran broke from tradition and began accepting eurodollars as payment for its oil exports from its E.U. and Asian customers. Saddam Hussein attempted a similar bold step back in 2000 and was met with a devastating reaction from the U.S. Iraq now has no choice about using U.S. dollars for oil sales (Censored 2004 #19). However, Iraq's plan to open an international oil exchange market for trading oil in the euro currency is a much larger threat to U.S. dollar supremacy than Iraq's switch to euros.

While the dollar is still the standard currency for trading international oil sales, in 2006 Iran intends to set up an oil exchange (or bourse) that would facilitate global trading of oil between industrialized and developing countries by pricing sales in the euro, or "petroeuro." To this end, they are creating a euro-denominated Internet-based oil exchange system for global oil sales. This is a direct challenge to U.S. dollar supremacy in the global oil market. It is widely speculated that the U.S. dollar has been inflated for some time now because of the monopoly position of "petrodollars" in oil trades. With the level of national debt, the value of the dollar has been held artificially high compared to other currencies.

The vast majority of the world's oil is traded on the New York NYMEX (Mercantile Exchange) and the London IPE (International Petroleum Exchange), and, as mentioned by Clark, both exchanges are owned by U.S. corporations. Both of these oil exchanges transact oil trades in U.S. currency. Iran's plan to create a new oil exchange would facilitate trading oil on the world market in euros. The euro has become a somewhat stronger and more stable trading medium than the U.S. dollar in recent years. Perhaps this is why Russia, Venezuela, and some members of OPEC have expressed interest in moving towards a petroeuro system for oil transactions. Without a doubt, a successful Iranian oil bourse may create momentum for other industrialized countries to stop exchanging their own currencies for petrodollars in order to buy oil. A shift away from U.S. dollars to euros in the oil market would cause the demand for petrodollars to drop, perhaps causing the value of the dollar to plummet. A precipitous drop in the value of the U.S. dollar would undermine the U.S. position as a world economic leader.

China is a major exporter to the United States, and its trade surplus with the U.S. means that China has become the world's second largest holder of U.S. currency reserves (Japan is the largest holder with \$800 billion, and China holds over \$600 billion in T-bills). China would lose enormously if they were still holding vast amounts of U.S. currency when the dollar collapsed and assumed a more realistic value. Maintaining the U.S. as a market for their goods is a pre-eminent goal of Chinese financial policy, but they are increasingly dependent on Iran for their vital oil and gas imports. The Chinese government is careful to maintain the value of the yuan linked with the U.S. dollar (8.28 yuan to 1 dollar). This artificial linking makes them, effectively, one currency. But the Chinese government has indicated interest in de-linking the dollar-yuan arrangement, which could result in an immediate fall in the dollar. More worrisome is the potentiality of China to abandon its ongoing prolific purchase of U.S. Treasuries/debt—should they become displeased with U.S. policies towards Iran.

Unstable situations cannot be expected to remain static. It is reasonable to expect that the Chinese are hedging their bets. It is unreasonable to expect that they plan to be left holding devalued dollars after a sudden decline in their value. It is possible that the artificial situation could continue for some time, but this will be due largely to the fact that the Chinese want it that way. Regardless, China seems to be in the process of unloading some of its U.S. dollar reserves in the world market to purchase oil reserves, and most recently attempted to buy Unocal, a California-based oil company.

The irony is that apparent U.S. plans to invade Iran put pressure on the Chinese to abandon their support of the dollar. Clark warns that “a unilateral U.S. military strike on Iran would further isolate the U.S. government, and it is conceivable that such an overt action could provoke other industrialized nations to abandon the dollar en masse.” Perhaps the U.S. planners think that they can corner the market in oil militarily. But from Clark's point of view, “a U.S. intervention in Iran is likely to prove disastrous for the United States, making

matters much worse regarding international terrorism, not to mention potential adverse effects on the U.S. economy.” The more likely outcome of an Iran invasion would be that, just as in Iraq, Iranian oil exports would dry up, regardless of what currency they are denominated in, and China would be compelled to abandon the dollar and buy oil from Russia—likely in euros. The conclusion is that U.S. leaders seem to have no idea what they are doing. Clark points out that, “World oil production is now flat out, and a major interruption would escalate oil prices to a level that would set off a global depression.”

Update by William Clark: Following the completion of my essay in October 2004, three important stories appeared that dramatically raised the geopolitical stakes for the Bush Administration. First, on October 28, 2004, Iran and China signed a huge oil and gas trade agreement (valued between \$70 and \$100 billion dollars.)¹ It should also be noted that China currently receives 13 percent of its oil imports from Iran. The Chinese government effectively drew a “line in the sand” around Iran when it signed this huge oil and gas deal. Despite desires by U.S. elites to enforce petrodollar hegemony by force, the geopolitical risks of a U.S. attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities would surely create a serious crisis between Washington and Beijing.

An article that addressed some of the strategic risks appeared in the December 2004 edition of the Atlantic Monthly.² This story by James Fallows outlined the military war games against Iran that were conducted during the summer and autumn of 2004. These war-gaming sessions were led by Colonel Sam Gardiner, a retired Air Force colonel who for more than two decades ran war games at the National War College and other military institutions. Each scenario led to a dangerous escalation in both Iran and Iraq. Indeed, Col. Gardiner summarized the war games with the following conclusion, “After all this effort, I am left with two simple sentences for policymakers: You have no military solution for the issues of Iran. And you have to make diplomacy work.”³

The third and final news item that revealed the Bush Administration’s intent to attack Iran was provided by investigative reporter Seymour Hersh. The January 2005 issue of The New Yorker (“The Coming Wars”) included interviews with high-level U.S. intelligence sources who repeatedly told Hersh that Iran was indeed the next strategic target.⁴ However, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China will likely veto any U.S. resolution calling for military action against Iran. A unilateral military strike on Iran would isolate the U.S. government in the eyes of the world community, and it is conceivable that such an overt action could provoke other industrialized nations to abandon the dollar in droves. I refer to this in my book as the “rogue nation hypothesis.”

While central bankers throughout the world community would be extremely reluctant to “dump the dollar,” the reasons for any such drastic reaction are likely straightforward from their perspective—the global community is dependent on the oil and gas energy supplies found in the Persian Gulf. Numerous oil geologists are warning that global oil production is now running “flat out.” Hence, any such efforts by the international community that resulted in a dollar currency crisis would be undertaken—not to cripple the U.S. dollar and economy as punishment towards the American people per se—but rather to thwart further unilateral warfare and its potentially destructive effects on the critical oil production and shipping infrastructure in the Persian Gulf. Barring a U.S. attack, it appears imminent that Iran’s euro-denominated oil bourse will open in March, 2006.⁵ Logically, the most appropriate U.S. strategy is compromise with the E.U. and OPEC towards a dual-currency system for international oil trades.

For additional information: Readers interested in learning more about the dollar/euro oil currency conflict and the upcoming geological phenomenon referred to as Peak Oil can read William Clark's new book, Petrodollar Warfare: Oil, Iraq and the Future of the Dollar. Available from New Society Publishers: www.newsociety.com, www.amazon.com or from your local book store.

NOTES

1. "China, Iran sign biggest oil & gas deal," China Daily, October 31, 2004. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-10/31/content_387140.htm.
2. James Fallows, "Will Iran be Next?," Atlantic Monthly, December 2004, pgs. 97-110.
3. James Fallows, *ibid*.
4. Seymour Hersh, "The Coming Wars," The New Yorker, January 24th-31st issue, 2005, pgs. 40-47. Posted online January 17, 2005. Online: http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/050124fa_fact
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#10 Mountaintop Removal Threatens Ecosystem and Economy

Source:

Earthfirst! Nov-Dec 2004

Title: " See You in the Mountains: Katuah Earth First! Confronts Mountaintop Removal"

Author: John Conner

Faculty Evaluator: Ervand Peterson, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Angela Sciortino

Mountaintop removal is a new form of coal mining in which companies dynamite the tops of mountains to collect the coal underneath. Multiple peaks are blown off and dumped onto highland watersheds, destroying entire mountain ranges. More than 1,000 miles of streams have been destroyed by this practice in West Virginia alone. Mountain top removal endangers and destroys entire communities with massive sediment dams and non-stop explosions.

According to Fred Mooney, an active member of the Mountain Faction of Katuah Earth First!, “MTR is an ecocidal mining practice in which greedy coal companies use millions of pounds of dynamite a day (three million pounds a day in the southwest Virginia alone) to blow up entire mountain ranges in order to extract a small amount of coal.” He goes on to say that “Then as if that wasn’t bad enough, they dump the waste into valleys and riverbeds. The combination of these elements effectively kills everything in the ecosystems.”

Most states are responsible for permitting and regulating mining operations under the Surface Mining Control Act. Now MTR is trying to break into Tennessee, specifically Zeb Mountain in the northeast. Because Tennessee did such a poor job in the ’70s, the state renounced control, and all mining is now regulated under the federal Office of Surface Mining. This makes Tennessee unique because activists have recourse in the federal courts to stop mountaintop removal.

The coal industry has coined many less menacing names for mountaintop removal, such as cross range mining, surface mining and others. But regardless of the euphemism, MTR remains among the most pernicious forms of mining ever conceived. Blasting mountain tops with dynamite is cheaper than hiring miners who belong to a union. More than 40,000 have been lost to MTR in West Virginia alone.

Ninety-three new coal plants are being planned for construction throughout the U.S. Demand for coal will increase as these new facilities are completed. Oil is starting to run out and there are no concrete plans for a transition to renewable resources such as wind and solar energy. Coal companies therefore will be well-positioned to capitalize on their growing market. Katuah Earth First! (KEF!) is one of several groups resisting MTR.

The coal taken from Zeb Mountain is being burned by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and continues to cause environmental damage. KEF! wants to raise awareness and direct attention to the perpetrators—TVA and the Office of Surface Mining (OSM). KEF! emphasized that “the issue of mountain top removal is not just a local one. It is intertwined with many global issues such as corporate domination of communities, the homogenization of local cultures and the over consumption of our wasteful society.”

Four federal agencies that review applications for coal mines have entered an agreement that would give state governments an option that could speed up the process. The Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service and Office of Surface Mining said that the agreement was intended to streamline the procedures companies go through when applying for permits to start surface coal mines, including those that remove entire mountaintops to unearth coal.¹

Environmental groups are beginning to challenge these policies in federal district court. The current program allows the Army Corps of Engineers to issue a general permit for a category of activities under the Clean Water Act if they “will cause only minimal adverse environmental effects” according to federal regulation. Coal companies then also must seek individual “authorizations” from the Corps for the projects for which they have received a general permit.²

According to the Bush Administration, the federal judge who blocked the streamline permitting of new mountaintop removal coal mines has overstepped his authority. Lawyers for the Army Corps of Engineers asked a federal appeals court to overturn the July 2004 ruling by U.S. District Judge Joseph R. Goodwin. Industry lawyers criticized Goodwin’s decision as the “latest unwarranted and impermissible dismantling” of mountaintop removal regulations by federal judges in Southern West Virginia.³

Update by John Conner: The destructions of highland watersheds are a crime against the very future. The Appalachian Mountains are some of the most diverse in the world. Areas incredibly rich in biodiversity are being turned into the biological equivalent of parking lots. It is the final solution for 200 million-year-old mountains. Since dynamite is cheaper than people, MTR has broken the back of the mining unions in West Virginia, massive sediment dams threaten to bury entire communities, water tables are destroyed, and wells dry up. It is a form of cultural genocide driving a mountain people from their hills—then destroying the hills themselves.

There has been a direct impact on Marsh Fork Elementary, where a massive sediment dam looms above the elementary school. Over 18 people have been arrested for non-violent civil disobedience trying to protect the children of that school. Additionally, Mountain Justice Summer has begun a campaign modeled on Redwood and Mississippi Summers, where folks from all over North America have come to our region to help us defend our mountains.

When the Martin County coal impoundment burst, it released more than 20 times the waste volume into a community than the Exxon Valdez spill—yet the coal industry successfully suppressed the story. The coal industry is incredibly powerful, and there exists a glass ceiling on how far our stories go. The story of the folks committing civil disobedience for the first time in history in West Virginia to resist Mountain Top Removal was placed on the AP—but virtually no outlets outside of West Virginia picked it up.

People can get more information on this issue at mountainjusticesummer.org.

This site has everything—links, pictures, and state-by-state activities. From there you can sign yourself up for our electronic newsletter and find out what is going on in all the states under attack by Mountain Top Removal.

NOTES

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2. Associated Press, February 11, 2005, "Federal agencies will work together to speed up mining permits."
3. Charleston Gazette (West Virginia), March 22, 2005, Tuesday, "Bush, Industry seek reversal of mining ruling."

#11 Universal Mental Screening Program Usurps Parental Rights

Sources:

Asheville Global Report (British Medical Journal), No. 284, June 24-30, 2004

Title: "Bush Plans To Screen Whole U.S. Population For Mental Illness"

Author: Jeanne Lenzer

<http://www.agnews.org/issues/284/#2>

Truth News, September 13,2004

Title: " Forcing Kids Into a Mental Health Ghetto"

Congressman Ron Paul

<http://www.truthnews.net/world/2004090078.htm>

Faculty Evaluator: David Van Nuys Ph.D.

Student Researchers: John Ferritto, Matt Johnson

In April of 2002, President Bush appointed a 22 member commission called the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health in order to " identify policies that could be implemented by Federal, State and local governments to maximize the utility of existing resources, improve coordination of treatments and services, and promote successful community integration for adults with a serious mental illness and children with a serious emotional disturbance." 1 Members of this commission include physicians in the mental health field and at least one (Robert N. Postlethwait) former employee of pharmaceutical giant Ely Lilly and Co.

In July of 2003 the commission published the results of their study. They found that mental health disorders often go undiagnosed and recommended to the President that there should be more comprehensive screening for mental illnesses for people of all ages, including pre-school age children. In accordance with their findings, the commission recommended that schools were in a " key position" to screen the 52 million students and 6 million adult employees of our nation's schools.2

The commission also recommended linking the screenings with treatment and support. They recommended using the Texas Medication Algorithm Project (TMAP) as a model treatment system.3 TMAP, which was implemented in Texas' publicly funded mental health care system while George W. Bush was governor of Texas,4 is a disease management program that aids physicians in prescribing drugs to patients based on clinical history, background, symptoms, and previous results. It was the first program in the United States aimed at establishing medication guidelines for treating mental health illnesses.5 Basically, it is an algorithm that recommends specific drugs which should be used to treat specific diseases. Funding for TMAP was provided by a Robert Wood-Johnson Grant as well as several major drug companies. The project began in 1995 as an alliance of individuals from pharmaceutical companies, the University of Texas, and the mental health and corrections systems of Texas.6

Critics of mental health screening and TMAP claim that it is a payoff to Pharmaceutical companies. Many cite Allen Jones, a former employee of the Pennsylvania Office of the Inspector General. He was fired when he revealed that many key officials who have influence over the medication plan in his state received monetary perks and benefits from pharmaceutical companies, which benefited from their drugs being in the medication algorithm. TMAP also promotes the use of newer, more expensive anti-psychotic drugs. Results of studies conducted in the United States and Great Britain found that using the older, more established anti-psychotic drugs as a front line treatment rather than the newer experimental drugs makes more sense. Under TMAP, the Ely Lilly drug olanzapine, a new atypical antipsychotic drug, is used as a first line treatment rather than a more typical anti-psychotic medication. Perhaps it is because Ely Lilly has several ties to the Bush family, where George Bush Sr. was

a member of the board of directors. George W. Bush also appointed Ely Lilly C.E.O. Sidney Taurel to a seat on the Homeland Security Council. Of Ely Lilly's \$1.6 million political contributions in 2000, 82 percent went to Republicans and George W. Bush.⁷

In November of 2004, Congress appropriated \$20 million⁸ to implement the findings of the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. This would include mandatory screening by schools for mental health illnesses. Congressman Ron Paul, R-Texas introduced an amendment to the appropriations bills which would withhold funding for mandatory mental health screenings and require parental consent and notification. His amendment, however, was voted down by a wide margin (95-315 in the House of Representatives).⁹ Paul, a doctor and long-time member of the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS) states, "At issue is the fundamental right of parents to decide what medical treatment is appropriate for their children. The notion of federal bureaucrats ordering potentially millions of youngsters to take psychotropic drugs like Ritalin strikes an emotional chord with American parents." Paul says the allegation "that we have a nation of children with undiagnosed mental disorders crying out for treatment is patently false," and warns that mental health screening could be used to label children whose attitudes, religious beliefs, and political views conflict with established doctrine. Paul further warns that an obvious major beneficiary of this legislation is the pharmaceutical industry. The AAPS has decried this legislation, which they say will lead to mandatory psychological testing of every child in America without parental consent, and "heap even more coercive pressure on parents to medicate children with potentially dangerous side effects."

Update by Jeanne Lenzer: Whether it's the pills we take or the oil we use, it would be reassuring to know that the information used to develop new medicines or to utilize natural resources wisely is based on science—not corporate spin.

But blandishments from Big Pharma to politicians and doctors have a profound effect on health care in the U.S., making medical research closer to propaganda than science at times.

One way drug companies, in collusion with doctors, increase their market share is to expand the definition of diseases. When diagnostic criteria were liberalized for attention deficit disorder in 1991, the number of children diagnosed jumped by about 60 percent.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) acknowledged in the July 2004 issue of *Advocacy News* that, "The BMJ story has gained some traction in derivative reports on the Internet." But, they boasted, "mainstream media have not touched the story, in part thanks to APA's work, for which the [Bush] Administration is appreciative."¹⁰

The APA's boast is curious. The article was the most downloaded article in the history of the BMJ. It clearly struck a nerve with a public wary of doctors and politicians whose pockets are lined with drug company money.

Given the interest in the BMJ story, it would seem that the APA, instead of attempting to keep the story out of the mainstream media, would be anxious to counter the widely circulated statements in the article. It would also seem that the mainstream press could provide the Administration and the APA the best possible vehicle to counter these supposed factual errors in the BMJ article.

But, the facts might prove difficult to square with the public. More than one in every 100 toddlers and preschoolers in the United States are on powerful psychiatric drugs, such as Ritalin and Prozac, according to a study published in the February 2000 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Joseph T. Coyle, M.D., wrote in an accompanying editorial, “ It appears that behaviorally disturbed children are now increasingly subjected to quick and inexpensive pharmacologic fixes, as opposed to informed multimodal therapy.” He concluded, “ These disturbing prescription practices suggest a growing crisis in mental health services to children and demand more thorough investigation.”

But instead of issuing warnings about overmedication or inappropriate prescribing, the experts on the New Freedom Commission warn ominously that too few children are receiving treatment for mental illness. They cite escalating numbers of toddlers expelled from daycare as evidence of potentially serious psychological problems—problems to be diagnosed and cured with mental health screening and pills. Social and economic reasons for the rise in kiddie expulsions are left unexamined.

As bad as this is for those put on drugs and labeled “ mentally ill,” the far bigger concern is the creation of a disease for every drug, a situation made possible by the hand-in-glove relationship between industry and the government.

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#12 Military in Iraq Contracts Human Rights Violators

Sources:

Mother Jones, November/December 2004

Title: " Dirty Warriors: How South African Hitmen, Serbian Paramilitaries, and Other Human Rights Violators Became Guns for Hire for Military Contractors in Iraq"

Author: Bary Yeoman

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Title: " Intelligence, Inc."

Author: Pratap Chatterjee

www.law.com, May 11, 2004

Title: " Untested Law Key in Iraqi Abuse Scandal"

Author: Jonathan Groner

Faculty Evaluator: Rick Williams, JD

Student Researcher: Danielle Hallstein

The United States government is contracting private firms to recruit, hire, and train civilians to perform duties normally done by military personnel. These corporate employees are sent to fill empty positions as prison guards, military police, and interrogators at United States military bases worldwide, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Cuba. Independent of the United States military, these employees are not held accountable by military law. Many of the recruits are citizens with prior experience as policemen or soldiers. However, a number of the employees have backgrounds as mercenaries and soldiers who fought for repressive regimes throughout the world, such as in South Africa, Chile, and Yugoslavia. Employees from some of these firms have recently been indicated in prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The Pentagon claims that it can no longer fight the war on terror without enlisting the help of private contractors. The reason for this inability is that the number of active troops in the United States military has dropped from 2.1 million to 1.4 million since the end of the Cold War. This puts a lot of pressure on companies to fill positions as quickly as possible. One negative consequence of this rushed hiring is the lack of in-depth background checks on applicants. Many recruits have been implicated in past human rights violations, including torture and killing. One of these ex-soldier-turned-United States employees was Gary Branfield, who was killed in a firefight with Iraqi soldiers in the spring of 2004. In the 1980s he was a covert operations specialist working for the South African apartheid government. Branfield's mission was to track down and assassinate members of the African National Congress living outside of South Africa. Mysteriously, this information failed to appear during background checks performed by Branfield's employer, Hart Group. Hart Group has been hired by the United States to guard Iraqi energy

facilities and to protect the engineers rebuilding Iraq's electricity network. Retired justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa Richard Goldstone comments, "The mercenaries we're talking about worked for security forces that were synonymous with murder and torture."

The Titan Corporation, which claims to provide "comprehensive information and communications products, solutions, and services for National Security" (www.corpwatch.org), has a contract with the U.S. to supply translators for the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. A 2004 military investigation into prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib concluded that "Titan employees actively participated in detainee abuse, including assault and possibly rape" (Mother Jones, 2004). However, the only legal action taken against Titan as of yet is in the U.S. district court for the Southern district of California, where the Abu Ghraib prisoners have filed a class action suit against the employees of Titan. Employees of California Analysis Center Incorporated (CACI) were also found to have participated in the abuse. Plaintiffs in this suit are demanding a jury trial, but the process is moving slowly. Jeffrey Ellefante, executive vice president at CACI, says that CACI has yet to be informed of the specific accusations against its employees. Oddly enough, the soldiers implicated in the abuse have already been court martialed under the Military Code of Conduct.

So why is there a discrepancy between the punishment of soldiers and that of independent employees for the same crime? The answer is legal ramifications. While United States military personnel are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, independent contractors working through the Pentagon as civilians are not. Because of this, Congress passed the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA) in 2000 to enable the prosecution of civilians "employed by or accompanying U.S. armed forces" (www.law.com). Unfortunately, MEJA can only be applied to civilian employees who are contracted through the Department of Defense (DOD), and to crimes committed overseas that would merit a minimum one-year sentence under Federal law. Currently there is an investigation into the deaths of Iraqi prisoners after having been questioned by private interrogators hired by the CIA. If found guilty, these interrogators may be let off on a technicality because they work for the CIA, not the DOD, like MEJA requires.

This begs the question, under whose jurisdiction do these crimes fall? In an attempt to answer this, the Defense Department proposed new regulation earlier this year that "would require DOD contractors to make sure their employees comply with the Uniform Code of Military Justice where applicable" (www.law.com.) Debate over this proposal will open on May 24, 2005. Critic Daniel Guttman, fellow at John Hopkins University, questions the "where applicable" phrase saying, "it says the Uniform Code applies where applicable, but when is that?...They seem to be making policy on the run" (www.law.com). As for now, the Pentagon claims that it, "is not in the business of policing contractors' hiring practices," therefore it may take many more cases like Abu Ghraib before the U.S. government steps in to regulate the unlimited power that these private contractors are brandishing.

Update by Barry Yeoman: This was the first major article to systemically link the issues of military privatization with human rights abuses. We explained how the recent growth of a private security industry, fueled by the invasion of Iraq, necessitated the hiring of former soldiers and police officers trained and experienced in assassination and torture in formerly repressive countries.

Numerous radio stations have interviewed me about this article. Among the radio shows are "Political Thought," WMAR, Poughkeepsie NY; "The Morning Zone," KGAB, Cheyenne WY; and Ian Masters' Background Briefing, KPFK-FM, Los Angeles CA. The last of these interviews can be accessed at <http://www.barryyeoman.com/biography.html>.

A column called "Coalition of Willing is Dwindling" in the Paradise Post (CA) quoted from it. I have done extensive interviews with a European television network, which is producing a documentary on the subject.

Amnesty International has a petition drive seeking accountability for private contractors at Abu Ghraib: <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/action/index.asp?step=2&item=10897>.

There are several excellent resources on the growth of this industry: Peter Singer's book "Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry" (Cornell University Press, 2003) and the Center for Public Integrity's 11-part investigation "Making a Killing: The Business of War" <http://www.publicintegrity.org/bow/> are but a few.

#13 Rich Countries Fail to Live up to Global Pledges

Sources:

Oxfam Press Release, December 6, 2004

Title: "Poor Are Paying the Price of Rich Countries' Failure"

Author: Caroline Green

http://www.oxfam.org/eng/pr041206_MDG.htm

InterPress Service, OneWorld U.S., December 6, 2004

Title: "45 Million Children to Die in Next Decade Due to Rich Countries' Miserliness"

Author: Jim Lobe

<http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/99063/1/>

Faculty Evaluator: Maureen Buckley, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Paige Dumont

Forty-five million children will needlessly die between now and the year 2015, reveals the report by Oxfam, "Poor Are Paying the Price of Rich Countries' Failure." According to this report, 97 million more children will be denied access to an education by the year 2015 and 53 million more people will lack proper sanitation facilities. Ending poverty will require assistance on many levels. For third world countries, economic growth is undermined by unfair trade rules. Without finance and support, these countries will not be able to take advantage of global trade, investment opportunities, or protect basic human rights.

Wealthy countries such as the U.S., Germany, Japan, and the UK have promised to provide a very small fraction of their wealth to third world countries. By offering .7 percent of their gross national income, they could reduce poverty and end the burden of debt that makes low income countries pay up to \$100 million per day to creditors. In the years 1960-65, wealthy countries spent on average 0.48 percent of their combined national incomes on official development assistance but by the year 2003 the proportion had dropped to 0.24 percent. Vital poverty-reduction programs are failing for the lack of finance. Cambodia and Tanzania are among the poorest countries in the world, yet they will require at least double the level of external financing that they currently receive if they are to achieve their poverty-reduction targets.

Global initiatives to enable poor countries to develop provisional education and combat HIV/AIDS are starved of cash. Despite the fact that HIV infection rates are rising in sub-Saharan Africa, the global fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is assured of only one quarter of the funds that it needs for 2005. Poor countries continue to spend more paying back their creditors than they do on essential public services. Low-income countries paid \$39 billion in debt payments and interest in 2003, while they received only \$27 billion in aid.

Wealthy countries can easily afford to deliver the necessary aid and debt relief. For wealthy countries such as the U.S. to spend merely 0.7 percent of gross national income on humanitarian aid is equal to one-fifth of its expenditure on defense and one half of what it spends on domestic farm subsidies. The U.S., at just 0.14 percent, is the least generous provider of aid in proportion to national income of any developed country. By comparison, Norway is the most generous provider at 0.92 percent. The U.S. is spending more than twice as much on the war in Iraq as it would cost to increase its aid budget to 0.7 percent, and six times more on its military program. Canceling the debts of the 32 poorest countries would be small change for the wealthy nations.

Millions of children are now in school in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia, thanks to money provided by foreign aid and debt relief. Because of these relief funds, Ugandans no longer have to pay for basic health care. A policy was implemented that resulted in an increase of 50 to 100 percent in attendance at Ugandan health clinics and doubled the rate on immunities. History also shows that aid has been necessary in eradicating global diseases as well as rebuilding countries devastated by war.

The wealthiest of nations have continuously signed international statements pledging to increase foreign aid to 0.7 percent of their gross national income in order to eliminate the crippling debts of third world countries. Repeatedly, they have broken their promises.

#14 Corporations Win Big on Tort Reform, Justice Suffers

Sources:

Dollars and Sense, Issue #252, March/April 2004

Title: "Supremes Limit Punitive Damages"

Author: Jamie Court

<http://www.dollarsandsense.org/0304court.html>

Democracy now! Feb 4, 2005

Title: " Tort reform: The Big Payoff for Corporations, Curbing the Lawsuits that Hold Them Accountable"

Author: Amy Goodman et al (Juan Gonzalez interview with Joanne Doroshow)

<http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=05/02/04/1537236>

Faculty Evaluator: Perry Marker, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Chris Bui

On February 18, 2005, President Bush signed into law the most sweeping federal tort reform measure in more than a decade. The Class Action Fairness Act puts into effect a tort reform that will take away people's access to the courts, undermining the constitutional right to trial by jury. These reforms weaken consumer and worker protections, denying due process of law in civil cases to all but the wealthiest in our society. The act will move many civil lawsuits from state to federal courts in an attempt to end so-called " forum shopping" by trial lawyers seeking districts most hospitable to multi-party suits against companies.

What has been lost in all the partisan rhetoric is the fact that class action suits are most often lawsuits brought by people who have been hurt by HMO abuses, civil rights violations, or workplace injuries and violations. These are the suits that allow for compensation when large numbers of people are hurt by companies in the pursuit of profit. Although, at times, individual injuries may be relatively small, they represent a pattern of behavior on the part of the defendant. While legal recourse may not be available on an individual level, by joining together at the state level, people have been able to affect responsible change in the conduct of corporations. Federal courts are not expert in these cases, are already overburdened, and are much smaller than state courts. Critics claim that the real intention of this law is to make sure these cases get buried quickly and are ultimately dismissed.

Attached to this bill is a mass tort section that will severely restrict large class action suits against pharmaceutical companies and paves the way for medical malpractice reform, effectively immunizing abusive or negligent corporations from liability.

The reform sets a cap of \$250,000 per lawsuit while shielding drug companies from responsibility for punitive damages and lawsuits where the drug had been approved by the FDA. One woman who was taking the FDA approved drug Vioxx, for example, had a stroke and continued taking the drug because she wasn't warned of its major side effect—stroke. She went on to have a second stroke. The new reform would limit her settlement to \$250,000 for a lifetime of disabilities. Under this new legislation corporations will not be held accountable for their faulty products and will only be punished with a slap on the wrist in terms of financial payment.

Update by Jamie Court: The Supreme Court ruling in Campbell seems to be an eye-glazing experience for the mainstream media. For example, the press ignored the significance of the ruling in covering the Congressional debate over 2005 legislation signed into law by President Bush that created new hurdles to class action lawsuits. Given the Campbell ruling's limits, the new class action restrictions give a virtual guarantee to banks, insurers, drug makers, and other big industries that no matter how egregious their conduct, the penalty will always be financially manageable. Indeed if the media had taken more notice of the ruling, President Bush's campaign plank of limiting lawsuits of all kind would be seen in a far different light.

Read the State Farm v. Campbell case at <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>.

#15 Conservative Plan to Override Academic Freedom in the Classroom

Source: The Nation

Title: “ The New PC”

Author: Russell Jacoby

Date of Publication: April 4, 2005

Student Researchers: Vanessa Dem, Theodora Ruhs

For centuries, the higher education classroom has been a haven for honest debate and protected academic freedom. The college professor, one of the last “ rugged individualists,” had the freedom to teach a given subject in his or her own manner, as he or she saw it. The interpretation of the subject matter was the professors own, not a representation of a “ liberal” or “ conservative” dogma.

The halls of academia have included a wide variety of perspectives, from Newt Gingrich and William F. Buckley Jr. to Noam Chomsky and Albert Einstein.

In his article “ The New PC,” Russell Jacoby addresses a new extremist conservative movement to bring what they say is “ political balance” to higher education. These conservatives see academia as a hotbed of liberal activity that is working to indoctrinate America’s youth with leftwing ideology, citing studies that conclude that faculty of most universities are overwhelmingly liberal. They fear that these liberal faculty members are abusing students who profess conservative belief systems, and to remedy this they are pushing for regulation of the academic world to monitor professors’ _expression of theory and opinion.

At the forefront of this movement is David Horowitz and his academic watchdog organization, Students for Academic Freedom (SAF). SAF counsels its student members that, when they come across an ‘abuse’ like controversial material in a course, they are to write down the date, class and name of the professor. They are advised to accumulate a list of incidents or quotes, obtain witnesses, and lodge a complaint. Many in the academic world see these actions as a new McCarthy-ism—an effort to sniff out those who do not subscribe to the ‘dominant’ belief structure of the nation.

Beyond his student watch group, Horowitz is also championing a “ Student Bill of Rights.” Ironically, this bill claims to protect academic freedom. It proposes some ideas that are commonsense, such as, “ students will be graded solely on the basis of their reasoned answers and appropriate knowledge of the subjects and disciplines they study, not on the basis of their political or religious beliefs.”¹ But Jacoby warns that academic freedoms extended to students easily turn into the end of freedom for teachers. In Horowitz’s society of rights, students would have the right to hear all sides of all subjects all the time. Principle #4 of Horowitz’s academic bill of rights states that curricula and reading lists “ should reflect the uncertainty and unsettled character of all human knowledge,” and provide “ students with dissenting sources and viewpoints where appropriate.” The bill does not, however, distinguish when or where dissenting viewpoints are, or are not, appropriate.

The SAF website has a section for students to post 'abuses' and complaints about their academic experiences. Perusing these postings, Jacoby found one student reporting an 'abuse' in an introductory Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution class, "where military approaches were derided. The student complained that 'the only studying of conflict resolution that we did was to enforce the idea that non-violent means were the only legitimate sources of self-defense.'" Jacoby points out the irony, "presumably the professor of 'peace studies' should be ordered to give equal time to 'war studies.' By this principle, should the United States Army War College be required to teach pacifism?" From this point the movement seems to be rendered ridiculous.

Several authors, including Jacoby, point out the hypocrisy of Horowitz's focus on the humanities and education in general. The conservatives who feel such an urgency to protect the freedoms of conservative students in the humanities and to balance out the ratio of liberal to conservative faculty are in no rush to sort out the inequalities in business schools where the trend often appears to be the opposite, with the liberals in the minority. And as Jacoby points out, "of course, they do not address such imbalances in the police force, Pentagon, FBI, CIA, and other government outfits where the stakes seem far higher and where, presumably, followers of Michael Moore are short in supply."

Despite the apparent circus, this movement poses a real threat to the academic world. Whether or not the Student Bill of Rights passes in any of the state legislatures, where it stands as of Spring 2005, is not as important as how it influences public opinion. Already this movement has led to attacks and firings of a number of professors for their left leaning viewpoints. Ward Churchill, from the University of Colorado, was threatened with termination for using the term "little Eichmanns" to describe World Trade Center workers.² Oneida Memato, a political science professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver, was also harassed for her liberal bias in class.³ And more recently, self-proclaimed anarchist David Graeber was fired, he believes, for his personal political activity, and for standing up for a student organizer who he felt was being treated unfairly.^{4,5}

Horowitz also aims to affect other areas of government involvement in academia, specifically funding. Proclaiming that academics are "a privileged elite that work between six to nine hours a week, eight months a year for an annual salary of about \$ 150,000 a year,"⁶ Horowitz further claims that he is "dedicated to exposing the cowards who run our universities to the alumni and taxpayers who pay their salaries. State Senator Larry Mumper argues, "Why should we, as fairly moderate to conservative legislators, continue to support universities that turn out students who rail against the very policies that their parents voted us in for?"⁷

NOTES

1. Students for Academic Freedom. "The Student Bill of Rights." <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/essays/sbor.html>.
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. <http://www.villagevoice.com/people/0523.interview.64691.24.html>.
5. "Early Exit" <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/05/18/yale>.
6. Mattson, Kevin.

7. Mattson. Kevin.

#16 U.S. Plans for Hemispheric Integration Include Canada

Sources:

Centre for Research on Globalisation, November 23, 2004

Title: " Is the Annexation of Canada Part of Bush's Military Agenda?"

Author: Michel Chossudovsky

<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO411C.html>

Canadian Dimension, Jan/Feb 2005, Winnipeg: Vol.39, Iss.1; pg. 12

Title: " Canada's Chance to Keep Space for Peace"

Author: Bruce K. Gagnon

space4peace.org

Faculty Evaluator: Sherril Jaffe, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Christina Reski

The U.S. and Canada have been sharing national information since the creation of NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) in 1958. This bi-national agreement to provide aerospace warning and control for North America is scheduled to expire in May 2006. In preparation for the renewal of this contract, the U.S. and Canadian commanders are proposing to expand the integration of the two countries, including cooperation in the " Star Wars" program, cross-national integration of military command structures, immigration, law enforcement, and intelligence gathering and sharing under the new title of NORTHCOM, U.S. Northern Command.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien refused to join NORTHCOM. To circumvent his decision, this " illusive transitional military" (aka NORAD/NORTHCOM) formed an interim military authority in December 2002, called the Bi-

National Planning Group (BPG.) The command structure is fully integrated between NORAD, NORTHCOM and the BPG. The BPG is neither accountable to the U.S. Congress nor the Canadian House of Commons. The BPG is also scheduled to expire in May 2006. Hence, the push for Canada to join NORTHCOM.

Donald Rumsfeld said that U.S. Northern Command would have jurisdiction over the entire North American region. NORTHCOM's jurisdiction, outlined by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), includes all of Canada, Mexico, parts of the Caribbean, contiguous waters in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans up to 500 miles of the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian coastlines as well as the Canadian Arctic.

Under NORTHCOM, Canada's military command structures would be subordinated to those of the Pentagon and the DoD. In December 2001, the Canadian government reached an agreement with the head of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, entitled the "Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration." This agreement essentially hands over confidential information on Canadian citizens and residents to the U.S. Department of Homeland. It also provides U.S. authorities with access to tax records of Canadians. The National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004, currently debated in the U.S. Senate, centers on a so-called 'Information Sharing Network' to coordinate data from 'all available sources.'

The BPG is the interim military for NORTHCOM. Part of the BPG's agenda is the Civil Assistance Plan (CAP) which supports the ongoing militarization of the civilian law enforcement and judicial functions in both the U.S. and Canada. Military commanders would "provide bi-national military assistance to civil authorities." The U.S. military would have jurisdiction over Canadian territory from coast to coast, extending from the St. Lawrence Valley to the Parry Island in the Canadian Arctic.

It appears that some Canadian leaders are in full support of this program. In the summer 2004, Canada agreed to amend the NORAD treaty to allow sharing satellite and radar data with the ballistic missile defense program based in Colorado. This operation center will control the 40 interceptor rockets planned for Alaska, California and at sea.

On February 22, 2005, at the NATO summit in Brussels, Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin declared that his people would not participate in the controversial Missile Defense Shield. Contradicting this message, Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. (and former board member of the Carlyle Group) Frank McKenna, said "We are part of it now."

On August 2, 2004, the U.S. Air Force quietly published a new doctrine called "Counterspace Operations." The development of offensive counterspace capabilities provides combatant commanders with new tools for counterspace operations... that may be utilized throughout the spectrum of conflict and may achieve a variety of effects from temporary denial to complete destruction of the adversary's space capability. It has also been noted that Canadian Military personnel are taking part in large scale American space war games designed to prepare for combat in orbit.

Under an integrated North American Command, Canada would be forced to embrace Washington's pre-emptive military doctrine, including the use of nuclear warheads as a means of self defense, which was ratified by the U.S. Senate in December 2003.

Similar bi-national negotiations are being conducted with Mexico. U.S. military could exert strategic control over air space, land mass and contiguous territorial waters extending from the Yucatan peninsula in southern Mexico to the Canadian Arctic, representing 12 percent of the world's land mass. The militarization of South America under the "Andean Trade Preference Act" as well as the signing of a "parallel" military cooperation protocol by 27 countries of the Americas (the so-called Declaration of Manaus) is an integral part of the process of hemispheric integration (see story #17).

Richard N. Haass, of the U.S. Department of State, said at the 2002 Arthur Ross Lecture, “ In the 21st century, the principal aim of American foreign policy is to integrate other countries and organizations into arrangements that will sustain a world consistent with U.S. interests and values, and thereby promote peace, prosperity and justice as widely as possible. Integration reflects not merely a hope for the future, but the emerging reality of the Bush Administration’s foreign policy.”

#17 U.S. Uses South American Military Bases to Expand Control of the Region

Sources:

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Jan/Feb 2005

Title: “ What’s the Deal at Manta”

Author: Michael Flynn

NACLA Report on the Americas, Nov/Dec 2004

Title: “ Creeping Militarization in the Americas”

Authors: Adam Isacson, Lisa Haugaard and Joy Olson

Z Magazine, December 29, 2004

Title: “ Colombia—A Shill (proxy) Country For U.S. Intervention In Venezuela”

Authors: Sohan Shama and Surinder Kumar

Faculty Evaluator: Jorge Porras, Ph. D.

Student Researchers: Adrienne Smith, Sarah Kintz

The United States has a military base in Manta, Ecuador, one of the three military bases located in Latin America. According to the United States, we are there to help the citizens of Manta, but an article in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists says that many people tell a different story.

According to Miguel Moran, head of a group called Movimiento Tohalli, which opposes the Manta military base, “ Manta is part of a broader U.S. imperialist strategy aimed at exploiting the continent’s natural resources, suppressing popular movements, and ultimately invading neighboring Colombia.” Michael Flynn reported that the military base in Ecuador is an “ integral part of the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Colombia—and is a potential staging ground for direct American involvement in the

conflict there. Ecuadorians worry that the U.S. could ultimately pull their country into conflict.” Flynn goes on to say that “the base is also at the center of a growing controversy regarding the U.S. efforts to block mass emigration from Ecuador [to the U.S.]” Policy makers have diminished the difference between police roles and military roles, stating that a police force is a body designed to protect a population through minimal use of force and the military, which aims to defeat an enemy through use of force.

According to a ten-year lease agreement between Ecuador and the United States, “... U.S. activities at the base are to be limited to counter-narcotics surveillance flights (the agreements for the other two Latin American Forward Operating Locations contain similar restrictions).” Ecuadorian citizens are not pleased with the lease or the way the U.S. has abused it. “A coalition of social and labor organizations has called for the termination of the U.S. lease in Manta on the grounds that the United States has violated both the terms of the agreement and Ecuadorian law.”

The U.S., says Flynn, is intervening in Colombia through private corporations and organizations. Most of the military operations and the spraying of biochemical agents are contracted out to private firms and private armies. In 2003, according to the article in Z Magazine, the U.S. State Department said, “...there are seventeen primary contracting companies working in Colombia, initially receiving \$3.5 million.” One of these private American defense contractors, DynCorp, runs the military base at Manta. “The Pentagon’s decision to give DynCorp—a company that many Latin Americans closely associate with U.S. activities in Colombia—the contract to administer the base reinforced fears that the United States had more than drug interdiction in mind when it set up shop in Manta,” says Flynn.

In addition, say Shama and Kumar, DynCorp was awarded a “\$600 million contract to carry out aerial spraying to eliminate coca crops which also contaminates maize, Yucca, and plantains—staple foods of the population; children and adults develop skin rashes.” The chemical, the foundation for the herbicide Roundup, is sprayed in Ecuador in a manner that would be illegal in the United States.

According to the NACLA report, in 2004, the Pentagon began installing 3 substitute logistics centers (now under construction) in the provinces of Guayas, Azuay, and Sucumbios, and is currently militarizing the Ecuadorian police who are receiving “anti-terrorist” training by the FBI. The U.S. military is also aiding Colombia’s “war on drugs.” Isacson, Haugaard and Olson write that, “increased militarization of antinarcotics operation is a pretext for stepped up counterinsurgency action and extending the war against them by the U.S.” Washington also has seven security offices in Ecuador: defense (DAO), drug enforcement (DEA), military aid (MAAG), internal security, national security (NSA), the U.S. Agency for Internal Development (USAID), the Peace Corps, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). According to the Bush Administration they are mixing military and police roles to “...govern its counter-terror efforts in the hemisphere.”

Michael Flynn offers this quote from an Ecuadorian writer as another example of the United States intervening in the operations of another country to further its own agenda: “The U.S. invasion of Iraq and the pressure on Ecuador to sign the interdiction agreement form part of a policy aimed at consolidating a unipolar world with one hegemonic superpower.”

Update by Michael Flynn: I think one important aspect of my story about the Manta base is that it shows the arrogance that often characterizes U.S. relations with its southern neighbors. This arrogance comes with a heavy price, which the U.S. is paying now as South American leaders express an ever greater willingness to take an independent path in their affairs and reject the U.S. lead. This fact was clearly revealed recently when the Organization of American States soundly rejected a U.S. proposal to set up a mechanism to review the state of democracy in the Americas. Manta is a small part of this much larger picture. U.S. ambassadors, the head of Southcom, even representatives in Congress have shown a disregard for Ecuadorian concerns about operations at the Manta base, which has helped fan criticism of the base, and has turned into a lightning rod of criticism of U.S. policies. And this is only one of among dozens of similar bases spread out across the globe—what impact are they having on U.S. relations?

An equally important issue touched on in my story is the U.S. reaction to the migration crises that has gripped several Latin countries in recent years. Manta is a sort of quasi-outpost of the U.S. southern border, which has shown remarkable flexibility in recent years. The fact is, the border itself ceased long ago to be the front line in the effort to stop unwanted migration. The United States uses military bases located in host countries as staging grounds for detention efforts. It has funded detention centers in places like Guatemala City, and it has teamed up with law enforcement officials from other countries to carry out multi-lateral operations aimed at breaking up migrant smuggling activities. Manta is one piece in this larger puzzle.

To my knowledge, the mainstream press has not picked up on the precise story lines covered in my article. On the other hand, the press has not altogether ignored these issues either. Ginger Thompson of the New York Times has tracked the plight of migrants in several Latin American countries, and last year she teamed up with an Ecuadorean journalist to produce a remarkable story about the harrowing experience of migrants who dare to board the smuggling vessels leaving Ecuadorean shores. They did not, however, scrutinize Manta's role in interdicting these migrants, or address the many problematic aspects of U.S. overseas interdiction practices. Regarding U.S. overseas military bases, the recent turmoil in Uzbekistan has drawn the attention of the U.S. press to contradictions in U.S. policy that have emerged between its desire to have bases in strategic spots around the world and President Bush's promise to advocate democratic change across the globe. Also, Dana Priest of the Washington Post has done excellent work reporting on the role of U.S. bases and military commanders around the globe. See, for example, Priest's *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military* (New York: Norton, 2003). Several alternative press outlets have also tracked this issue, including for example Mother Jones magazine, which ran a story by Chalmers Johnson on this issue, and the Nation Institute's Tom Engelhardt, who has run a number of pieces in his TomDispatch touching on U.S. overseas bases.

For additional information: For those interested in following up on the Manta base, the best source of information online is the web site of the Ecuadorean daily: El Universo at <http://www.eluniverso.com/>.

I would also suggest looking at the studies about U.S. forward operation locations published by the Amsterdam-based Transnational Institute at <http://www.tni.org/>.

To find out more about U.S. cross-border interdiction policies, a story that has been woefully under-reported in the United States, I suggest taking a look at other stories I have written on this subject, some of which are available on the web site of the International Reporting Project: <http://www.pewfellowships.org/index.htm>.

Finally, to get a global perspective of U.S. basing ambitions, I suggest perusing the May 2005 report of the U.S. Overseas Basing Commission, which is available online at <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/dod/obc.pdf>.

Update by Lisa Haugaard: While the nation is focused on events in Iraq and Afghanistan, 9/11 has also had a disturbing impact on U.S. policy toward Latin America. But the growth in U.S. military programs towards Latin America and the unfortunate emphasis by the United States on encouraging non-defense related roles for militaries is part of a more general trend that the Center for International Policy, Latin America Working Group Education Fund and Washington Office on Latin America have been documenting since 1997. Latin American civil society organizations, individuals and governmental leaders have struggled hard to strictly limit their militaries' involvement in civilian affairs, given that many militaries in the region had exercised severe repression, carried out military coups and maintained political control during several turbulent decades. After this painful history, it is troubling for the United States to be encouraging militaries to once again adopt non-defense related roles, as is the growing weight of U.S. military, rather than regional development aid in U.S. relations.

We are seeing a continuation of the general trend of declining U.S. development assistance and stable military aid to the region as well as the United States encouraging actions that blur the line between civilian police and military roles. We are also witnessing efforts by the Defense Department to exercise greater control over “security assistance” (foreign military aid programs) worldwide, which were once overseen exclusively by the State Department. This almost invisible shift—by no means limited to Latin America—is disturbing because it removes the State Department as the lead agency in deciding where foreign military aid and training is appropriate as part of U.S. foreign policy. It will lead to less stringent oversight of military programs and less emphasis upon human rights conditionality.

Our report, which we published in Spanish, received good coverage from the Latin American press. Mainstream U.S. newspapers regularly use our military aid database. The larger story about the general trends in U.S. military aid in Latin America and changes in oversight of foreign military programs, however, is one that has been covered by only a few major media outlets.

To see our military aid database, reports and other information (a collaborative project by the three organizations) see our “Just the Facts” website, <http://www.ciponline.org/facts>. See also our organizations’ websites: Washington Office on Latin America, www.wola.org; Center for International Policy, www.ciponline.org; and Latin America Working Group Education Fund, www.lawg.org.

We welcome efforts by journalists, scholars and nongovernmental organizations to insist upon greater transparency and public oversight of U.S. military training programs, not just in Latin America but worldwide.

#18 Little Known Stock Fraud Could Weaken U.S. Economy

Sources:

San Antonio Express-News—March 2, 2005

Title: “Naked Short Selling Is A Plague For Businesses And Investors”

Author: David Hendricks

TheMotleyFool.com—March 30, 2005

Title: “Who’s Behind Naked Shorting?”

Author: Karl Thiel

Financial Wire—Stockgate Today Series

Title: " SEC's Donaldson Addresses Liquidity Fraud," September 20, 2004;

" Dateline NBC Cancelled and Attorney Accuses DTCC of Cheap Thuggery," April 7, 2005

Author: Dave Patch

Faculty Evaluator: Wingham Liddell, Ph.D.

Student Researcher: David Stolowitz

The negligence of government regulatory agencies and the media is becoming worrisome as a major scandal, unknown outside the financial community, is bankrupting small businesses and investors and having a negative effect on the economy.

While the balance of supply and demand is a fairly well known principle of economic health, a related and similar relationship exists between liquidity—the availability of liquid, spendable assets such as cash, stocks and bonds—and security—the stability, endurance and trustworthiness of more long-term financial mechanisms.

A healthy economy requires both enough access to liquid assets to ensure a smooth and flexible flow of money and a system that guarantees enough stability, protection and security for investors to take a reasonable measure of risk without having excessive fears of losing their money. Unreasonable emphasis on the first requirement and not enough attention to the second is a trend that has developed in the last decade and may have more to do with ideology than sound economic policy. Liquidity fraud and naked shorting abuses as described in this article are a symptom of a greater problem within our economic culture. This lopsided philosophy of economic regulation is a significant factor in creating the kind of climate that has produced company scandals like Enron and WorldCom, as well as a careless attitude towards free trade and globalization that may create more costs than benefits in the name of " economic growth."

The scandal coined " Stockgate" by the Financial Wire involves the abuse of a practice called " short selling." As opposed to a traditional approach to investing in which stocks are researched and bought on the hope they will rise over the " long" term, going " short" involves a bet that a stock is about to go down in value. In a short sale, an investor sells stock that he or she technically doesn't own. The investor borrows these shares of stock from their broker, who in turn may likely borrow the shares himself from a financial clearinghouse like a brokerage firm or hedge fund. Hoping that the price of the stock will drop, the investor is obligated to eventually " close" the short by buying back the sold shares at a hopefully lower price, thus making a profit from the fall of the stock. When the time runs out for " covering" the short and the price hasn't dropped, the investor is forced to buy back the shares at a loss and take a financial hit. The short sale of stocks is a risky bet, usually not recommended except for speculation or hedging—to protect long-term financial positions with short-term offsets. As short-selling is a sale of stocks not owned, but loaned, it is an example of buying on margin—a category of practices whose abuses stand out clearly in many people's minds as a significant factor in the Stock Market Crash of 1929 which ushered in the Great Depression.

Naked shorting is an illegal abuse of short selling in which investors short-sell stock that they have no intention or ability to ever cover. When allowed to occur, naked shorting drives the stock value of a company down by creating more stock shares flowing around the market than actual shares of stock that the company can back with their current earnings. Companies, their shareholders, and indeed the entire economy are hurt financially by naked shorting, as it reduces the money available to support economic growth. According to activist Dave Patch, " Naked shorting steals some of the greatest ideas, products, and services in America. Small micro-cap companies are driven out of business by this abuse and we are left with the unknowns of what these

companies and their employees had to offer our futures. The opportunities for the next Microsoft may never be felt as naked shorting snuffed out that creativity before it was ever brought to fruition. Ultimately, naked shorting steals from the very foundation of our nation as it steals the American dream of opportunity.”

Patch and other investors hurt by or concerned about the consequences of naked shorting organized, petitioned and investigated the background surrounding the Stockgate scandal. What they found was not merely a series of noteworthy cases of extravagant abuse by individual investors and professionals, but a systemic pattern of negligence by regulators that allowed the abuse to go by largely unchecked. A whole series of checks and balances was originally designed to prevent abuses like naked shorting. Yet, as their research has shown, every regulator along the way has failed its duty and led to both widespread and high-figure abuse. While investors have lost hundreds of billions of dollars in savings, the Wall Street Firms responsible for the abuse saw negligible fines that had no appreciable impact on their stock values. Some executives were even given raises in the midst of their negligence and fraud!

As more pressure has been brought against regulatory agencies to stop the fraud and enforce rules, an opposition has come forth that actually favors allowing the illegal practice to continue unchecked. These critics argue that all short sales, including illegal naked shorts, help bust the hype that can surround micro-cap companies. Excitement over new but untried ideas can artificially inflate stock prices, causing eventual losses to companies and investors when the bubble bursts, as in the case of the dot-com boom of the '90s.

While it is true, as the critics argue, that removing naked shorting could in some cases allow hyped prices to climb further, such an effect is vastly overrated. The argument does not take many other financial factors into account, such as the increased efficiency in the flow of information and shares that eliminating naked shorting would create or the fact that legal short selling could provide the same protections. Many securities analysts say it is fallacious to assert that the only recourse to the adjustment in hype and price securities is to allow an illegal practice to continue.

The same enforcement of already existing rules by regulators could curb hype just as much as it curbs naked shorts. A proactive stance by the financial community in informing and educating the public could also prevent the pump and dump schemes that such critics say would be the consequence of ending naked shorting.

Often it is the very organizations that did little to stop the dot-com problem from getting out of hand while it was occurring that now cry out at the prospect of the SEC stepping up to protect small investors from naked shorting. Of particular interest is the fact that much of this criticism comes out of the Depository Trust Commission (DTCC), which takes a share of profits from every short sale and is currently fighting off lawsuits accusing it of impropriety in a number of areas. The DTCC is also alleged to have brought pressure to bear on media corporations such as General Electric to suppress the story from being reported. GE's NBC Dateline program obtained an exclusivity contract to cover the Stockgate scandal over a year ago, and then postponed the episode indefinitely. Officially, Dateline claims that a slew of more important stories than this widespread financial scandal have caused the delay. At the time of this writing, however, they are preparing to air an Al Roker interview with an American Idol finalist.

Additional References:

David Sedore, “Hedge Fund Assets Frozen” : March 4, 2005; “Hedge Fund Virtually Bare” : March 12, 2005; etc. The Palm Beach Post—KL Financial fraud series.

PrimeZone Media Network, “First American Scientific Corp. Takes Counter Measures to Stop ‘Naked Shorting’ of its Stock” —December 17, 2004.

#19 Child Wards of the State Used in AIDS Experiments

Sources:

UK Observer

Title: "GlaxoSmithKline Allegedly Used Children as Laboratory Animals"

Author: Antony Barnett

Barnett's article is based on the original research of Liam Scheff which can be viewed at:

<http://www.altheal.org/texts/house.htm>

Democracy Now! December 2004

Title: "Guinea Pig Kids: How New York City is Using Children to Test Experimental AIDS Drugs."

Mainstream Media Coverage: Fox News Network, The O'Reilley Factor, March 10, 2004, CBS Morning News, February 2, 2005.

Faculty Evaluator: Jeanette Koshar, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Mike Cattivera, Kiel Eorio

Orphans as young as three months old were used as test subjects in AIDS drug trials in New York's Incarnation Children's Center. The Center, which is run by Catholic Charities, specializes in treating HIV sufferers, and the drug trials were performed on children with HIV or who were born to HIV-positive mothers. The New York City Health Department is looking into claims that more than 100 children at Incarnation were used in as many as 36 experiments. Most of these experiments were sponsored by federal agencies such as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Documents obtained by the UK Observer have implicated British pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline's involvement in at least four experiments conducted at Incarnation since 1995 using black and Hispanic children. Several trials were conducted to test the toxicity of AIDS drugs. In one trial, children as young as four received a high-dosage cocktail of seven drugs; another tested the reaction of six-month-olds to a double dosage of a measles vaccine. Other studies conducted on children included testing AZT, which can carry dangerous side effects, as well as testing the long term safety of anti-bacterial drugs on six-month old babies. GlaxoSmithKline also used children to "obtain tolerance, safety and pharmacokinetic data" for Herpes drugs.

These trials were conducted by Columbia University Medical Center doctors. A spokesperson for Columbia University said that there have been no trials at Incarnation since 2000, and that the consent for using the children as test subjects was provided by the Administration for Children's Services. Consent was based upon a panel of doctors and lawyers who decided whether or not the benefits of allowing the child to receive the drugs outweighed the risks (although it was unclear what recipient "benefits" referred to). Though GlaxoSmithKline has acknowledged their involvement in the trials at Incarnation, they deny any wrongdoing. According to their spokesperson: "These studies were implemented by the U.S. Aids Clinical Trial Group, a clinical research network paid for by the National Institutes of Health. Glaxo's involvement in such studies would have been to provide study drugs or funding but we would have no interactions with the patients."

The medical community has defended these studies, saying it enabled children, normally without access to treatment, the opportunity to receive AIDS drugs. However, many, outraged at these studies, argue there is a difference between providing children with the latest AIDS drugs and using them for experimentation. According to Antony Barnett, several experiments were considered to be Phase 1 trials, which are among the most dangerous. These drugs are similar to those used in chemotherapy and carry serious side effects. Critics also argue that it is difficult to test babies for HIV, and results are often incorrect; therefore many of these trials may have been conducted on babies or children not actually infected with HIV.

These trials at New York's Incarnation Children's Center were part of a broader series of HIV and AIDS drug trials that were conducted in at least seven states on foster children. Some children died during the trials. However, government officials have so far found no evidence that their deaths could be directly connected to the experiments.¹

NOTE

1. <http://washingtontimes.com/metro/20050511-103959-2907r.htm>.

#20 American Indians Sue for Resources; Compensation Provided to Others

Sources:

LiP, Winter 2004

Title: "Trust Us, We're the Government: How to Make \$137 Billion of Indian Money Disappear."

Author: Brian Awehali

News from Indian Country, March 8, 2004

Title: "Despite Wealth of Resources, Many Tribes Still Live in Poverty"

Author: Angie Wagner

Mainstream Media Coverage: New York Times, April 7, 2004, and the Washington Post, March 14, 2004

Community Evaluator: Keith Pike MA

Student Researcher: Kiel Eorio

Native Americans, after more than two centuries, are still being cheated by the government and U.S. companies. Oil companies operate at Montezuma Creek in Utah. Montezuma Creek lies on a Navajo Reservation. The companies have under-compensated the Native Americans for the right to their natural resources since the 1950s. District court-appointed investigator Alan Balaran discovered that non-Native Americans in the same area received royalties that amounted to more than 20 times the amount of the Native Americans on the reservation.

Native American reservations are filled with natural resources, but the government has routinely allowed energy companies to short-change the tribes. In Balaran's findings it shows that the government owes Native Americans as much as \$137.5 billion in back royalties. The issue of the government keeping funds from Native Americans dates back to the Dawes Act of 1887. The Dawes act created a trust fund for Native Americans over the years; since then the government has grossly mismanaged revenues from oil, timber and mineral leases on tribal land.

According to Elouise Cobell, a member of the Blackfeet tribe, many Native Americans depend on these royalty checks for the bare necessities. The Navajo Nation has more than 140,000 members and is the country's largest tribe. It is also one of the poorest. More than 40 percent of its people live in poverty while the median household annual income is \$20,000, less than half of the national median. Mary Johnson, a Navajo tribe member, who lives in a one bedroom stone house off the main highway, once received a royalty check for \$5.30. These required checks are commonly paid out in sporadic intervals.

Johnson Martinez, a 68-year-old Navajo, lives out of a trailer that is pulled by his pickup truck. His "home" is just yards away from where gas pipelines sit on the family land. He has no running water and sometimes no electricity. There are even times when he doesn't have any food. At night he builds a fire to keep him and his dogs warm. Sometimes he has received checks for only a few cents.

In 1994, Congress passed the American Indian Trust Reform Act. This required the Interior Department to account for all the money in the trust fund and clean up the accounting process. The Individual Indian Money case, also known as Cobell V. Norton, is the largest class action suit ever filed against the federal government. Filed in 1996, Elouise Cobell is at the center of the suit that involves more than 100 years of revenues generated by government leases on Native American land held "in trust" for mining as well as oil and gas exploration. For years she has tried to get an accurate accounting of funds held in trust by the U.S. Government for individual Native American land leased by the federal government for natural resource stripping. The defendant in the Cobell V. Norton case is Interior Department Secretary Gale Norton. She has been held in contempt by Federal Judge Royce C. Lamberth for ignoring his orders to account for the fund. Lamberth stated that he had never seen greater government incompetence than the Interior Department had shown in administering the money and representing itself in court.

In early of 2001, Alan Balaran, the investigator in the case, made a surprise visit to the Government's warehouse. There he found papers from a shredder, which had records concerning the money paid out of the trust fund. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, which resides under the Interior Department, stated that similar documents were being shredded every day.

In March of 2004, Lamberth ordered a shutdown for the Interior Department's internet connections due to security holes that could have allowed hackers to access hundreds of millions of dollars in royalties from Native American lands managed by the agency, according to Balaran's findings. This was the third internet shutdown in three years. This particular shutdown was ordered after the Interior Department refused to sign sworn certificates that it had fixed major security flaws. This is the same system that processes hundreds of millions of dollars annually for Native Americans.

In April of 2004, Alan Balaran resigned under pressure as the investigator in the case. He states that the Bush Administration has been pursuing his refusal to silence criticisms of the Interior Department's handling of individual Native American accounts. Balaran's findings show that the Bush Administration knowingly allowed energy companies to continue to pay Native Americans far less than non-Native Americans for natural resources. Judge Royce C. Lamberth has ordered the government to complete a historic accounting for all funds in the case by January 6, 2008.

References:

Rocky Mountain News, August 21, 2003 "Indians Underpaid for Land Leases, Official Charges; Appraisal Program Under Norton Targeted" by M.E. Sprengelmeyer.

Bismarck Tribune, April 7, 2004, "Investigator: Interior Favored Companies" by Robert Gehrke.

PR Newswire, February 24, 2005 "Cobell Litigation Team: U.S. District Court Reissues Structural Injunction in Cobell V. Norton Indian Trust Case-Full Accounting to Be Complete by January 6, 2008."

Update by Brian Awehali: The Cobell v. Norton case is important because the government is colossally and obviously wrong. This is evident in light of the success of Eloise Cobell's team in successive court victories. The sheer scope of the case, its possible precedent-setting resolution, and the ways in which it highlights the current limitations of Native Americans' dependent-yet-sovereign status, all provide opportunities for real reform and long-term re-examination of the terms of U.S.-to-Native, government-to-government relations.

Media coverage of this story has largely suffered from two main challenges. The first challenge has been the massive bureaucratic complexities of the case, which I believe insulated it from quite a lot of daily news coverage. The second, and subtler, challenge is the average American's lack of understanding of Native sovereignty. Without a clear understanding of this, Americans literally have no meaningful framework to fit the story into, and it simply disappears.

Ongoing security flaws in the Department of the Interior's trust accounting systems have continued for a ridiculously long time. Despite failure after failure to amend security flaws that allow for manipulation of records, and in spite of repeated documented instances of bureaucratic ill will resulting in massive theft and "loss" from trust accounts, the Department of the Interior is still in charge of them. Another investigative story on SmartMoney.com (December 3, 2004) reported that "officials in the Bush Administration had detailed knowledge of fraudulent practices that allowed energy companies to cheat impoverished Native Americans out of vast sums over dozens of years."

Indian Country Today also reported that behind the scenes negotiations might already be happening between the White House and Congress—but not with the plaintiffs in the case. The piece also warns of the possibility of another "midnight rider" on an appropriations bill that would effectively defer justice for yet another year.

Because recent developments in this case have centered mostly around court motions and abstruse legal machinations, there hasn't been much hard "news" for the mainstream press to grab onto. Without new and breaking "hooks," I think the perception is that this is an old story, rather than the very urgent and pressing one that it is. I also believe the government's strategy—stall, obfuscate and deceive—is a deliberate attempt to keep media attention largely surface and scattershot.

The best places to go for information about the case are the following sites: <http://www.indiantrust.com>, Indian Country Today: <http://www.indiancountry.com>, The Friends Committee on National Legislation: http://www.fcnl.org/issues/item.php?item_id=1266&issue_id=112

#21 New Immigration Plan Favors Business Over People

Sources:

Interhemispheric Resource Center IRC,

November 16, 2004,

Washington Free Press, Nov/Dec, 2004

Title: How U.S. Corporations Won the Debate Over Immigration

Author: David Bacon

www.washingtonfreepress.org/72/howUsCorporationsWon.htm

MotherJones.com, November 11, 2004

Title: "Migrants No More"

Author: Maggie Jones

www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2004/11/11_404

Faculty Evaluator: Francisco Vazquez, Ph.D.

Student Researchers: Joseph F. Davis

A bi-partisan effort from the Federal government is emerging to close the borders with Mexico by increasing barriers that keep “illegal” immigrants from traveling to and from Mexico, and in turn creating a guest worker program with specific time limits for residency. Reminiscent of the defunct bracero program, the status of “guest worker” has reappeared as the preferred name for Mexican nationals working in this country.

The leading organization behind the guest worker legislation is The Essential Worker Immigration Coalition (EWIC), which was organized in 1999, while Bill Clinton was still president. The group quickly grew to include 36 of the country’s most powerful employer associations, headed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The National Association of Chain Drug Stores—including Wal Mart (which was sanctioned for employing undocumented workers last year)—belongs, as do the American Health Care Association, the American Hotel and Lodging Association, the National Council of Chain Restaurants, the National Restaurant Association, and the National Retail Federation. Each of these associations represents employers who depend on a workforce almost entirely without benefits and working at (or below) minimum wage.

Edward Kennedy, Democrat, and John McCain, Republican, are promoting a bi-partisan bill that would create the designation of “guest worker” for a three-year period. About half a million workers would be eligible for the status if they are sponsored by American businesses and pay five hundred dollars. The over ten million undocumented workers residing in the United States who are not sponsored by businesses would be encouraged to come forward and pay a two-thousand-dollar fine to receive the new status. The guest worker category can be renewed after three years, or businesses could sponsor workers for green cards.

The proposed legislation does not address the growing problem of undocumented workers residing in the United States. Because of the nature of the work being offered under this program, most guest workers will be left with little more than minimum wage employment. There are no benefits or health care offered under the new program. The two-thousand-dollar price tag for uninvited potential guest workers means that most of the more than ten million undocumented workers will be unwilling to come forth. Historically, millions of Mexican laborers would return to Mexico during off-seasons to visit family. Today, with tighter border restrictions and the cost of paying a labor smuggler up to \$300, few people return to Mexico, resulting in permanent under-class poverty communities spread out throughout the country.

There has been no serious discussion on Capitol Hill on realistically dealing with the undocumented worker situation in this country because U.S. corporations will continue to benefit from cheap labor sources from outside and inside the borders of the United States.

The official bracero program, negotiated in 1942 between the U.S. and Mexican governments was ended in 1964. Ernesto Galarza, a labor organizer, former diplomat and early hero of the Chicano movement, was its greatest opponent in Washington. But Cesar Chavez was also an early voice calling for abolition. Chavez later said he could never have organized the United Farm Workers until growers could no longer hire braceros during strikes. In fact, the great five-year grape strike in which the UFW was born began the year after the bracero program ended. According to the UFW’s Mark Grossman, “Chavez believed agribusiness’ chief farm labor strategy for decades was maintaining a surplus labor supply to keep wages and benefits depressed, and fight unionization.”

The organization of veterans of the bracero program, with chapters in both the U.S. and Mexico, was even more critical. “We’re totally opposed to the institution of new guest worker programs,” explained Ventura Gutierrez, head of the Union Sin Fronteras. “People who lived through the old program know the abuse they will cause.” One former bracero, Manuel Herrera, told the Associated Press’s Julianna Barbassa, “they rented us, got our work, then sent us back when they had no more use for us.” Thousands of former braceros are still trying to collect money deducted from their pay during the 1940s and 1950s.

Money that was supposedly held in trust to ensure they completed work contracts, but never turned over to them. Bush's proposal contains a similar provision. "If we accept, then our grandsons and great-grandsons will go through what we went through," ex-bracero Florentino Laraios told Barbassa. U.S. labor opposition focused on the lack of a real amnesty. Eliseo Medina, executive vice president of the Service Employees International Union, and one of the AFL-CIO's key policy makers on immigration, said, "Bush tells immigrants you have no right to earn citizenship, but tells corporations you have the right to exploit workers, both American and immigrant..." This proposal allows hard-working, tax-paying immigrants to become a legitimate part of our economy, but it keeps them from fully participating in our democracy—making immigrants a permanent sub-class of our society.

Update by David Bacon: "How Corporations Won the Debate over Immigration" broke a story of national importance—how the largest U.S. corporations, dependent on a steady supply of immigrant workers, got the President and Congress to introduce legislation giving them a vastly expanded guest worker program. This program, like the old "bracero" program of the 1940s and '50s, used a system of contract labor to exploit immigrant workers and deny them their rights, while creating an oversupply of labor to drive down wages for all workers, immigrant and non-immigrant alike.

The story was originally published in the fall of 2004. By the spring of 2005, corporate pressure for expanded guestworker programs had grown so strong that even bipartisan proposals for immigration reform included them. The word in Washington DC is now that no immigration reform is worth discussing unless corporate America gets what it wants. In mid-May, a new bill was introduced by Senators Edward Kennedy and John McCain, which includes a program even larger than that proposed by Bush.

The President's program calls for 300,000 people to be given temporary visas for three years, renewable for another three. The Kennedy/McCain bill calls for 400,000 temporary visas. In addition, the bill calls for requiring the 9 million currently undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to enroll as guestworkers for six years to qualify for making application for a green card, and to pay a \$2000 fine. Increased enforcement of employer sanctions, the law that makes it a federal crime for an undocumented worker to hold a job, would be used to force people into the program by making it even more risky to try to work without becoming a guest worker.

Despite these draconian provisions, the bill won the sponsorship of many Democrats, and almost no Republicans. In the meantime, Texas Senator Comyn announced his intention to introduce an even more conservative bill in mid-July. The Comyn bill is regarded as the legislative embodiment of the President's program. It is a straight temporary worker bill, with no provisions for legalization.

No matter whether sponsored by Democrats or Republicans, the corporate lobby for temporary workers has legislation which corresponds to its program.

In the meantime, however, a much more liberal bill has been introduced by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Instead of increasing job competition and pitting one group of low-wage workers against another, the bill tries to balance the needs of all low-wage workers. African-American and other minority communities suffering high unemployment would receive job training and creation programs. The bill would set up a legalization program for undocumented immigrants based on their residency, rather than employment status. It has provisions to strengthen protection for the rights of immigrant workers, ends discrimination against immigrants from countries like Haiti and Liberia, and has no guest worker program.

Republicans and many Democrats have derided the Jackson Lee bill as incompatible with the atmosphere in Congress, which seeks both to reward corporations and increase punitive measures against immigrants, especially the undocumented. But a rising tide of protest in immigrant communities and other communities of color around the country has criticized the growing wave of anti-immigrant legislation, and is calling for a movement to defend their rights instead.

Generally, the story of corporate sponsorship of the guest worker proposals has been ignored by the mainstream media. Reports on the Kennedy-McCain and Bush proposals have treated them as “pro-immigrant” because they would allow workers to cross the border legally. They’ve ignored the actual conditions for immigrants under current guest worker programs, as well as the money and influence trail leading back from these proposals to the corporate lobby, the Essential Worker Immigration Coalition. They have also ignored the Jackson-Lee bill, even though it presents the unprecedented political situation in which the country’s most progressive immigration legislation is being proposed by African-American Congress members.

Readers who want more information about the overall situation of immigrants and legislation which affects them can contact the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, at 510-465-1984, www.nnirr.org. More information on pending immigration legislation and the Jackson Lee bill is available from Nolan Rappaport, minority counsel to the House Immigration Subcommittee, 202-225-2329.

#22 Nanotechnology Offers Exciting Possibilities But Health Effects Need Scrutiny

Source:

The Chronicle of Higher Education September 10, 2004

Title: “The Dark Side of Small”

Author: Richard Monastersky

Faculty Evaluator: Scott Gordon, Ph. D., Jennifer Lillig Whiles, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Jason Piepmeier

The science of nanotechnology is rapidly advancing, but there is little research to show whether or not nano-sized molecules are safe for people and the environment.

Nanotechnology is the science of using molecules that are virtually impossible to see; one blood cell measures at 7,000 nanometers in width. Nanotechnology has virtually unlimited potential. Products such as stainless, wrinkle free pants use nanotechnology as well as transparent sunscreens and tennis balls that keep their bounce. The U.S. government spent close to \$ 1 billion in 2004 on research and development in nanotechnology.

However, only 1 percent of it is going towards research for risk assessment, despite the fact that nanotechnology also has the potential to cause harm to people and the environment. The nano-sized molecules can damage, or kill, the skin cells of humans and also kill valuable bacteria in water. The reason little money is given to research the risks is nanotechnology's huge upside; some estimates predict that the nanotech market will reach \$1 trillion in a decade.

Thousands of papers have come out touting different developments in nanoscience, but fewer than fifty have examined how engineered nanoparticles will affect people and the environment. The studies that have been conducted to determine if nano-molecules are safe paint a grim picture for nanotechnology. In the spring of 2004, Eva Oberdorster, an adjunct scientist at Duke University, made headlines with potentially disturbing news about highly praised a nanoparticle called "fullerene," named for the inventor R. Buckminster Fuller.

The "fullerene" is made of 60 carbon atoms, bonded together like a molecular soccer ball. Oberdorster put a solution of "fullerene" into a tank with large-mouthed bass and later examined different organs in the fish. She found signs of oxidative damage in their brains and speculated that the nanoparticles had stimulated the production of free radicals, highly reactive compounds that can cause cellular damage. "Normally," she said, "particles can't get into the brains of fish or people because a protective structure called the blood-brain barrier keeps out harmful materials." But Oberdorster's, and other experiments show that nano-size particles can slip through that barrier by traveling up nerve cells into the brain.

Oberdorster's father also studies the effects of nanoparticles. Dr. Gunter Oberdorster, a professor of toxicology in environmental medicine at the University of Rochester, received a \$5.5 million, five-year grant from the Department of Defense to study the effects of nanoparticles. Scientists at the University of Rochester looked at the titanium dioxide nanoparticles that are used as pigments in white paint. Rats and mice inhaled particles ranging in size from 12 nanometers up to 250 nanometers. The smaller particles were found to cause more inflammation than an equal amount of larger particles. "The smaller particles react differently from the larger ones," he says, "because nano-size materials evade the normal defense system in the lungs, the macrophage cells that gobble up the irritants and clear them out." Once nanoparticles get deep into the lungs, they can cross over into the blood stream and from there can go into any organ in the body. Inhaling the nano-sized particles in titanium dioxide, which is on the market now, is unlikely because they are captured in liquid substances. However, Dr. Oberdorster suggests that it may be possible for nanoparticles to cross over through the skin.

Another study, run by Anna A. Shevedova, an adjunct associate professor at West Virginia and a senior staff scientist at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), found that carbon nanotubes generated dangerous free radicals in cultures of human skin cells. Her research team reported that the nanotubes caused oxidative damage that triggered the deaths of cells.

Almost everybody involved in nanotechnology says it is too soon to tell whether and how these materials might harm people or the environment. But early studies show that this is something that should be looked into more seriously. In a survey conducted by North Carolina State University, public perception of nanotechnology remains fairly positive. As has happened with new technologies in the past, this optimism may become accusations and lawsuits if the side effects of nanotechnology outweigh the benefits.

#23 Plight of Palestinian Child Detainees Highlights Global Problem

Sources:

Left Turn, December 2004

Title: "Control & Resistance: Palestinian Child Prisoners"

Authors: Catherine Cook, Adah Kay, Adam Hanieh

The Guardian, August 28, 2004

Title: "Palestinians Want an End to Their Solitary Confinement"

Author: Kama Nabulsi

Faculty Evaluator: Carolyn Epple, Ph. D. Maureen Buckley, Ph. D.

Student Researcher: Shatae Jones

According to Catherine Cook, Adah Kay, and Adam Hanieh, approximately 350 Palestinian children ages 12-18, are currently being held in Israeli prisons. Over 2,000 children have been arrested since the beginning of the second Intifada, a Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation. This number corresponds with number given in a report by the human rights organization Defense for Children International, which adds that another 170 children are held in military detention centers.

Looking at the testimonies from hundreds of detained children, Cook et al found a pattern in the children's experience of arrest, interrogation, sentencing and prison conditions. The children overwhelmingly reported abuse during their experience in either prison or detention camp. The consistency of these reports reveals that these patterns of abuse are not just the actions of a few bad soldiers, but perhaps reveals a broader policy. Virtually every child interviewed describes a deliberate pattern of behavior by Israeli soldiers or police characterized by violence, physical and psychological threats, and overwhelming force, often in the middle of the night. Cook, Kay and Hanieh believe that the similarity in testimonies from child prisoners points to a systematic approach to child abuse, calculated to exploit children's vulnerability and create feelings of fear, intimidation and helplessness.

One testimony in their study states, "Because there was no one I could talk to and I felt incredibly frightened and scared, I tried to commit suicide while being in solitary confinement. On October 12, 2003, I was moved to Ofer Military Prison Camp. When I arrived the soldiers asked me to take off my clothes. They used a metal detector on my naked body. One hand was holding the metal detector, while the other hand touched my naked body, concentrating mainly on my back and bottom."

Even without the abuses by personnel, the living conditions that children are put in are bad enough. The report by Kama Nabulsi tells us that children are "locked in cells for hours on end with, in some cases, only 45 minutes outdoor exercise allowed every two days. Many are forced to sleep on the floor due to overcrowding. Windows are boarded up with iron panels, which block out the light and intensify the heat in the rooms." Practices, such as these, have been well documented in other troubled areas around the world, but are only beginning to be documented within occupied territories.

Also noticeable is a lack of decent healthcare. Cook, Kay and Hanieh see the abuse of children during interrogation, the notoriously poor sanitary conditions within Israeli prisons, and denial of adequate medical treatment as ways to pressure child detainees into collaboration. When conducting a series of interviews with 60 ex-prisoners from Bethlehem in 1994, the authors

found that “90 percent of those interviewed claimed that the administration used the denial of medical treatment as a way of recruiting collaborators.” One former child prisoner asserted that prisoners were well aware that the prison hospitals were using the threat of withholding treatment to force detainees to collaborate.

According to the DCI report, “In many areas, Israel does not reach the standards demanded by the minimum rules [of the UN Convention of the Rights of a Child]. For instance, it is not possible for a youth in detention to work, and there are no educational facilities. In the territories, the situation is even worse.” This statement implies that the rights of all children (Israeli as well as Palestinian) are not being attended to by Israeli authorities. It seems that in Israel there is a problem in the attitude toward child welfare in general. But, according to Project Censored evaluator Maureen Buckley, “this story represents just a small piece of the larger picture of the ongoing, worldwide failure to protect the rights of children.”

Reference:

DCI Israel Children’s Rights Monitor, 2004 Report “International Standards.”

Update by Catherine Cook, Adah Kay and Adam Hanieh: In the 15 months since this article was written in spring 2004, little has changed for child prisoners, and the issue has been largely boycotted by the mainstream press. But the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners, including children under 18, in Israeli detention centers and jails remain high on the political agenda. The Israeli government still uses prisoners as a key bargaining chip in the so called “peace process.” But relevant human rights and international standards play no part in this ritual; Palestinian negotiators could not secure the unconditional release of all child prisoners as an issue separate from negotiations over adult prisoners. So the recent second tranche of prisoners released at the end of May included only 14 children. As in the past, most of the other 384 prisoners, had almost completed their sentences.

Last year saw the revelations of U.S. torture of Iraqi prisoners including children dubbed the biggest story of the Iraqi war by William Rivers Pitt in his article “Torturing Children.”¹ Like Israel, the U.S. administration and military attempted to present this as rogue practice, but the evidence pointed to systemic abuse. We and others tried at the time to highlight the striking similarities to the abuse meted out over decades to Palestinian prisoners including children.² But again, these parallels largely escaped the mainstream press.

Currently, out of around 7,500 Palestinian detainees, about 280 are children (including 30 boy administrative detainees held indefinitely without formal trial or charge). DCI/PS,³ who represent the majority of child prisoners, report a dramatic increase in arrests of 12-14 year-olds, most for throwing stones last year. There has also been an increase last year in the numbers of children arrested from the northern West Bank (e.g. Nablus and Jenin), in part reflecting the continued use of mass arrests as a method of control. They also note harsher sentencing policies, such as doubling of sentences of more than three years compared with 2003—only partly due to some of the charges being more serious.

There has been no improvement in detention conditions with particularly poor provision in detention/interrogation centers—bare cells and inadequate food served on bits of paper with no cutlery. In prisons,⁴ girls are still housed in cells with adult women prisoners with little natural light, and they get no formal education. Boys also receive no education, except in one of the prisons; many are still beaten and punished by having family visits refused or solitary confinement.

In August 2004, in protest against harsh prison conditions, Palestinian prisoners launched their largest hunger strike in decades. The Israeli prison administration did their best to undermine this by confiscating liquids and salts, setting up barbecues outside cells, raiding cells, beating up prisoners, placing them in isolation and refusing medical treatment until the strike ended. Eventually the strike petered out. As with so many other Palestinian issues, this action was largely ignored by the mainstream press.

This last year has seen Israel's position, tacitly supported by the U.S. government, strengthened against the Palestinians. Under cover of its promise of unilateral disengagement from Gaza, Israel continues to entrench itself in the West Bank and extends its system of suppression and control in which arrest and prison play such a key role.

For additional information:

Defence for Children International/Palestine Section, Research and International Advocacy Unit, RIA@dcj-pal.org, www.dci-pal.org

Adameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association, www.addameer.org, addameer@p-ol.com

Sumoud <http://sumoud.tao.ca>; Email sumoud@tao.ca

NOTES

1. William Rivers Pitt, "Torturing Children," Truthout July 20, 2004.
2. Catherine Cook, "Torture of Iraqi Prisoners Spotlights Israeli Treatment of Palestinian Prisoners," Information Brief # 106, May 11, 2004.
3. Defence for Children International (Palestine Section) Annual Review 2004.
4. DCI/PS's Legal department regularly visits prisons, detention and interrogation centres in the West Bank and in Israel to monitor prison conditions for children and intercede on their behalf with the Israeli prison administration.

#24 Ethiopian Indigenous Victims of Corporate and Government Resource Aspirations

Sources:

World War 4 Report, Issue 97, April 2004

"State Terror in Ethiopia: Another Secret War for Oil?"

<http://www.ww4report.com/97.html>

<http://www.allthingspass.com>

Z Magazine Online, May 2004

Author: keith hamon snow

Faculty Evaluator: Tom Lough, Ph.D.

Student Researcher: Thedoria Grayson

According to a report by keith hamon snow, after conducting Field observations in January, the U.S.-based organizations Genocide Watch and Survivor's Rights International released a conclusive report on February 22, 2004. This report provides evidence that Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Defense Front (EPRDF) soldiers and "Highlander" militias in the Anuak territory of Ethiopia have killed thousands of native civilians. The Highlanders are predominantly Tigray and Amhara peoples who resettled in Anuak territory in 1974. The Highlanders are on a quest to force the Anuak from the region. Ethiopia is the latest U.S. ally in the "War on Terror" to turn its back on its own indigenous peoples. The Anuak territory is a zone coveted by corporate interests for its oil and gold. EPRDF soldiers and settlers from Ethiopian highlands initiated a campaign of massacres, repressions, and mass rape, deliberately targeting the Anuak minority.

According to Snow, the U.S. government was informed about the unfolding violence in the Gambella region as early as December 16, 2003. Massacres were reportedly ordered by the commander of the Ethiopian army in Gambella, Nagu Beyene, with the authorization of Gebrehad Bamabas, Regional Affairs Minister of the Ethiopian government.

According to Anuak sources relying on sympathetic oppositionists within the regime, the EPRDF plans to procure the petroleum of Gambella were laid out at a top-level cabinet meeting in Addis Ababa (the capital of Ethiopia) in September 2003. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi chaired the meeting, at which the militant ethnic cleansing of the Anuaks was reportedly openly discussed. December 13, 2003 marked the start of a coordinated military operation to systematically eliminate Anuaks. Sources from inside the military government's police and intelligence network say that the code name of the military operation was: "OPERATION SUNNY MOUNTAIN."

The killing of eight UN officials and Ethiopian government officials whose van was ambushed on December 13, 2003 sparked the recent conflict. Although there is no specific evidence about the ethnicity of the killers, the targets of the attacks have been mainly Anuaks. After this attack, EPRDF soldiers used automatic weapons and hand grenades, then attacked the Anuak villages, summarily executing civilians, burning dwellings (sometimes with people inside), and looting property. Some 424 Anuak people were reportedly killed, with over 200 more wounded. Numerous sources report that there have been regular massacres of the Anuak since 1980. Discrimination against the Anuak has been detailed in six reports published in the Cultural Survival Quarterly beginning in 1981 (see e.g.: "Oil Development in Ethiopia: A Threat to the Anuak of Gambella," Issue 25.3, 2001). There is no evidence of previous communal violence between the two indigenous groups (Anuaks and the local Nuer) as was claimed and reported by the NYT and other media, and by the EPRDF government.

As of November 4, 2004, at least 1,500 and perhaps as many as 2,500 Anuak civilians have died in the recent fighting. Intellectuals, leaders, students and other educated classes have been intentionally targeted. Hundreds of people remain unaccounted for and many have mysteriously "disappeared." Thousands and perhaps tens of thousands of Anuak homes have reportedly been burned.

The Anuak men have been killed, arrested, or displaced, leaving thousands of women and children vulnerable. Anuak women and girls are routinely raped, gang-raped and kept as sexual slaves by EPRDF forces, often at gunpoint. Girls have been shot for resisting rape, and summary executions for girls held captive for prolonged periods as sexual slaves have been reported. Reports from non-Anuak police officials in Gambella indicate an average of up to seven rapes per day. Due to the isolation of women and

girls in rural areas, rapes remain under-reported. Some 6,000 to 8,000 Anuak remain at refugee camps in Pochalla, Sudan, and there are an estimated 1,000 annual refugees in Kenya. In August 2004, approximately 25 percent (roughly 50,000 people) of Gambella's population had been displaced.

To the Anuak and other indigenous peoples of southwestern Ethiopia, the government of Prime minister Meles Zenawi is a ruthless military dictatorship. Almost everyone links "the problem" to Gambella's oil. "Since the problem, we are not able to farm or to fish," said one Anuak survivor who was shot three times. He is shy, but he will show you where one bullet entered and exited his wrist. He was shot December 13, 2003—the day the EPRDF and local highlander militias launched their genocidal war on the Anuaks. "Many men ran away into the bushes and were killed since the problem began," says one witness. "They are raping many girls. They keep some women by force." The violence has almost completely disrupted this year's planting season, and people believe that famine in the coming winter months (October-March, 2005) will be exacerbated by the destruction of milling machines and food stores.

In August 2003, the U.S. committed \$28,000,000 to international trade enhancements with Ethiopia. Beginning July 2003, forces from the Pentagon's Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) held a three-month bilateral training exercise with Ethiopian forces at the Hurso Training Camp, northwest of Dire Dawa. The U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division recently completed a three-month program to train an Ethiopian army division in counter-terrorism attacks. Operations are coordinated through the CJTF-HOA regional base in Djibouti, where the Halliburton subsidiary KBR is the prime contractor.

Because Ethiopia is considered to be an essential partner of the U.S. in its "War on Terrorism," the U.S. provided some \$1,835,000 in International Military and Educational Training (IMET) to Ethiopia between 1995–2000. Some 115 Ethiopian officers were trained under the IMET program from 1991–2001. Approximately 4,000 Ethiopian soldiers have participated in IMET and Foreign Military Sales and Deliveries programs. The U.S. also equipped, trained, and supported Ethiopian troops under the Africa Regional Peacekeeping program. Ethiopia has remained a participant of the IMET program in 2000–2004. A U.S. AID representative asked Congress to approve some \$80,000,000 in funding for Ethiopia's programs in the Fiscal Year of 2005. Ethiopia was described as a "top priority" of the Bush Administration.

In 2000, Texas-based Sicor Inc. signed a \$1.4 billion dollar deal with Ethiopia for the "Gazoil" joint venture to exploit oil and gas in the southeast Ogaden Basin. Hunt Oil Company of Dallas, Texas is also involved in the Ogaden Basin through the subsidiary Ethiopia Hunt Oil Company. Hunt Oil's chairman of the board and CEO Ray L. Hunt is also director of Halliburton Company. U.S. Cal Tech International Corp. is also reportedly negotiating a joint venture with the China National Petroleum Corp. to operate in the same regions. The Anuak are also gold miners in the Gambella district. U.S. based Canyon Resources has gold operations in southern Ethiopia. The interest of multinational gold and oil corporations indicate ulterior motives in the terror campaign against the Anuaks.

Anuak sources in Gambella state: "The Anuak people have not been involved in the discussions about the oil, our leaders have not agreed on these projects, and they will not hire any Anuaks for these jobs. If any Anuaks say anything about the oil, he will be arrested."

Update by Keith Harmon Snow: It is important to recognize that the U.S. public is subject to an ongoing institutionalization of "truth" and "reality" that is premised on total information warfare. This is nowhere so starkly evident as with the stereotypes, mythologies and deceptions doled out to the U.S. public on the subject of Africa (the Arab world, and all things Islamic, run a close second). This includes mainstream reportage, policy debates, scholarly journals, tabloids, radio shows, and print magazines—from WIRED to National Geographic. This is also evident in supposed "alternative" media sources like The Nation and films like Hotel Rwanda.

Alternative? To what? Virtually all available media fall on a spectrum that serves up topics and frameworks that are tolerated and allowed, where “healthy debate,” “exposés” and (perceived) “hostility” (to what people in other countries are calling EMPIRE), are even encouraged. Hence we have Seymour Hersh offering us revealing exposés on torture in Abu Ghraib, but saying nothing about the profits being made over the dead bodies due to U.S. sponsored covert operations and destabilization in Congo during and since the Clinton regime.

Nation editor Katrina Van de Heuvel will steer sharply away from any challenge to the “humanitarian” actions of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a strong proponent of military intervention—allied with the other two big humanitarian agencies CARE and Refugees International—in the recent massive lobbying effort to “stop genocide” in Darfur, Sudan. Is there genocide in Darfur? If so, or even not so, why has it received overwhelming press attention while the Anuak genocide has received none? What about nearby Congo? And Rwanda?

Van de Heuvel has ties with Henry Kissinger, a member of an IRC board, and one of the few U.S. officials to be publicly labeled as a war criminal. The IRC is a powerful faction in Congo, Rwanda and Sudan, and the Congolese accused them of espionage. CARE’s “partners” include aerospace and defense corporation Lockheed-Martin, who is also a major underwriter of Seymour Hersh’s regular print venue, the war advocacy journal *Atlantic Monthly*.

A truly “investigative” journalist might hack through the propaganda of *Hotel Rwanda* to get to United Artists parent company Metro Goldwyn Meyer, whose directors, not surprisingly, given what the film does not tell you about the U.S.-sponsored invasion of Rwanda (1990–1994), include current United Technologies director and U.S. General (Ret.) Alexander Haig. Recall that “I’m in charge here” Al Haig served under a Hollywood actor named Ronald Reagan. *Hotel Rwanda* took off from the now celebrated but wholly mythologized book *We Regret To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed* by Philip Gourevitch, the *New Yorker*’s premier Africanist, and whose brother-in-law, Jamie Rubin, was Madeleine Albright’s leading man. The *Nation* runs the standard nonsense on Rwanda, usually by Victoria Britain. Another pro-military interventionist on Darfur, Samantha Power could surely satisfy *The Nation*, given her selective and patriotic journalism on Rwanda and the Balkans, for which she won a Pulitzer.

Behind the mass hysteria whipped up in the post-September 11th America are the dirty little and not-so-little but secret wars whipped up in defense of predatory capitalism and empire in “uncivilized” and “savage” places like Djibouti, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo and (Gambella) Ethiopia.

By February 21, 2002, the U.S. DOD had already purchased 79 RQ-1 Predators from General Atomics, for a per unit price of about \$7 million, or some \$553 million dollars. “State Terror in Ethiopia” was the first report, and WW4 Report the first venue, to illuminate the U.S. military alliance with the Ethiopian regime and the regional base of U.S. covert operations in Hurso, Ethiopia as well as the presence of RQ-1 Predator Drones being operated over the entire Horn region by the Central Intelligence Agency. Smith College students recently working to “stop genocide” in Darfur held a letter-writing campaign demanding that George Bush authorize that unmanned Predator drones—impersonal, indiscriminate killing robots—be launched against Arabs on horses, and other “undefined” targets, in Darfur.

It takes more than one party to wage a war. From Chad, Uganda and Ethiopia come weapons and logistical support for the enemies of the Islamic regime in Khartoum. At the same time, the Bush gang has reportedly “allied” with the Sudan government in its “war on terror”—if we believe the Ken Silverstein “expose” in the *L.A. Times* (which is merely being expedient in its truth-telling). Off the agenda are any discussions of the U.S. regimes of terror in Uganda or Cameroon, for example, or U.S. support for the Sudan People’s Liberation Army and other warring militias and factions in Darfur, Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Congo.

Like nearby Chad, Ethiopia has become a favored territory from which transnational corporate interests can be served by launching clandestine terror operations against Islamic governments, Al Qaeda phantoms, and other hostile enemies. The latter category, of course, includes Arabs on horseback, machete-wielding Hutus, Mai-Mai “wearing bathroom fixtures” on their heads, innocent men, women and children all over Africa, and, of course, the Anuaks of Ethiopia who, like the Ogonis in Nigeria and the Fur of Darfur, have the audacity to be living over someone else’s oil.

Shortly after “State Terror in Ethiopia” appeared in WW4 Report and Z Magazine, Marc Lacey, Nairobi Bureau Chief for the New York Times, ran some damage control, and reported from Gambella with a nasty little blame-the-victims story that deflected attention from the undesirable details: “Amid Ethiopia’s Strife, a Bathing Spot and Peace” (New York Times, 6/11/04). There was hardly a word about oil or U.S. interests, and Lacey framed the story to suggest that peace had returned to Gambella, an area rife with ancient tribal animosity, he declared, where the Anuaks “once went naked and ate rats.” (Curiously, not one New York Times link to this story is active today, perhaps because it has been widely noted for its racism, and so it is being electronically erased.)

Doug McGill of the McGill Report has done some wonderful and consistent work to report on the Anuak story. World War 4 Report also published a second follow-up story titled “Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia.” Soon after this appeared, Human Rights Watch finally published a major report on the Anuak genocide based on the field investigations “Today is the Day of Killing Anuaks” and “Operation Sunny Mountain?” (undertaken for Survivor’s Rights International and Genocide Watch by this author, as an unpaid volunteer). While their researcher received a copy of “Operation Sunny Mountain?” several months prior to its formal release and before traveling to Ethiopia, Human Rights Watch never cited their sources or contacts.

The U.S.-supported regime of Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia is going to fall, imminently, as widespread domestic dissent and protest, which remain underreported, further escalate. June 2005 saw massive government repression, troops firing on crowds, and torture spreading across Ethiopia after the people protested obvious election-rigging (sanctioned by Jimmy Carter and election monitors). Ethiopia’s secret U.S.-sponsored war (2000) against Eritrea has destabilized the border region, causing untold death and despair. Murder, extra-judicial execution, rape, disappearances, arrest and imprisonment of Anuaks, Oromos, Nuers and other indigenous Ethiopian people continue. What makes “State Terror in Ethiopia” so poignant is its sharp juxtaposition to the stories of genocide and crimes against humanity in Darfur, which received widespread attention, and to Congo, which is mostly off the media agenda.

With Darfur, what is really at issue is not genocide, and it is not about “humanitarian” anything, or there wouldn’t be so many people dead already—and still dying. It is about regime change, and some people will do anything to get us to support that. In Congo, the death toll has struck seven million since the U.S. invasion began, and the war rages on while both Clinton and Bush factions profit from diamond and gold and other hundreds-of-multimillion-dollars-a-month material thefts. Next to the holy wars of Congo and Darfur, the Anuaks are a mere thorn in the side of Empire. Such is the political economy of genocide.

#25 Homeland Security Was Designed to Fail

Sources:

Mother Jones, September/October 2004

Title: " Red Alert"

Author: Matthew Brzezinski

NPR, September 24, 2004

Title: " Fortress America: On the Front Lines of Homeland Security" (an interview with Matthew Brzezinski)

Author Matthew Brzezinski

Faculty Evaluators: Greg and Meri Storino

Student Researcher: Joey Tabares

It was billed as America's frontline defense against terrorism. But badly under-funded, crippled by special interests, and ignored by the White House, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been relegated to bureaucratic obscurity. Unveiled on March 1, 2003, the Department of Homeland Security had been touted as the Bush Administration's bold response to the new threats facing America in the post-Cold War world of global terrorism. It is currently composed of 22 formerly separate federal agencies and it boasts 186,200 employees. Its operations are funded by a budget of nearly \$27 billion.

There are 15,000 industrial plants in the United States that produce toxic chemicals. According to the Environmental Protection Agency(EPA), about 100 of these plants could endanger up to a million lives with poisonous clouds of ammonia, chlorine, or carbon disulfide that could be released into the atmosphere over densely populated areas by a terror attack. Unprotected chemical plants are possible candidates for future attacks by terrorists. These are some of the most vulnerable pieces of infrastructure in America.

Following 9/11 there was a big push to increase security at all chemical plants in the United States. Democrats put forth a Chemical Security Act, the purpose of which was to codify parameters for site security, ensure safe transport of toxic materials, and prevent further accidents from happening. But Republicans defeated the bill after oil companies pumped millions of dollars into lobbying campaigns to stop it.

Matthew Brzezinski's article in Mother Jones asserts that President Bush doesn't put much importance, if any at all, on Homeland Security reports. Security spending has risen just 4 percent since 9/11, and most of that increase was only to cover higher insurance programs. There are many chemical plants that have no fencing requirements, cameras, and no guards. The article points out the spending needed to insure the safety of U.S. citizens and compares it (unfavorably) to the amount spent in Iraq over the same time period.

Aside from being hamstrung by its reluctant architects, DHS simply has not been able to compete with Iraq in the battle for resources. With the President's tax cuts trimming government revenues, and budget deficits reaching levels not seen since the Vietnam War, money is tight for programs the White House does not see as top priorities. The truth of the matter is that Homeland Security is very much a shoestring operation—so much so that worried Democrats in Congress keep trying to throw more money at it.

Brzezinski, recent author of “Fortress America” and former Wall Street correspondent, suggests the Department of Homeland Security needs a serious reassessment of its goals and operations to better protect Americans. He says the White House has decided that the Homeland Security intelligence unit should rank lower than the FBI and the CIA. Seven Republican Senators that had previously endorsed the Chemical Security Act later withdrew their support. \$5.7 million in contributions from the petrochemical campaign (led by the American Petroleum Institute) helped to ensure that Republicans took the Senate in the 2002 midterm elections and that the Chemical Security Act die out. People opposing the act emphasized the economic impact of the Security Act. The argument was that Chlorine and its derivatives went into products that account for 45 percent of the nations GDP, and reductions to its production would hurt the economy.

Three years after 9/11 almost anybody can still gain entry into thousands of chemical sites across the country. If a factory spends lots of money on security spending upgrades, its products can't compete with other factories that spend nothing. Only legislation can level the playing field.

The failure of the mainstream media to acknowledge the fact that Homeland Security has been a complete washout further signifies the cozy relationship it enjoys with the halls of power. Protection of the homeland has been an area where the president has received consistently high marks from the country—ostensibly because this is the one area where he has stayed strong and focused. It would have been helpful for the country to know if this wasn't true.

References:

Judy Clark, Oil and Gas Journal, June 23, 2003, “ Government, Industry Forge Partnerships for Security Enhancement.”

Primedia, August 1, 2003, “ An Overlooked Vulnerability?”

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