

# The Top 25 News Stories You've Never Heard

## **Project Censored: The news that didn't make the news . . .**

Project Censored is a media research group out of Sonoma State University which tracks the news published in independent journals and newsletters. From these, Project Censored compiles an annual list of 25 news stories of social significance that have been overlooked, under-reported or self-censored by the country's major national news media.

<http://www.projectcensored.org>

## The Top 25 Censored Stories of 2007 listed on Project Censored

- [1. No Habeas Corpus for "Any Person"](#)
- [2. Bush Moves Towards Martial Law](#)
- [3. US Military Control of Africa's Resources](#)
- [4. Frenzy of Increasingly Destructive Trade Agreements](#)
- [5. Human Traffic Builds US Embassy in Iraq](#)
- [6. Operation FALCON Raids](#)
- [7. Behind Blackwater Inc](#)
- [8. The US Neoliberal Invasion of India](#)
- [9. Privatisation of America's Infrastructure](#)
- [10. Vulture Funds Threaten Poor Nations Debt Relief](#)
- [11. The Scam of "Reconstruction" in Afghanistan](#)
- [12. Another Massacre in Haiti by US Troops](#)
- [13. Immigrant Roundups to Gain Cheap Labour for US Corporate Giants](#)
- [14. Impunity for US War Criminals](#)
- [15. Toxic Exposure can be Transmitted to Second Generations on a "Second Genetic Code"](#)
- [16. No Hard Evidence Connecting Bin Laden to 9/11](#)
- [17. Drinking Water Contaminated by Military and Corporations](#)
- [18. Mexico's Stolen Election](#)
- [19. People's Movement Challenges Neoliberal Agenda](#)
- [20. Terror Act Against Animal Activists](#)
- [21. US Seeks WTO Immunity for Illegal Farm Payments](#)
- [22. North Invades Mexico](#)
- [23. Feinstein's Conflict of Interest in Iraq](#)
- [24. Media Misquotes Threat from Iran's President](#)
- [25. Who Will Profit from Native Energy?](#)

[Return to the Warroom](#)

Tomdispatch.com is for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of our post-9/11 world and a clear sense of how our imperial globe actually works. Read more about the site's founder and editor [Tom Engelhardt](#) and his [guest authors](#). Click [here](#) to e-mail Tom.

**SIGN UP TODAY**

Tomdispatch is published 3 to 4 times a week. Sign up today to get it delivered to your e-mail inbox.

posted August 27, 2006 10:00 pm

## Tomgram: Ann Jones on the Road to Taliban Land

[**Note for readers:** *The next Tomdispatch post will be on September 5th.*]

For the last year or more, the news trickling in from Afghanistan, the first country "liberated" by the Bush administration, has been [ever more dismal](#) -- a Taliban insurgency expanding and becoming more sophisticated in its tactics; [poppy-growing](#) and drug production on a [steep upward climb](#); the government in Kabul faltering; and, for the U.S., the usual crop of [Afghan civilians](#) killed in operations guaranteed to stoke the flames of opposition.

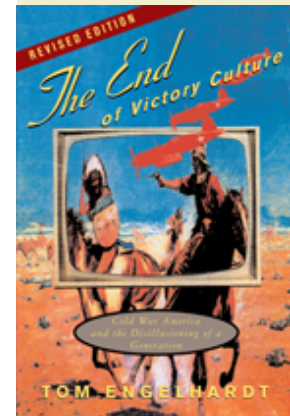
-  [RSS](#)
-  [Digg](#)
-  [StumbleUpon](#)
-  [Reddit](#)
-  [Yahoo](#)
-  [Google](#)

Ann Jones, an award-winning journalist and women's rights activist, begins her remarkable new book, [Kabul in Winter, Life Without Peace in Afghanistan](#), this way: "I went to Afghanistan after the bombing stopped. Somehow I felt obliged to help pick up the pieces. I was a New Yorker who had always lived downtown, and for a long time after the towers fell I experienced moments when I couldn't get my bearings... Four thousand collateral civilian deaths in Kabul brought no consolation for the death of thousands from around the world in the fallen towers of the city that had so long been my home. I thought America had lost its bearing too. So I left."

As it turned out, though, the bombing of that already fractured land never really stopped. In fact, in recent months, as fighting in Afghanistan only spread and intensified, while [British](#), [French](#), and [Canadian](#) soldiers of the NATO force just emplaced in the southern part of the country as well as [American soldiers](#) began [to die](#) in greater numbers, U.S. [bombing missions](#) have been on the rise and those old Vietnam heavy bombers, the [B-52s](#), have even been called in. Jones herself spent the better part of four years working with small, humanitarian NGOs in Kabul, investigating the conditions of women in Afghan prisons (abysmal), teaching English to Afghan schoolteachers ("Once, after I explained what *blind date* meant, a woman said, 'Like my wedding.'"), and discovering much about the American way of "reconstruction."

She left Afghanistan in March 2006. Only months later, there may be yet more jumbled pieces, far less well picked up than might have seemed humanly possible back in 2002 when the Bush administration was touting Afghanistan as its first great success in remaking the known world. Jones came home to write a vivid, moving, and saddening book about just what happened to those "pieces" she witnessed (with plenty of historical

TOM ENGELHARDT:  
READ THE LATEST



The End of Victory Culture

[Excerpt \(Updated Preface\)](#)

[Excerpt \(Updated Afterword\)](#)

America Victorious has been our country's postulate since its birth. Tom Engelhardt, with a burning clarity, recounts the end of this fantasy, from the split atom to Vietnam. It begins at our dawn's early light and ends with the twilight's last gleaming. It is as powerful as a Joe Louis jab to the solar plexus.  
--Studs Terkel

Click to read [about this book](#), [author interview](#), [reviews and blurbs](#), or [to buy](#).

NEW THIS WEEK  
FROM NATIONBOOKS



**Blood of the Earth**  
THE BATTLED FOR THE WORLD'S VANISHING OIL RESOURCES  
BY DILIP HIRO

book about just what happened to those people she witnessed (with plenty of historical background for those who know little about modern Afghanistan, that strange crucible of Great Power dreams and conflicts) -- especially about the state of Afghan women. I recommend her book most strongly.

Below she considers the nature of American "reconstruction" in Afghanistan. On this day, with tropical storm [Ernesto](#) threatening to turn into a category 1 hurricane in the Caribbean and potentially menacing a wide stretch of the U.S. Gulf Coast, including Katrina-ravaged, still largely unreconstructed New Orleans, and with the Army Corps of Engineers [just informing](#) that city's residents that their partially rebuilt levees may not, in fact, be able to withstand a strong storm, her analysis of Bush administration-style reconstruction seems germane for more than just Afghanistan. *Tom*

## Why It's Not Working in Afghanistan

By Ann Jones

Remember when peaceful, democratic, reconstructed Afghanistan was advertised as the exemplar for the extreme makeover of Iraq? In August 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was already proclaiming the new Afghanistan "a breathtaking accomplishment" and "a successful model of what could happen to Iraq." As everybody now knows, the model isn't working in Iraq. So we shouldn't be surprised to learn that it's not working in Afghanistan either.

The story of success in Afghanistan was always more fairy tale than fact -- one scam used to sell another. Now, as the Bush administration hands off "peacekeeping" to NATO forces, Afghanistan is the scene of the largest military operation in the history of that organization. Today's personal email brings word from an American surgeon in Kabul that her emergency medical team can't handle half the wounded civilians brought in from embattled provinces to the south and east. American, British, and Canadian troops find themselves at war with Taliban fighters -- which is to say "Afghans" -- while stunned NATO commanders, who hadn't bargained for significant combat, are already asking what went wrong.

The answer is a threefold failure: no peace, no democracy, and no reconstruction.

### Doing Things Backward

Critics of American Afghan policy agree that the Bush administration, in its haste to take out Saddam's Iraq, did things backward. After bombing the Taliban into the boondocks in 2001, it set up a government without first making peace -- a scenario later to be repeated in Iraq.

Instead of pressing for peace negotiations among rival Afghan parties, the victorious Americans handed power to Islamists and militia commanders who had served as America's stand-in soldiers in its Afghan proxy war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Then the Bush administration staged elections for these candidates and touted the result as democracy. It also confined an International Security Assistance Force, made up largely of European troops, to the capital, creating an island of safety for the government, while dispatching warlords of its choice to hunt for Osama bin Laden in the countryside.

In the east and south -- that is, about half the country -- the Taliban never stopped fighting. Now, augmented by imported al-Qaeda fighters ("Arab-

This vivid history of oil--and the way it revolutionized civilian life, war, and world politics--sets the stage for the coming oil wars of the 21st Century.

In a recent edition of Yale Global Online, Dilip Hiro explains why playing the oil card only goes so far in international diplomacy. Read it [here](#).

[Nation Books](#) ▶

## SEARCH

## DISPATCH ARCHIVES

## THINK LINKS

### Websites

- [After Downing Street](#)
- [Alternet](#)
- [Antiwar.com](#)
- [Atlantic Free Press](#)
- [Black Agenda Report](#)
- [Buzzflash](#)
- [Commondreams](#)
- [Cursor.org](#)
- [Electronic Iraq](#)
- [Foreign Policy in Focus](#)
- [History News Network](#)
- [Iraq Slogger](#)
- [Juan Cole's Informed Comment](#)
- [Lew Rockwell](#)
- [Open Democracy](#)
- [PEJ](#)
- [The Smirking Chimp](#)
- [Talking Points Memo](#)
- [TomPaine](#)
- [Truthdig](#)
- [Truthout](#)
- [War in Context](#)
- [Working for Change](#)
- [ZNET](#)

### Blogs

- [The American Empire Project](#)
- [Barbara's Blog](#)
- [Democrats.com](#)
- [Dahr Jamail's MidEast Dispatches](#)
- [Dan Froomkin's White House Watch](#)
- [Direland](#)
- [The Dreyfuss Report](#)
- [Eric Alterman's Altercation](#)
- [Firedoglake](#)
- [Gristmill Blog](#)
- [Lobelog](#)
- [The Notion at the Nation](#)
- [This Modern World](#)
- [A Tiny Revolution](#)
- [Tony Karon's Rootless Cosmopolitan](#)
- [William Arkin's Early Warning](#)



Afghans") and new tactics learned from the insurgency in Iraq (roadside bombs or IEDs, suicide bombing), Taliban forces are stronger than at any time since the United States "conquered" them in 2001. According to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, most Afghans have long favored a process of amnesty and reconciliation; and President Hamid Karzai recently called on the Bush administration to change course and stop killing Afghans. But administration policy, recently reaffirmed in Kabul by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, calls for a fight to the last Talib.

Predictably, public opinion has been turning steadily against the largely powerless central government, guarded in the capital by foreign forces. The insecurity endured by most Afghans -- the absence of peace -- is enough to make them give up hope in President Karzai, often jeeringly referred to as the "mayor of Kabul" or "assistant to the American Ambassador."

Historically Afghans have selected and followed strong leaders; they expect a leader to deliver security, jobs, special favors... something anyway. The Karzai government, confined to a self-serving American agenda that is often at odds with Afghan interests, has delivered nothing at all to the average Afghan, still living in abysmal poverty. In 2004, Afghans dutifully voted for Karzai as the instrument of American promises. By 2005, when Parliamentary elections were held, voters indicated that they were fed up with the same old candidates -- all those militia commanders and Islamist extremists -- and the same old hollow promises.

The sad part of the story is this. Despite the Bush administration's sham "peace" and fake "democracy," it might have made -- might still make -- a success of Afghanistan if only it delivered on that third big promise: to rebuild the bombed-out country. Most Afghans, after the dispersal of the Taliban, were full of hope and ready to work. The tangible benefits of reconstruction -- jobs, housing, schools, health-care facilities -- could have rallied them to support the government and turn that illusory "democracy" into something like the real thing. But reconstruction didn't happen. When NATO-led forces moved into the southern provinces this summer to keep the peace and continue "development," Lieutenant-General David Richards, British commander of the operation, seemed astonished to find that little or no development had so far taken place.

For that failure the U.S. is to blame. Until this year, the American-led Coalition assumed sole charge of "security" operations outside Kabul, but it never put enough troops on the ground to do the job. (Sound familiar?) As a result, aid workers (both international and Afghan) lost their lives, and non-governmental aid organizations (NGOs) withdrew to Kabul, or like Médecins Sans Frontières, left the country altogether. Private contractors who remained in the field found themselves regularly diverting project funds to "security," so that, as in Iraq, aid money poured into operations that belonged in the military budget.

A recent audit by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction found the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) using "an accounting shell game" to hide mammoth cost overruns on projects -- as high as 418% -- resulting partly from such security problems. There's every reason to believe that an audit of Afghanistan reconstruction by many of the same firms under contract to USAID would reveal similar accounting practices used for the same reason. Without peace there can be no security, and without security no development.

## Foreign

[AlArab Online](#)  
[Agence France Presse](#)  
[Asia Times](#)  
[BBC](#)  
[Foreign Press Review](#)  
[The Guardian](#)  
[Haaretz](#)  
[The Independent](#)  
[Middle East On-Line](#)  
[LeMonde Diplomatique](#)  
[Le Monde Diplomatique \(English Language\)](#)  
[Outlook India](#)  
[Watching America](#)

## Magazines

[American Prospect](#)  
[Bulletin of Atomic Scientists](#)  
[Grist](#)  
[Guernica](#)  
[LA Weekly](#)  
[The London Review of Books](#)  
[Mother Jones](#)  
[The Nation](#)  
[The New York Review of Books](#)  
[Salon.com](#)

## Media Criticism

[Editor and Publisher](#)  
[FAIR](#)  
[Media Matters](#)  
[The News Dissector](#)  
[Neiman Watchdog](#)  
[PressThink](#)  
[Romenesko](#)

## Resources

[Arms Trade Resource Center](#)  
[Defense Tech](#)  
[Global Security.org](#)  
[Jim Lobe's Interpress Archive](#)  
[The National Security Archives](#)  
[Natural Resources Defense Council](#)  
[Noah Schachtman's Danger Room](#)  
[Right Web](#)  
[Secrecy News](#)  
[USC Center on Public Diplomacy](#)  
[Wikipedia](#)

## Comics

[Doonesbury](#)  
[Life During Wartime](#)  
[Tom Tomorrow's This Modern World](#)

## Polling

[Donkey Rising](#)  
[Pollster.com](#)  
[ProfessorPollkatz's Pool of Polls](#)  
[Program on International Policy Attitudes](#)  
[Real Clear Politics](#)  
[Zogby](#)

## Iraq Casualty Figures

[Antiwar.com Casualties Page](#)  
[Antiwar.com Daily Casualty Update](#)  
[Iraq Body Count](#)  
[Iraq Coalition Casualties](#)

## Mainstream Media

[Christian Science Monitor](#)  
[Los Angeles Times](#)  
[Newsweek](#)  
[New York Times](#)  
[Washington Post](#)

## The Reconstruction Shell Game

But there's more to the story than that. To understand the failure -- and fraud -- of such reconstruction, you have to take a look at the peculiar system of American aid for international development. During the last five years, the U.S. and many other donor nations pledged billions of dollars to Afghanistan, yet Afghans keep asking: "Where did the money go?" American taxpayers should be asking the same question. The official answer is that donor funds are lost to Afghan corruption. But shady Afghans, accustomed to two-bit bribes, are learning how big-bucks corruption really works from the masters of the world.

A fact-packed report issued in June 2005 by Action Aid, a widely respected NGO, headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, makes sense of the workings of that world. The report studied development aid given by all countries globally and discovered that only a small part of it -- maybe 40% -- is real. The rest is "phantom" aid; that is, the money never actually shows up in recipient countries at all.

Some of it doesn't even exist except as an accounting item, as when countries count debt relief or the construction costs for a fancy new embassy in the aid column. A lot of it never leaves home. Paychecks for American "experts" under contract to USAID, for example, go directly from the Agency to their American banks without ever passing through the to-be-reconstructed country. Much aid money, the report concludes, is thrown away on "overpriced and ineffective Technical Assistance," such as those very hot-shot American experts. And a big chunk of it is carefully "tied" to the donor nation, which means that the recipient is obliged to use the donated money to buy products from the donor country, even when -- especially when -- the same goods are available cheaper at home.

The U.S. easily outstrips other nations at most of these scams, making it second only to France as the world's biggest purveyor of phantom aid. Fully 47% of American development aid is lavished on overpriced technical assistance. By comparison, only 4% of Sweden's aid budget and only 2% of Luxembourg's and Ireland's goes to such assistance. As for tying aid to the purchase of donor-made products, Sweden and Norway don't do it all; neither do Ireland and the United Kingdom. But 70% of American aid is contingent upon the recipient spending it on American stuff, especially American-made armaments. Considering all these practices, Action Aid calculates that 86 cents of every dollar of American aid is phantom aid.

According to targets set years ago by the UN and agreed to by almost every country in the world, a rich country should give 0.7% of its national income in annual aid to poor ones. So far, only the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (with real aid at 0.65% of national income) even come close. At the other end of the scale, the U.S. spends a paltry 0.02% of national income on real aid, which works out to an annual contribution of \$8.00 from every citizen of "the wealthiest nation in the world." (By comparison, Swedes kick in \$193 per person, Norwegians \$304, and the citizens of Luxembourg \$357.) President Bush boasts of sending billions in aid to Afghanistan, but in fact we could do better by passing a hat.

The Bush administration often deliberately misrepresents its aid program for domestic consumption. Last year, for example, when the President sent his wife to Kabul for a few hours of photo ops, the *New York Times* reported

### Tom Engelhardt's articles from around the web

[Why the US Military Loves Ron Paul](#)  
July 23, 2007, [The Nation website](#)

[Order 17](#)  
September 24, 2007, [The Nation website](#)

[We Count, They Don't](#)  
October 4, 2007, [The Nation website](#)

[Medal Inflation](#)  
October 9, 2007, [The Nation website](#)..

that her mission was "to promise long-term commitment from the United States to education for women and children." Speaking in Kabul, Mrs. Bush pledged that the United States would give an additional \$17.7 million to support education in Afghanistan. As it happened, that grant had previously been announced -- and it was not for Afghan public education (or women and children) at all, but to establish a brand-new, private, for-profit American University of Afghanistan catering to the Afghan and international elite. (How a private university comes to be supported by public taxpayer dollars and the Army Corps of Engineers is another peculiarity of Bush aid.)

Ashraf Ghani, the former finance minister of Afghanistan and president of Kabul University, complained, "You cannot support private education and ignore public education." But typically, having set up a government in Afghanistan, the U.S. stiffs it, preferring to channel aid money to private American contractors. Increasingly privatized, U.S. aid becomes just one more mechanism for transferring taxpayer dollars to the coffers of select American companies and the pockets of the already rich.

In 2001, Andrew Natsios, then head of USAID, cited foreign aid as "a key foreign policy instrument" designed to help other countries "become better markets for U.S. exports." To guarantee that mission, the State Department recently took over the formerly semi-autonomous aid agency. And since the aim of American aid is to make the world safe for American business, USAID now cuts in business from the start. It sends out requests for proposals to a short list of the usual suspects and awards contracts to those bidders currently in favor. (Election-time kickbacks influence the list of favorites.)

Sometimes it invites only one contractor to apply, the same efficient procedure that made Halliburton so notorious and profitable in Iraq. In many fields it "preselects vendors" by accepting bids every five years or so on an IQC -- that's an "Indefinite Quantities Contract." Contractors submit indefinite information about what they might be prepared to do in unspecified areas, should some more definite contract materialize; the winners become designated contractors who are invited to apply when the real thing comes along. USAID generates the real thing in the form of an RFP, a Request for Proposals, issued to the "pre-selected vendors" who then compete (or collaborate) to do -- in yet another country -- work dreamed up in Washington by theoreticians unencumbered by first hand knowledge of the hapless "target."

## **The Road to Taliban Land**

The criteria by which contractors are selected have little or nothing to do with conditions in the recipient country, and they are not exactly what you would call transparent. Take the case of the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, featured on the USAID website as a proud accomplishment. In five years, it's also the only accomplishment in highway building -- which makes it one better than the Bush administration record in building power stations, water systems, sewer systems, or dams.

The highway was featured in the *Kabul Weekly* newspaper in March 2005 under the headline, "Millions Wasted on Second-Rate Roads." Afghan journalist Mirwais Harooni reported that even though other international companies had been ready to rebuild the highway for \$250,000 per kilometer, the U.S.-based Louis Berger Group got the job at \$700,000 per

kilometer -- of which there are 389. Why? The standard American answer is that Americans do better work -- though not Berger which, at the time, was already years behind on another \$665 million contract to build Afghan schools. Berger subcontracted to Turkish and Indian companies to build the narrow, two-lane, shoulderless highway at a final cost of about \$1 million per mile; and anyone who travels it today can see that it is already falling apart.

Former Minister of Planning Ramazan Bashedost complained that when it came to building roads, the Taliban had done a better job; and he too asked, "Where did the money go?" Now, in a move certain to tank President Karzai's approval ratings and further endanger U.S. and NATO troops in the area, the Bush administration has pressured his government to turn this "gift of the people of the United States" into a toll road, charging each driver \$20 for a road-use permit valid for one month. In this way, according to American experts providing highly paid technical assistance, Afghanistan can collect \$30 million annually from its impoverished citizens and thereby decrease the foreign aid "burden" on the United States.

Is it any wonder that foreign aid seems to ordinary Afghans to be something only foreigners enjoy? At one end of the infamous highway, in Kabul, Afghans complain about the fancy restaurants where those experts, technicians, and other foreigners gather, men and women together, to drink alcohol, carry on, and plunge half-naked into swimming pools. They object to the brothels -- eighty of them by 2005 -- that house women trafficked in to serve the "needs" of foreign men. They complain that half the capital city still lies in ruins, that many people still live in tents, that thousands can't find jobs, that children go hungry, that schools and hospitals are overcrowded, that women in tattered burqas still beg in the streets and turn to prostitution, that children are kidnapped and sold into slavery or murdered for their kidneys or eyes. They wonder where the promised aid money went and what the puppet government can possibly do to make things better.

At the other end of the highway, in Kandahar city -- President Karzai's home town -- and in the southern provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan, Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah is reported to have more than 12,000 men under arms and squads of suicide bombers at the ready. They ambush newly arrived NATO troops. The embattled British commander, Lieutenant-General Richards, recently issued a warning: "We need to realize that we could actually fail here."

The U.S. attacks the Taliban, as it did in 2001, with air power. (The *Times* of London reports that in May alone, U.S. planes flew an "astonishing" 750 bombing raids.) Every day brings new reports of NATO and Taliban combat casualties, and of "suspected" Taliban as well as civilians killed, long range, by American bombs.

In the meantime, the Taliban take control of villages; they murder teachers and blow up schools. U.S.-led drug eradication teams take control of villages and destroy the poppy crops of poor farmers. Caught as usual in the middle of warring factions, Afghans of the south and east long ago ceased to wonder where the money went. Instead they wonder who the government is. And what ever happened to "peace"

*Journalist and [photographer](#) Ann Jones spent much of the last four years in Afghanistan working as a human rights researcher and women's advocate*

*with international humanitarian agencies and teaching English to Kabul high school English teachers. She writes about her Afghan experience for the Nation magazine and notably in a new book [Kabul in Winter: Life Without Peace in Afghanistan](#) (Metropolitan Books, 2006). For more on her, check out her [website](#).*

Copyright 2006 Ann Jones

[E-mail to a Friend](#) | [Printer-Friendly Version](#)





UN in Haiti accused of second massacre

January 21, 2007

News [HaitiAction.net](http://HaitiAction.net)[ABOUT](#)[EVENTS](#)[TALK](#)[NEWS](#)[LINKS](#)[HOME](#)

# UN in Haiti accused of second massacre



Photos: ©2006 [Haiti Information Project](#) Lelene Mertina, 24 years-old, was six months pregnant when a UN bullet ripped through her abdomen instantly killing her unborn child on Dec, 22, 2006. She claimed that she was running to get out of the way of a UN armored vehicle when they suddenly opened fire in her direction. She denies there was firing on UN forces by purported gang members when she was shot. The UN has said most of the victims were felled by crossfire after coming under fire from gang members in Cite Soleil.

## UN in Haiti accused of second massacre

*Horrifying evidence surfaces contradicting UN denials*

Photos: ©2006 [Haiti Information Project](#)

HIP - Port au Prince, Haiti – A Cite Soleil community activist, Samuel Leconte, was arrested at gunpoint by Brazilian soldiers on Jan. 18th and was turned over to the Haitian police. The first questions posed to Mr. Leconte by the UN were whether he has information connecting former political prisoner Annette Auguste, aka So An, and exiled president Aristide to large demonstrations in the seaside shanty town of Cite Soleil. While Mr. Leconte has responded that he has no such information and that the demonstrations are taken



at the initiative of the community, the information Mr. Leconte does possess is eyewitness testimony of the killings executed by UN forces in his community on December 22, 2006.

Weeks before his arrest, Mr. Leconte spoke at a funeral for the victims of what residents of Cite Soleil are calling a second massacre by UN military forces in their community. Mr. Leconte condemned the killings while sitting in front of a large banner that read "Thank you President Preval for this Christmas gift," an obvious reference to Preval's having reportedly approved the deadly raid. "They killed women, children and old people. They shot them like animals" states Mr. Leconte as he begins to weep into the microphone. He concluded, "They will never stop our demands for the return of President Aristide. We will keep demonstrating and will never stop until the land of Dessalines is truly free and independent!!" As of this writing, Mr. Leconte is being held without charges by the Haitian police in the notorious Delmas 33 prison which is called Fort Dimanche, alluding to a former prison run by the Duvalier dictatorship.

According to residents of Cite Soleil, UN forces attacked their neighborhood in the early morning hours of Dec. 22, 2006 and killed more than 30 people including women and children. For many this was a repeat of UN military operations on July 6, 2005 when more than 26 people were killed in a successful assassination attempt on Emmanuel "Dred" Wilmer and four of his closest followers. Wilmer was openly hostile to the UN military occupation of his country and opposed the ouster of the constitutional president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He led armed resistance and inspired others to do the same against the brutal Haitian police and the irreparably corrupt legal system.

This time the target was a purported kidnapping gang led by a young man named Belony. The military operation was said to have been personally sanctioned by President Rene Preval, who was elected last year with support from Aristide's Lavalas movement. Tens of thousands of Lavalas supporters paralyzed the capital for more than a week to challenge the 76 million dollar UN-sponsored elections fiasco. The UN-backed Provisional Election Council(CEP) attempted a ballot counting fraud meant to keep Preval from assuming office.

The irony is that the attack on Dec. 22 seems to have been triggered, not by a surge in kidnappings as claimed by the UN, but by another massive demonstration of Lavalas supporters that began in Cite Soleil. About ten thousand people demonstrated a few days before for the return of president Aristide in a clear condemnation of what they called the foreign military occupation of their country. These huge demonstrations are not to be



The week before the UN military action in Cite Soleil saw several huge demonstrations demanding the return of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Residents believe that the UN justification for the attack, to arrest a base of kidnappers, was really a cover for collective punishment against the community for continuing demonstrations like these.



Samuel Leconte was arrested and questioned by UN authorities and then turned over to the Haitian police. He is currently being held without charges in the Delmas 33 police station.



A helicopter gunship flies a sortie over Cite Soleil on Dec. 22, 2006. The UN has denied firing at the population from helicopters despite



confused with smaller protests of the so-called "student demonstrations" of the "testicles up your derriere" movement or GNB that helped to oust Aristide on Feb. 29, 2004. The protesters in Cite Soleil were offered a far different treatment by the UN than the so-called "students."

Footage taken by HIP videographers shows unarmed civilians dying as a result of indiscriminate gunfire from UN forces on December 22, 2006. Although the UN denied firing from helicopter gunships, an unidentified 28 year-old man dies on camera stating that he was shot in the abdomen from a circling UN helicopter raining death upon those below. This is not the first time the UN has denied murdering unarmed civilians in Cite Soleil. The occupation force also denied killing unarmed civilians on July 6, 2005. Eloufi Boulbars, a UN spokesperson stated on July 8, 2005, "We saw five people killed, that's what we could count. Armed bandits who had tried to resist were either killed or wounded." Documentary evidence finally forced the UN to admit that unarmed civilians had been killed by UN forces despite their attempts to cover it up.

The scene December 22, 2006 was not all that different with the UN feeding the corporate media a story of military intervention against kidnapers and denying once again the disproportionate use of force resulting in the heavy loss of life among unarmed civilians. Another similarity was the UN's utter disregard in planning for civilian casualties. As in July 2005, not a single medical unit accompanied the UN forces as residents hit by indiscriminate and sustained gunfire bled to death in the middle of the street or managed to crawl back to their homes to die in the arms of their families.

"I couldn't count all the victims," states one survivor who asked to remain anonymous due to fears for her safety. "They came in shooting. Look at that pregnant woman they just shot. Look at that young man. Are we all bandits? Are we all kidnapers?" Annette Auguste, who was a political prisoner in Haiti for more than two years added, "We saw young men and women gunned down by UN forces in Cite Soleil. Young people shot dead. Were they all kidnapers too?"

More than three hours of video footage and a large selection of digital photos, illustrate more than words ever could what the UN is doing in Haiti. The wounded and dying on the video tape all express horror and confusion at the reasons UN forces shot at them. A 16 year-old young man asks why UN forces shot him as he clearly realizes he is going to die. Less than an hour later we see his lifeless corpse replace what once was an animated and articulate young man. HIP Founding Editor Kevin Pina commented, "It is clear that this represents an act of terror against the community.

## eyewitness testimony from victims and survivors



An unidentified 28 year-old man is seen dying in his home. Before succumbing to his wounds, he gives testimony that directly contradicts UN denials of firing from helicopter gunships on the population below. "I was shot by the helicopter" were his last words.



Jonel Bonhomme, 16 years-old, lies in a pool of his own blood just after being shot by UN forces on December 22, 2006. Before dying, Bonhomme described in detail how the UN opened fire on unarmed civilians in his neighborhood.



This video evidence shows clearly that the UN stands accused, once again, of targeting unarmed civilians in Cite Soleil. There can be no justification for using this level of force in the close quarters of those neighborhoods. It is clear that the UN views the killing of these innocents as somehow acceptable to their goal of pacifying this community. Every demonstration, no matter how peaceful, is seen as a threat to their control if it includes demands for the return of Aristide to Haiti. In that context it is difficult to continue to view the UN mission as an independent and neutral force in Haiti. They apparently decided sometime ago it was acceptable to use military force to alter Haiti's political landscape to match their strategic goals for the Haitian people."

The people of Cite Soleil now view president Preval as having the blood of innocent victims on his hands along with UN Special Envoy to Haiti Edmond Mulet and the recently replaced Brazilian General Jose Elito Carvalho de Siqueira. In the minds of the survivors they now join the ranks of General Heleno Ribera, former UN Envoy Juan Gabriel Valdes and the former US-installed prime minister Gerard Latortue all of who are implicated in ordering and covering up the first massacre of July 6, 2005.

*More photos and testimonies will be added soon, return to this web page.*

*See Also*

### [Evidence mounts of a UN massacre in Haiti](#)

July 12 2005

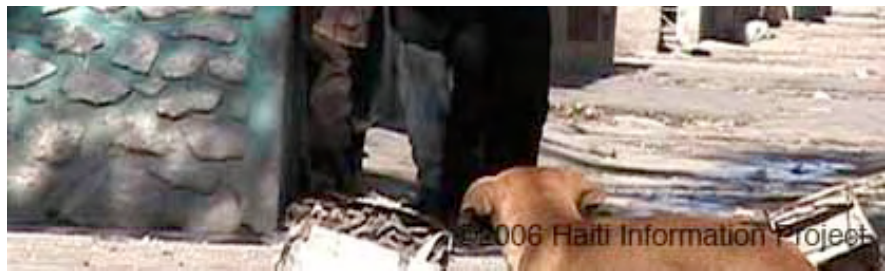
### [The UN's disconnect with the poor in Haiti](#)

December 25, 2005

## [US Embassy in Haiti acknowledges excessive force by UN](#) Jan 23 2007

*New documentary by Kevin Pina*

### ["Haiti: We must kill the BANDITS" Knoxville premiere Monday, January 22](#)



An unidentified man in Cite Soleil crosses himself in a religious gesture before attempting to walk across the street as UN forces open fire in his community on Dec. 22, 2006.



An unidentified Haitian man holds a towel to his face to stop the bleeding from a headshot he claims came from UN forces on Dec. 22, 2006 in Cite Soleil.



## truthout • editorial

 [Print This Story](#) [E-mail This Story](#)**Which Side Are You On?**

By David Bacon

truthout | Guest Contributor

Monday 29 January 2007

Oakland, California - Of all the supporters of corporate immigration reform, Homeland Secretary Michael Chertoff is the most honest. The day of the notorious raids at the Swift and Company meatpacking plants, he told the media the raids would show Congress the need for "stronger border security, effective interior enforcement and a temporary-worker program." Bush wants, he said, "a program that would allow businesses that need foreign workers, because they can't otherwise satisfy their labor needs, to be able to get those workers in a regulated program."

Chertoff is hardly the only voice in DC using raids to justify guest worker programs. Cecilia Mu-oz, head of National Council of La Raza (NCLR), is another. Those deported in December were among the millions of undocumented workers who came after Congress passed the last immigration amnesty in 1986. Since legislators at the time didn't consider people who would come in following years, "perhaps the most tragic consequences are the terrible human costs of workplace raids," she mourns. New guest worker programs will give future migrants legal status, she claims, and protect them from the *migra*.

The raids do cause terrible suffering. But Mu-oz and other Washington insiders actually supported bills last year that mandate the same worksite enforcement Chertoff carries out today. More raids were a price they were willing to pay (or that others would pay) for the guest worker programs they wanted.

Today, many Congressional leaders - Democrats and Republicans - want to allow corporations and contractors to recruit hundreds of thousands of workers a year outside of the US and put them to work here on temporary visas. Labor schemes like this have a long history. From 1942 to 1964, the *bracero* program recruited temporary immigrants. They were exploited, cheated, and deported if they tried to go on strike. Growers pitted them against workers already in the country to drive down wages. Cesar Chavez, Ernesto Galarza and Bert Corona all campaigned to get the program repealed.

Advocates of today's programs do everything they can to avoid association with the bitter "bracero" label. They used "guest worker" until that name also developed an ill repute. Now they prefer other euphemisms - "essential workers," or just "new workers."

We don't live in a magical world, however. You can't clean up an unpleasant reality by renaming it.

Current guest worker programs allow labor contractors to maintain blacklists of workers who work slowly or demand rights. Anyone who makes trouble doesn't get rehired to work in the US again. Public interest lawyers spend years in court, trying just to get back wages for cheated immigrants. The Department of Labor almost never decertifies a contractor for this abuse.

Guest workers labor under the employer's thumb. Standing up for a union or minimum wage is risky. Under current programs, and in the new Congressional proposals, if workers lose their jobs they must leave, making deportation a punishment for being unemployed. No one gets unemployment insurance, disability or workers' compensation payments. Companies save money and avoid bad publicity by sending injured workers back home, where healthcare is virtually unavailable.

But Mu-oz and others argue that Congress can allow guest workers to go to court. Our legal system is such a poor protector of workers' rights today, however, that in 30 percent of all organizing drives, workers (both citizens and immigrants) are illegally fired, with virtually no remedies or penalties on employers. Arguing that lawyers can protect immigrants on temporary work visas is preposterous.

These problems aren't aberrations, curable with legal fine print.

By their nature, guest worker programs are low-wage schemes, intended to supply plentiful labor to corporate employers, at a price they want to pay. Companies don't recruit guest workers so they can pay them more, but to pay them less.

According to Rob Rosado, director of legislative affairs for the American Meat Institute, meatpackers want a guest worker program, but not a basic wage guarantee for those workers. "We don't want the government setting wages," he says. "The market determines wages."

Major Senate sponsors of guest worker bills don't believe the government should even set a minimum wage for anyone, immigrant or citizen. John McCain, John Cornyn, James Kyl, Larry Craig and Chuck Hegel all just voted for an amendment to repeal the federal minimum wage entirely. Making them responsible for guest worker wages is putting the fox in charge of the chickens.

And it's not just wages. The schemes create a second tier of workers with fewer rights and less job security. They have none of the social benefits US workers won in the New Deal - retirement, unemployment and disability insurance. Instead of including new immigrants in these and other social programs, giving them legal residence and rights, Congress would create a huge workforce without them. Corporations that have pushed for eliminating these standards for everyone would be halfway there.

That's why workers, unions and community organizations have opposed guest worker programs, but also why corporations want them. Starting in the late 1990s, companies organized a shadowy lobby group, the Essential Worker Immigration Coalition (EWIC) which today encompasses over 40 huge employer associations, including Wal-Mart, Marriott, Tyson Foods and the Association of Builders and Contractors. They recruited the Cato Institute to produce guest worker recommendations, which President Bush repeats almost word-for-word. The hard-right Manhattan Institute provides additional cover.

The corporate lobby made other inroads as well. John Gay, who heads the National Restaurant Association and EWIC, is now board chair of the National Immigration Forum, a major Washington player. NCLR's list of corporate sponsors includes Wal-Mart and 14 other multinationals. Even two unions, the Service Employees and UNITE HERE, supported the Senate guest worker compromise last year.

The question Congress is deciding isn't "what can stop immigration?" With over 180 million people in the world living outside their countries of origin, nothing can. Migration begins when people are displaced. In the countries that are the main sources of migration to the US, most migration is caused by economic dislocation - people can no longer survive as farmers or workers. Other migrants fled the wars that raged in Central America.

NAFTA, CAFTA, and US-sponsored economic reforms, along with US military intervention, uprooted millions of people, leaving them little option other than coming north. Corporations like Wal-Mart and Marriott wrote US trade policy to improve their investment opportunities abroad. Now they also want guest worker programs to channel people displaced by those policies into their US operations. Often those leaving home are among the most skilled and educated. Their departure makes it even harder for their countries to progress.

This flow of forced migration may not stop in the near future, but changing pro-corporate trade policies would reduce the pressure on people to leave home. Unsurprisingly, that's not on EWIC's agenda.

The real question Congress is deciding is the status of people once they're here. Other proposals, from outside the Beltway, would give immigrants far greater rights and much more equality than guest worker programs. Congress could, for instance,

- Give permanent residence visas, or green cards, to people already here. Those visas don't require people to stay, but give them the chance to come and go - to work, study, or take care of family members in the US or in their home country. They can't be deported if they lose a job.
- Expand the number of green cards available for new migrants, opening the door to legal immigration far enough to accommodate those now coming illegally. Most immigrants already come through family networks. Making family reunification easier would help them and strengthen communities.
- Allow people to apply for green cards, in the future, after they've been here a few years. The US wouldn't develop the huge undocumented population it has today.
- Stop the enforcement program that has led to thousands of deportations and firings, and a border so heavily militarized that migrants cross, and die, in the most dangerous areas.
- Prohibit companies from recruiting outside the US. They can always hire immigrants with green cards here, and green card holders are in a much better position to demand rights and higher wages.

It's not likely that many corporations will support such a program. That's why those who claim to represent the interests of immigrants in Washington must choose whose side they're really on.

*David Bacon is a California photojournalist who documents labor, migration and globalization. His book Communities Without Borders was just published by Cornell University/ILR Press.*

-----

**Jump to today's Truthout Features:**

Today's Truthout Features

 [Print This Story](#)

 [E-mail This Story](#)

© : t r u t h o u t 2007

| [t r u t h o u t](#) | [issues](#) | [environment](#) | [labor](#) | [women](#) | [health](#) | [voter rights](#) | [multimedia](#) | [donate](#) | [contact](#) | [subscribe](#) | [about us](#) | [rss feed](#) | [archive](#) |

## Products

- [Overview](#)
- [CQ.com](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
  - [Guided tour](#)
- [CQ Budget Tracker](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
  - [Guided tour](#)
- [CQ HealthBeat](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
  - [Guided tour](#)
- [CQ Today](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
- [CQ Weekly](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
- [CQ Homeland Security](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
  - [Guided tour](#)
- [CQ House Action Reports](#)
  - [Free trial](#)
  - [Guided tour](#)
- [CQ Transcripts](#)
  - [Congressional Hearing Transcripts](#)
  - [CQ Newsmaker Transcripts](#)
- [CQ Midday Update](#)
- [CQPolitics.com](#)
- [CQ Behind The Lines](#)
- [CQ Online Store](#)
  - [CQ Issue Briefs](#)
  - [CQ Bill Briefs](#)
  - [CQ Books](#)
  - [CQ Special Supplements](#)
- [CQ Press](#)

## Customer Service

- [Contact us](#)
- [CQ.com quick start guide](#)
- [CQ Homeland Security quick start guide](#)

## Advertise

- [Pure CQ: 2005 Media Kit](#)

## About CQ

- [Mission](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Press releases](#)
- [Working at CQ](#)
- [Executive team](#)
- [Reprints](#)
- [Other CQ sites](#)

## About this Site

- [Privacy policy](#)

CQ HOMELAND SECURITY – SPYTALK  
Nov. 22, 2006 – 7:08 p.m.

## A Senate Mystery Keeps Torture Alive — and Its Practitioners Free

By Jeff Stein, CQ National Security Editor

With all the lawsuits over kidnapping and torture marching toward the Bush administration, you might think the top officials running the global war on terror would be worried just a little about the prospect that some day they might end up in court — if not having nightmares about getting measured for orange jumpsuits at Danbury Federal Prison.

Alas, no. Thanks to the legerdemain of Bush administration lawyers, a provision quietly tucked into the Military Commissions Act ([PL 109-366](#)) just before it was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush on Oct. 17, would ease any worries they might've had. It not only redefines torture upward, removing the harshest, most controversial techniques from the definition of war crimes, it also exempts the perpetrators — interrogators and their bosses — from punishment all the way back to Nov. 1997.

The deft wording is the Bush administration's attempt at bringing the United States' criteria for defining a war crime into line with the Geneva Convention's interpretation of torture.

The Supreme Court in June had declared the administration's hastily assembled military commissions unconstitutional, saying all prisoners in U.S. custody had to be held in accordance with the Geneva Convention's Article 3, which prohibits "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment."

Renegotiating the Geneva Convention was out of the question. So the administration's lawyers took what the president's counselor, Dan Bartlett, later called "the scenic route."

By way of the new Military Commissions Act, they effectively rewrote the U.S. enforcement mechanism for Geneva, the War Crimes Act, passed by Congress in Nov. 1997.

Never heard of this provision? That's because coverage of the act focused more on its suspension of habeas corpus, barring anyone defined as an enemy combatant from filing suit challenging the legality of their detention or raising claims of torture and other mistreatment.

Former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, in particular, must be pleased by this legal three-card monte.

So, too, must be President Bush.

That's because of another development that has garnered relatively minor coverage: The sworn statement of Lt. Gen. Randall M. Schmidt, the Army's inspector general, that implicates the erstwhile Defense Secretary in the abuse of a Guantanamo detainee.

On March 17, 2005, Schmidt interviewed Maj. Gen. Mike Dunlavey, the retired former commander of Task Force 170, which was in charge of Guantanamo interrogations.

In his report, first obtained last April by the Internet magazine Salon, Dunlavey described himself as "a trial lawyer" who had "done over 3,000 interrogations" during his "35 years of intelligence experience."

Under oath, Dunlavey said that Rumsfeld was "personally involved" in the interrogation of a high-ranking al Qaeda suspect, Mohammad al-Qahtani.

**Free Features**  
[CQPolitics.com](#)  
[Craig Crawford's 1600 Courts & the Law Media](#)  
[Futurist](#)  
[States & Localities](#)  
[CQ Homeland Security](#)  
[CQ Midday Update](#)

**CLICK HERE**

Be the  
first to  
know...

**CQToday**  
Action Alerts



From our  
newsroom  
to your  
inbox

**FREE TRIAL**

So was Bush, Dunlavey testified.

### Marching Orders

In his deposition, Dunlavey refers to Rumsfeld as “SECDEF.”

“I met with the SECDEF on the 20th or 21st of February, 2002, along with the Deputy SECDEF, [Paul] Wolferwitz [sic] and a number of other personnel ...” Dunlavey said.

“The SECDEF said he wanted a product and he wanted intelligence now. He told me what he wanted, not how to do it.

“Initially,” Dunlavey continued, “I was told that I would answer to SECDEF . . . .”

But “the directions changed and I got my marching orders from the president of the United States.”

And not just by telephone.

“I was told by the SECDEF that he wanted me back in Washington every week to brief him. . . . The mission was to get intelligence to prevent another 9/11.”

No one said Rumsfeld was in the prison cell shouting questions at al-Qahtani.

But Rumsfeld was also “talking weekly” about the al-Qahtani interrogation with Gen. Geoffrey Miller, then a senior commander at Guantanamo, Schmidt reported.

The secretary of Defense was “personally involved in the interrogation of [this] one person,” he said.

Later in the year, we now know, Rumsfeld gave interrogators formal approval for hooding prisoners, exploiting their phobias, putting them in prolonged stress positions, often in complete darkness, and bombarding them with ear-splitting noise, tactics ordinarily forbidden by the Army Field Manual.

Joanne Mariner, a lawyer and director of the Terrorism and Counterterrorism Program at Human Rights Watch, took aim at Rumsfeld when the Army IG’s report surfaced.

“The question at this point is not whether Secretary Rumsfeld should resign, it’s whether he should be indicted,” Mariner said, urging the appointment of a special prosecutor.

“Gen. Schmidt’s sworn statement suggests that Rumsfeld may have been perfectly aware of the abuses inflicted on al-Qahtani,” she added.

### Murky Trail

Who dunnit? Who slipped the language that could potentially exempt torturers from prosecution into the Military Commissions Act?

The White House counsel’s office wrote it, if Dan Bartlett’s “scenic route” jibe is any guide.

A spokeswoman there denied it.

But who was the accessory?

Backdating the exemption of perpetrators wasn’t in the original bill, stitched together by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz, Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and John W. Warner, R-Va., said a Senate aide involved in the drafting of the bill.

The version those three and the White House seemed to agree on — it apparently changed like a Rubik’s cube every week — backdated the officials’ exemption from prosecution only to Sept. 11, 2001.

Nor did the Warner version narrow the definitions for war crimes nearly to the extent that the final version did, said the aide, on condition of anonymity.



As for the timing of the midnight riders, they had to have been inserted quietly over the last weekend, or even the last night, before the bill moved to a final vote and then to the White House, the aide speculated .

“We have no idea who it came from or how it came to be.”

The senators’ offices did not answer queries during the shortened holiday week.

White House spokesperson Dana Perrino, meanwhile, thickened the mystery.

She said the stealth changes didn’t come from the counsel’s office.

“It could’ve come from elsewhere in the White House or Justice Department,” she said, a smile in her voice.

“But it didn’t come from us.”

Ah, sweet mystery of Hill life.

In any event, with Democrats holding the gavels come January, the Republicans should enjoy their legalistic coup while it lasts.

What the Republicans got, the Democrats can take away.

*Jeff Stein can be reached at [jstein@cq.com](mailto:jstein@cq.com).*

Source: **CQ Homeland Security**  
© 2006 Congressional Quarterly Inc. All Rights Reserved.



## Rachel's Democracy & Health News #876

"Environment, health, jobs and justice--Who gets to decide?"

Thursday, October 12, 2006

[Printer-friendly version](#)

[www.rachel.org](http://www.rachel.org) -- To make a secure donation, click [here](#).



### Featured stories in this issue...

[Some Chemicals Are More Harmful Than Anyone Ever Suspected](#)

Evidence is piling up to show that many chemicals can cause serious illnesses, which then can be passed on to our children and grandchildren.

[Chemicals and Stress Cause Gene Changes That Can Be Inherited](#)

Scientists are still deciphering what has been described as the second genetic code. They know that a number of chemicals in our bodies act like dimming switches. They suspect this chemical switching system can be affected by diet, the air pollution we inhale, whether we smoke, and the stress we endure -- and the resulting changes can be passed along to offspring.

[A Single Prenatal Chemical Exposure Can Cause Cancer Later](#)

Pregnant rats were exposed to high levels of a fungicide commonly used in vineyards. In male offspring and three subsequent male generations of the rats, 85 percent of the animals developed cancer, prostate disease, kidneying disease, premature aging or other problems.

[Marine Life Is Disappearing from Puget Sound, and Fast](#)

Puget Sound -- Washington State's unique inland sea -- is rapidly approaching an ecological tipping point.

[Scientists Find Farm Link To Breast Cancer](#)

A new study from Canada links farm life to an increased likelihood of breast cancer.



From: Rachel's Democracy & Health News #876, Oct. 12, 2006  
[\[Printer-friendly version\]](#)

### SOME CHEMICALS ARE MORE HARMFUL THAN ANYONE EVER SUSPECTED

By Peter Montague

New evidence is flooding in to suggest that many industrial chemicals are more dangerous than previously understood. During the 1990s, it came as a surprise that many industrial chemicals can interfere with the hormone systems of many species, including humans. Hormones are chemicals that circulate in the blood stream at very low levels (parts per billion, and in some cases parts per trillion), acting like switches, turning on and off bodily processes. From the moment of conception throughout the remainder of life, our growth, development and even many kinds of behavior are controlled by hormones.

Now new evidence is piling up to show that some of these hormone-related changes can be passed from one generation to the next by a mechanism that remains poorly understood, called epigenetics.

Until very recently scientists had thought that inherited traits always involved genetic mutations -- physical changes in the sequence of nucleotides that make up the DNA molecule itself. Now they know that there is a "second genetic code" that somehow influences the way genes operate, and that by some poorly-understood mechanism can be passed along to successive generations.

Medical scientists hope to take advantage of the new science of epigenetics to manipulate the behavior of genes for beneficial purposes. But the dark side of this new understanding is that stress, smoking, and pollution can cause epigenetic changes -- including many serious diseases like cancer and kidney disease -- that apparently can be passed along to one's children and even grandchildren. For example, Dutch women who went hungry during World War II gave birth to small babies. These babies, in turn, gave birth to small babies even though they themselves had plenty to eat. "It changes the whole way we think about inheritance," says Dr. Moshe Szyf at McGill University in

Toronto.

Just last month professor Michael Skinner at Washington State University in Spokane announced [results of laboratory experiments](#) showing that environmental pollution could permanently reprogram the genetic traits of a family line of rodents, creating a legacy of sickness. This research "highlights the long-term dangers from environmental pollution," professor Skinner said. Dr. Skinner showed that a single exposure to a toxic chemical in the womb could produce a sick litter of offspring, which in turn could produce its own sick offspring. "It's a new way to think about disease," Dr. Skinner said.

"A human analogy would be if your grandmother was exposed to an environmental toxicant during mid-gestation, you may develop a disease state even though you never had direct exposure, and you may pass it on to your great-grandchildren," Skinner said.

"It introduces the concept of responsibility into genetics," says Dr. Szyf. As [a recent story](#) in the Toronto Globe & Mail summarized, "Epigenetics may revolutionize medicine, said Dr. Szyf, and it also could change the way we think about daily decisions like whether or not to order fries with a meal, or to go for a walk or to stay in front of the television. You aren't eating and exercising for yourself, but for your lineage."

On average, 1800 new chemicals are registered with the federal government each year and about 750 of these find their way into products, all with hardly any testing for health or environmental effects.

Brominated flame retardants, phthalates, bisphenol-A, PFOA (related to the manufacture of Teflon) are the toxins that have gained our attention at the moment. By working overtime for 10 or 15 years in the traditional environmentalist way, we may be able to ban a half-dozen of them. But during that 10 or 15 years, the chemical industry (and the federal EPA) will have introduced somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 new chemicals into commerce, almost entirely untested. This destructive merry-go-round is accelerating.

Faced with evidence of harm, governments tend to respond initially by conducting "risk assessments" to show there is no problem. The main function of risk assessment is to make chemical problems disappear, almost like magic. As EPA's first administrator, William Ruckelshaus, reminded us, "We should remember that risk assessment data can be like the captured spy: If you torture it long enough, it will tell you anything you want to know."

So the bad news about chemical contamination is steadily mounting, while the number of new chemicals is steadily increasing. As we have been reporting regularly in [Rachel's Precaution Reporter](#), the European Union has responded to this situation by trying to enact a new law called REACH, which requires that chemicals be tested before they can be sold. As they say in Europe, "No data, no market." The U.S. and European chemical industries -- and the White House -- have been working overtime to subvert the European effort to enact REACH. But now it looks as though REACH -- in one form or other -- will become law soon. It will be binding on any corporations that want to sell chemicals in Europe, including firms based in the U.S.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

.....

From: Globe & Mail (Toronto, Ontario), Mar. 11, 2006  
[\[Printer-friendly version\]](#)

**CODE 2**

By Anne McIlroy

Scientists are rewriting the laws of heredity as they learn more about a mysterious second genetic code that turns our genes on and off.

The traditional idea that we are the passive carriers of our genes is being challenged by the notion that we are their custodians. Our lifestyles -- what we eat, how much we exercise, whether we smoke -- may play a role in a chemical switching system that activates or

deactivates our genes. There are signs that our behaviour may program sections of our children's DNA, and that how we live may even affect our grandchildren's genes.

"It introduces the concept of responsibility into genetics," said Dr. Moshe Szyf, a researcher at McGill University in Montreal and a pioneer in the field of epigenetics, the study of genetic changes that don't involve mutations in DNA.

"It changes the whole way we think about inheritance."

If DNA is the hardware of inheritance, the epigenetic operating system is the software, controlling the 30,000 genes that carry instructions for the proteins that make up our bodies and keep them running.

Scientists are still deciphering what has been described as the second genetic code. They know, Dr. Szyf said, that a number of chemicals in our bodies act like dimming switches and determine whether every gene in each cell produces a lot of a particular protein, very little or none of it.

They suspect this chemical switching system can be affected by diet, the air pollution we inhale, whether we smoke, and the stress we endure. It may be a mechanism through which our environment affects our genes.

In mice there is proof some of these changes can be passed down from generation to generation. There are signs this may be the case for humans, as well, if the environmental changes affect genes in sperm or eggs.

A recent study found that found men who started smoking before puberty are more likely to have overweight male children. Dutch women who went hungry in the Second World War gave birth to small babies, but their children also had small babies, even though they had enough to eat.

There is also evidence, at least in rats, that a mother can turn genes on and off in her offspring. Mothers who lick their pups activate a gene that restricts the production of the stress hormone cortisol. As a result, their babies are more laid back.

Canadian scientists in Montreal and Hamilton are now doing an unprecedented experiment in humans, and want to find whether a mother's behaviour affects similar genes in young children. They should have preliminary results by the fall.

A recent study in Spain found that as identical twins get older, they become genetically less similar. They start out with the same genes, but as they age, the switches that control their genes start to look different. The changes are barely noticeable in three-year-old twins, and most pronounced in elderly twins, especially those who have spent less of their lives together.

This helps explain why, in the Spanish study, a 35-year-old woman developed breast cancer but her identical twin didn't. It may also explain why when one identical twin develops schizophrenia, it is estimated that the other one has only a 50-per-cent chance of developing the mental illness.

Pamela Spiro Wagner started hearing voices the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Carolyn Spiro, her identical twin, became a psychiatrist. She was on call at a Boston hospital when her sister was admitted in a catatonic state, one arm extended into the air.

"This can't be my twin," she recalls thinking at the time. The two wrote a memoir, published last year, called *Divided Minds: Twin Sisters and their Journey through Schizophrenia*.

Identical twins can look less similar as they get older, and often act very differently. Epigenetics may help explain why.

Connie Millar, 31, says she began noticing more physical differences between herself and identical twin Kendra four or five years ago.

The sisters share a home in Welland, Ont.

"My hair is nice and full," Connie said. Kendra, younger by 11



minutes, conceded her hair is little thinner.

"Hers is more curly."

Their noses are a little different. Connie's turns up a little more, Kendra said. Connie weighs about 30 pounds less than her twin, and likes to curl and dance and go to the racetrack. Kendra is more of a homebody, and is fascinated by royalty.

Darrick Antell, a plastic surgeon in Manhattan, began doing face lifts on identical twins so he could compare the two surgical techniques. But he found that one twin was always an older version of the other. Smoking, sun exposure, diet and the amount of stress they had endured took a toll on their faces. But some of the differences were not so easily explained. One set of twins lived together, but one smoked and the other didn't. The smoker had much more grey hair than his twin.

"I think there is more at work here," said Dr. Antell, who has performed plastic surgery on more than 30 sets of twins, more than anyone else in the world.

But epigenetics may help explain more than the differences between people who are genetically identical.

Scientists are also looking at many common diseases to see if they might be caused, at least in part, by problems with the switching system that activates and deactivates genes. In Canada and around the world researchers are looking at the role epigenetics plays in various kinds of cancer, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, lupus and other illnesses.

Genes seem to play a part in all of these diseases, but not always the starring role. One patient with Alzheimer's can't recognize the faces of their loved ones, while someone else with the same gene linked to the disease is lucid at the age of 90.

The difference is not a mutation, or a change to the four chemicals -- known as nucleotides -- that make up the long strings of DNA in our chromosomes that we inherited from our parents. The problem may be an aberration in the operating system that controls which genes are turned on and off, and how much protein they produce.

In a number of kinds of cancer, a gene that suppresses tumour growth appears to get turned off, Dr. Szyf said. He and his colleagues believe they have discovered a way to turn it on again, with one of two epigenetic cancer drugs now being tested in clinical trials by the Montreal company MethylGene.

They aren't alone. Researchers say dozens of new epigenetic cancer drugs are now being tested around the world, almost all attempting to turn on genes that stop the growth of tumours. One, azacitidine or Vidaza, has been approved in the United States, but not yet in Canada. So far, however, it is not a miracle drug. It appears to help 16 per cent of those who take it.

Dr. Szyf is also exploring what role the switching system plays when cancer metastasizes, or spreads from the original site to other parts of the body.

He is also interested in the role gene switches play in behaviour, including suicide. He is working on epigenetic profiles of men who committed suicide, studying cells from their brains to see if there is a pattern in the genes that are turned on or off. So far, he has studied cells from 14 men who killed themselves, and says the preliminary results are promising.

Arturas Petronis, at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, is working on the epigenetic profiles of both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, which used to be known as manic depression. He is studying the brain cells of people with those mental illnesses who died, and comparing them with cells from the brains of people who didn't have either disease. He is looking for a pattern of on-off switches that is distinctive in schizophrenia and in bipolar disorder.

There is no evidence that lifestyle factors -- like drug use -- play a role in switching genes on or off in people who suffer from mental illness. Neither is there proof that lifestyle causes epigenetic

changes that lead to other diseases, like cancer. But it may be that smoking, for example, alters the activity of genes in lung cells.

Dr. Petronis characterizes the epigenetics explanation as a promising theory, one that may answer many perplexing questions about cancer and other diseases.

But first, he and other researchers caution, many mysteries need to be solved. No one knows how the switches in all our cells are controlled. Also unknown is to what extent changes in them are passed down from generation to generation.

Some researchers, however, believe epigenetics holds enormous promise for treating disease. It may be possible -- eventually -- to turn genes on or off, to increase or decrease the production of protein that is part of a disease. It may prove easier than conventional gene therapy, where new genes are inserted into a patient's genetic code.

"Epigenetics will completely change the face of medicine," Dr. Szyf predicted.

It also may change the way we think about pollution, or the chemicals in many products we use every day.

A number of scientists suspect that heavy metals, pesticides, diesel exhaust and tobacco smoke and other chemicals in the environment may be interfering with the human genetic switches. They fear that endocrine disrupters, the so-called gender-bender chemicals, may somehow be switching genes on and off, resulting in fish with both male and female sexual organs and male alligators with shrinking penises.

Michael Skinner a professor at Washington State University, briefly exposed pregnant rats to high levels of two endocrine disrupters, and insecticide and a fungicide. He and his colleagues found that their male offspring had lower fertility and sperm production for not one, but four generations.

Dr. Szyf said that in the future, chemicals should be evaluated not only for whether they cause changes to DNA, but whether they affect the amount of protein a gene produces.

He is working on a way to do this, and said the first step is to identify the sites in the genome that are most vulnerable to these changes.

Scientists are also intrigued about the role epigenetics may play in evolution. Switching genes on and off may be a way for animals, including humans, to adapt to the environment more rapidly than the glacial speed allowed by evolution, which depends on relatively rare mutations to DNA.

"You inherit DNA, but it doesn't tell you if you are living in a rich or a poor environment. If it is rich, you don't have to store fat, don't need to be anxious," Dr. Szyf said. "But if you are going to be thrown in a ghetto, that is a different thing."

Take the mother rats that don't lick their pups much. They tend to be at the low end of the rat social hierarchy, and as a result lead more stressful lives. It is probably a good thing that their pups produce more cortisol -- a stress hormone -- and are more uptight. Cortisol makes rats less aggressive, and less likely to get into fights they can't win.

Researchers in Montreal have found that the boys in neighbourhoods with high crime rates who don't get in much trouble tend to have higher levels of cortisol than boys who join gangs or steal cars. Their higher stress level seems to make them more fearful, and less likely to engage in risky business.

As for our modern lifestyles, exercise is good, but not just for burning calories. It may reprogram our genes, Dr. Szyf said.

Fat may do more than add extra body weight and clog arteries; it may also switch a number of genes on and off that in the past were helpful in preparing humans for a long winter without much food.

Epigenetics may revolutionize medicine, said Dr. Szyf, and it also could change the way we think about daily decisions like whether or not to order fries with a meal, or to go for a walk or to stay in front of the television. You aren't eating and exercising for yourself, but for your lineage.

#### Loosening the strands of DNA

Flicking genes on and off.

It would mean chaos -- and probably death -- if every gene in every cell of our body were active at once. Brain cells would get clogged with the proteins the kidneys, liver, heart, lungs and skin need to function, and vice versa.

The body needs a way to orchestrate our genes -- especially when an embryo is developing. Scientists are learning more about the chemical switching system that determines what genes get turned on or off, and when.

Most genes carry instructions about what cells they will be used in, says Tom Hudson, a researcher at McGill University in Montreal. But they still need to be activated or deactivated.

Scientists know that for easy storage, the DNA in cells is tightly wrapped around blocks that are called histone proteins. Think of string around a grapefruit, says Michael Meaney, a McGill researcher who found that mother rats can turn a gene on in their pups by frequently licking them.

For a gene to work, and make a protein, the string has to loosen, or the grapefruit has to move or change shape. So far, scientists know of at least five ways this happens, and are exploring how the different chemical reactions that turn genes on and off may be linked. The process they perhaps understand the best is called methylation, in which chemical tags are added to the DNA, tightening the string around the grapefruit so that a gene is silenced, or partially silenced.

Scientists are now mapping these tags, much as they mapped the human genome. They are marshalling resources for an international effort, similar to the human genome project. So far, scientists have mapped the differences in 25 genes that suppress the growth of tumours, says Manel Esteller, a Spanish researcher who did an experiment that showed identical twins become less genetically similar as they age.

They say the human epigenome project will produce profiles of diseases, a map that would show which genes are turned on or off in people with various forms of cancer, as opposed to people who don't get the disease.

Canadian researchers are working on their own on similar epigenetic profiles of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other diseases.

In most cases, it seems that epigenetic changes are not passed from parents to their offspring. Scientists aren't sure how -- but genes seem to be wiped clean after a sperm fertilizes an egg.

But they are intrigued by the notion that some changes may be passed on from generation to generation, and may be influenced by our diet or behaviour.

There is proof this sometimes happens in plants, yeast flies and mammals. Researchers in Australia and the U.S can get yellow mice to have brown babies if they feed them nutritional supplements like folic acid and vitamin B12 during pregnancy. But genetically identical yellow mice not given the supplements had yellow babies.

All of the animals had the same gene that helps determine fur colour, known as the Agouti gene. But in the mothers who were fed the dietary supplement -- and their babies -- the gene had extra chemical tags attached. It was methylated, and produced much less of the protein that colours mouse hair.

It has not been proven that changes to the epigenetic switching can be passed from generation to generation like this in humans, but there are signs it may happen, especially as it relates to diet. Swedish researcher Gunnar Kaati and his colleagues have looked at records from

1890 to 1920. They found that boys who matured in times of plenty had grandchildren with a higher rate of diabetes.

Copyright Copyright 2006 Bell Globemedia Publishing Inc.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

.....

From: Spokesman Review (Spokane, Wash.), Sept. 15, 2006  
[\[Printer-friendly version\]](#)

**WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY FINDS TOXIN, CANCER LINK**

**Study finds link during pregnancy**

By Shawn Vestal

New research by Washington State University scientists suggests that a single exposure to environmental toxins during pregnancy can cause cancer, kidney disease and other illnesses for future generations.

The research, led by WSU professor Michael Skinner, suggests that environmental pollution could permanently reprogram genetic traits in a family line, creating a legacy of sickness. It follows previous studies in Skinner's lab that showed similar long-term effects from toxins on the reproductive systems of successive generations.

"It's a new way to think about disease," Skinner said in a WSU news release. "If this pans out, it gives us a host of new diagnostic and therapeutic tools."

It also provides possible explanations for increases in some diseases, as well as spikes in illness that are tied to a geographical region. And it highlights the potential long-term dangers from environmental pollution, said Skinner, the director of WSU's Center for Reproductive Biology.

In the research, pregnant rats were exposed to high levels of a fungicide commonly used in vineyards. In male offspring and three subsequent male generations of the rats, 85 percent of the animals developed cancer, prostate disease, kidney disease, premature aging or other problems. Most of the rats developed more than one illness.

The research was published in two papers Thursday in the journal *Endocrinology*.

Skinner's lab has been working on the question of "epigenetic inheritance" for years, and published research last year that showed toxic exposure during embryonic development could hurt fertility over several generations. Epigenetic inheritance involves chemical modifications in the operation of genes from parent to offspring - changes in which the DNA itself isn't modified, but the way the genes "turn off" and "turn on" is affected, WSU said.

The new research suggests an environmental toxin can permanently reprogram an inheritable trait.

Skinner and a team of WSU researchers exposed pregnant rats to the fungicide vinclozolin during a period when the sex of the rats' offspring was being determined. It's a state of development when embryos are susceptible to genetic reprogramming, WSU said in its news release.

The rats were exposed to higher levels of the toxin than are normally present in the environment, and more research is needed to see if lower levels show the same effects.

Pregnant rats exposed to the toxin produced male offspring with low sperm counts and high rates of disease. When those rats mated with females that weren't exposed to the fungicide, their male offspring had the same problems -- a situation that persisted through four generations.

"A human analogy would be if your grandmother was exposed to an environmental toxicant during mid-gestation, you may develop a disease state even though you never had direct exposure, and you may pass it



on to your great-grandchildren," Skinner said.

Skinner said the findings might be applicable to the study of breast cancer and prostate disease, which are increasing faster than would be expected from genetic changes alone.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

.....

From: [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#), Oct. 9, 2006  
[\[Printer-friendly version\]](#)

**MARINE LIFE IS DISAPPEARING FROM PUGET SOUND, AND FAST**

By Robert McClure and Lisa Stiffler

Peter Lang and his buddies like to go diving by Blake Island, just across Puget Sound from West Seattle, where they can scoop up delectable Dungeness crabs.

But when they showed up last spring, the lush meadows of eelgrass where crab like to hide were nearly gone. In the sandy expanse below, they could pick out just a cell phone and an old car radio.

Where they normally spotted scads of crabs and fish, they saw just one sick-looking Dungeness -- with only one claw. It didn't bother to run from them.

The place -- within sight of Tillicum Village, where tourists savor salmon and celebrate the Sound's bounty -- had turned into an underwater desert.

In three other places where Lang and his friends expected to chase after bountiful sea life, they instead found a barren expanse.

"The shallows of Puget Sound are mostly dead," asserts Lang, who has been diving here since 1988. "Something's drastically changed in the last two years."

Lang's story and similar anecdotes match the findings of scientists who study the Sound. Their conclusion: Marine life is disappearing, and fast.

Seabird populations are plummeting. The state's largest seabird-nesting colony last year saw a catastrophic failure. In the south Sound -- years after fishing was cut way back for Pacific cod, whiting and walleye pollock -- populations are still in critical condition.

Salmon stocks stand at perhaps 10 percent of their historic abundance, and individual fish are much smaller.

The orcas that eat those salmon are the highest predator trying to eke out a living in Puget Sound. The federal government last year awarded local orcas the strongest protection available for species slipping toward extinction. Later this year, federal scientists will announce which areas of the Sound must be preserved to keep the population afloat. Whale lovers wonder if the effort will be enough.

The orcas are victims of decades of politicians' broken promises, industries' resistance to stricter regulations and -- perhaps most damagingly -- the inability to convince residents to live and work more gently on the shores of the Sound. It all has resulted in a failure to turn the environmental tide in favor of the salmon on which the orcas depend -- much less launch the broad-based rescue of Washington's unique inland sea that scientists say is necessary to prevent the loss of species.

Warnings are dire.

Recent studies show that Puget Sound's herring -- a key link in the food chain -- contain higher contamination levels than those in Europe's highly polluted Baltic Sea. In May, leading federal and state scientists reported that the "food web of Puget Sound appears to be more seriously contaminated than previously anticipated."

And orcas now are among the more chemically contaminated marine

mammals in the world's oceans.

What's causing the disappearance of the eelgrass and crabs, the birds and fish? Hard to say.

Research "has not been as robust or as consistent as it should be," said Tracy Collier, manager of the National Marine Fisheries Service's ecotoxicology program in Seattle.

"Saying why things are happening is difficult because we haven't been spending enough time and effort on it."

For example, systematic state eelgrass surveys were started just five years ago. They cover just 3 percent of the shoreline and one-fifth of the bays where eelgrass might be found.

The tale told by Lang and his diving buddies is one of several recent anecdotes that raise questions about whether we are witnessing a widespread decline in the Puget Sound ecosystem.

Jenny Black came back from college for summer break to find greatly reduced numbers of sea anemones and sea urchins off Bainbridge Island. Where many types of sea stars once thrived, a single species has taken over.

"It's definitely changed a lot. It's drastic," said Black, a Brigham Young University junior who scuba dives and studies marine biology. "I'm kind of bummed out. When you have too much of one thing, you know something's going wrong with the ecology."

These anecdotal reports from central Puget Sound raise the specter of the "dead zones" that have turned up in recent years off the Washington coast and in Hood Canal.

The news is not all bleak. Some sewage pollution and industrial contamination spots have been brought under control, at great cost, in Seattle. Tacoma's Commencement Bay is cleaner than it has been in decades. And state and federal officials have started spending millions to unravel reasons behind the increasingly desperate decline of Hood Canal -- which saw its most extensive fish kill in history last month.

But progress is slow. Despite promises to clean it up, the foul concoction known as stormwater flows into the Sound after every good rain. Shorelines crucial to marine health continue sprouting docks and waterfront owners reinforce walls that wreck the shallow-water ecology, despite a shoreline protection law that dates to 1971. And an ambitious federal effort to help Puget Sound's shoreline has been routinely underfunded.

Politicians have promised for years to save Puget Sound, starting with the chinook salmon that are orcas' main food source.

"We're concerned about the future of marine life in Puget Sound," former Gov. Gary Locke said in 2003, at least five years after he started promising to save the salmon. "We... need that road map of things we can do that will make an immediate and substantial benefit in the health of Puget Sound."

Nearly three years later, that road map still isn't finished. The sweeping actions that experts say are needed to save Puget Sound are still in their infancy.

Laws dealing with many of the problems are on the books, but enforcement is spotty.

"In our meetings with the citizens, we found out the first thing they want us to do is enforce existing law," said Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., a leader in efforts to save the Sound. "They don't think existing law is being enforced."

Gov. Chris Gregoire is credited by longtime observers with trying to bring a sense of urgency to the effort, prodding extra money from the Legislature and appointing an all-star, bipartisan committee to devise a way to save the Sound. But well-intentioned plans in the past have flared and then fizzled.

"The whole system is under stress," activist Stephanie Raymond told representatives of the Puget Sound Partnership, the high-powered group organized by Gregoire to map out a Sound rescue plan. "This isn't the first or the second or even the fourth time a set of people got together and said, 'How can we help Puget Sound?'"

"So I urge this group to look at it with fresh eyes."

Time is critical. WHAT YOU CAN DO

You live, work, play here. You can help.

- \* Buy seafood that's [sustainably harvested](#).
- \* Fish responsibly. [Avoid overfished species](#).
- \* Help collect scientific data on the Sound through [scuba surveys](#).
- \* Maintain vegetation on shorelines to slow erosion and provide shade and food sources for small fish.
- \* Build away from bluffs. Prevent erosion with log barriers instead of concrete walls.
- \* Volunteer for [beach restoration projects](#).
- \* Support the creation of marine protected areas where fishing is restricted.

WHO'S WHO IN PUGET SOUND

[The Puget Sound Partnership](#): Gov. Chris Gregoire-appointed group with 21 members representing diverse public, private and non-profit interests. Their purpose is to craft a plan for recovering the Sound's health by 2020. Draft plan to be released Friday for public comment.

[Puget Sound Action Team](#): State agency overseeing the protection and restoration of the Sound. Issues biannual report cards on progress.

[People for Puget Sound](#): Non-profit group dealing with marine-related education, restoration projects and lobbying.

[Puget Soundkeeper Alliance](#): Non-profit group with strong focus on stormwater pollution and patrols of marine industrial activities.

P-I reporter Robert McClure can be reached at 206-448-8092 or [robertmcclure@seattlepi.com](mailto:robertmcclure@seattlepi.com). P-I reporter Lisa Stiffler can be reached at 206-448-8042 or [lisastiffler@seattlepi.com](mailto:lisastiffler@seattlepi.com).

Copyright 1998-2006 Seattle Post-Intelligencer

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

.....

From: Toronto Globe and Mail, Oct. 12, 2006  
[\[Printer-friendly version\]](#)

**SCIENTISTS FIND FARM LINK TO BREAST CANCER**

By Martin Mittelstaedt

A team of researchers who studied the occupations of nearly all the Windsor, Ontario women who developed breast cancer in a period from 2000 to 2002 found they were about three times more likely to have worked on farms than women who didn't have the disease.

What's more, those who farmed and then later worked in the automotive industry were four times more likely to have the disease, according to a paper about the research being published Thursday in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences.

The new study is one of the most detailed investigations undertaken in Canada into the occupations of women who developed breast cancer, and it indicates that something about farming increases the risk of the disease, the most common cancer to afflict females in the country.

Although the researchers didn't determine what these risks were, they speculated about pesticides, many of which are able to mimic or block the normal functioning of estrogen and other hormones.

"If you were going to hypothesize about the No. 1 most likely cause of this elevated risk, I think you'd have to look at the whole chemical

exposure that exists on farms," said Jim Brophy, head of the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers in Sarnia, and lead author of the paper.

A staggering 99 per cent of all those treated for the disease at Windsor's cancer centre during the period of the research agreed to participate. Dr. Brophy said there was an enormous desire among women, who typically are not asked about the role their jobs may have played in their illness, to be part of a study that might help explain their cancer.

That desire has a resonance with Tricia Pletsch, who worked on her parent's farm near Chatham as a teenager and developed breast cancer two years ago, at 39. Her family doesn't have a history of the cancer, but she worries about the heavy chemical use on the farm while growing up.

"Pesticides were really popular in the seventies," she said.

Like most women with breast cancer, her doctors never asked about her occupation when trying to explain her illness and were at a total loss to explain why she was afflicted.

"No one asked me what I did, and when I asked them why I got it, no one had a clue," she said.

Scientists around the world are struggling to explain the recent epidemic of breast cancer in industrialized countries because fewer than 10 per cent of those with the disease have a known genetic predisposition for it.

Rates for the cancer in Canada are among the highest in the world, with the lifetime risk of about one in nine. During the past 30 years, there has been a largely unexplained 25-per-cent increase in the country's age-adjusted incidence rate.

Previous research has found an association between breast cancer and a woman's socioeconomic status, diet, age of first pregnancy, and several other factors, but the majority of cases have no known risk factor.

It is also not known why women with higher socioeconomic status are more at risk, but Dr. Brophy says occupation should be investigated more closely because it might provide clues on cancer-causing substances and new prevention strategies.

"If you would capture the lifetime [work] histories of people with cancer, it might be very revealing in terms of risk factors that we're not currently addressing. That could have an enormous preventative effect," Dr. Brophy said.

He said there has to be a major risk in farming to cause the research results. "It's very dramatic, in the most common cancer among women where 50 per cent of the cases are unexplained, to have a three-fold excess," Dr. Brophy said.

In Canada, none of the provincial registries track cancers by occupation. About 22,000 women in Canada will develop breast cancer this year and an estimated 5,300 will die from it.

Up until now, little research on occupation and breast-cancer risk has been done in Canada, although researchers at the British Columbia Cancer Agency looked at work histories and the disease in 2000. They also found an association with agriculture, although they looked at far fewer women farmers than the current study, whose results were considered statistically significant.

An official with Canada's largest cancer registry says he thinks it would be a good idea to study the occupations of those with the disease, although he said this effort would require millions in funding and a political will to implement.

"I certainly don't dispute that it's a neglected area, particularly with women coming into the work force and the nature of work changing," said Eric Holowaty, an epidemiologist at Cancer Care Ontario.

In Windsor, the researchers compared the work histories of 564 woman treated for breast cancer over a 21/2-year period ending in 2002 against a similarly sized random control group of women who didn't have the cancer.

Those with the disease were 2.8 times more likely to have worked on farms. This rate jumped to four times more likely if the women worked in agriculture and then the automotive industry and fell to 2.3 times if they worked on farms and then in health care.

There was no extra risk of breast cancer for women who never worked on farms and then went into the auto industry or into health care, suggesting that agriculture somehow primes women to get the disease.

The Windsor area has large numbers of women employed in agriculture because it is one of the most intensively farmed regions in Canada, with major fruit and vegetable crops. The area also has one of the largest car-making sectors in the country.

About 300 women in the study worked in agriculture.

The researchers found little difference between the women who got breast cancer and the control group with respect to hormone replacement therapy, breast-feeding history, smoking, oral contraceptive use, having a mother with the cancer and previous pregnancies.

Copyright 2006 Bell Globemedia Publishing Inc.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

.....

**Rachel's Democracy & Health News** (formerly Rachel's Environment & Health News) highlights the connections between issues that are often considered separately or not at all.

The natural world is deteriorating and human health is declining because those who make the important decisions aren't the ones who bear the brunt. Our purpose is to connect the dots between human health, the destruction of nature, the decline of community, the rise of economic insecurity and inequalities, growing stress among workers and families, and the crippling legacies of patriarchy, intolerance, and racial injustice that allow us to be divided and therefore ruled by the few.

In a democracy, there are no more fundamental questions than, "Who gets to decide?" And, "How **do** the few control the many, and what might be done about it?"

As you come across stories that might help people connect the dots, please Email them to us at [dhn@rachel.org](mailto:dhn@rachel.org).

**Rachel's Democracy & Health News** is published as often as necessary to provide readers with up-to-date coverage of the subject.

Editors:  
Peter Montague - [peter@rachel.org](mailto:peter@rachel.org)  
Tim Montague - [tim@rachel.org](mailto:tim@rachel.org)

.....

To start your own free Email subscription to **Rachel's Democracy & Health News** send a blank Email to: [join-rachel@gselist.org](mailto:join-rachel@gselist.org).

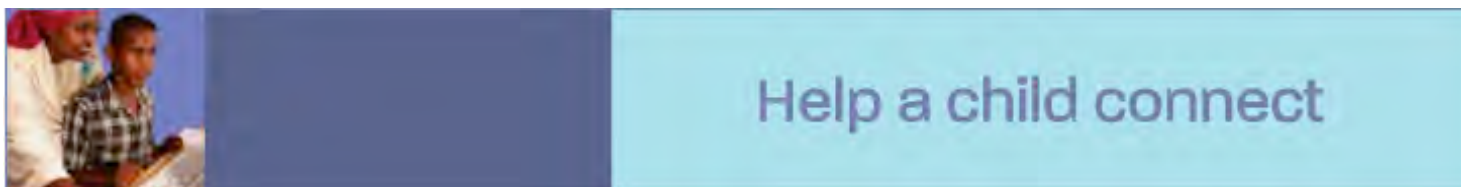
In response, you will receive an Email asking you to confirm that you want to subscribe.

.....

**Environmental Research Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 160, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903**  
[dhn@rachel.org](mailto:dhn@rachel.org)

.....

FBI says, "No hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11"



**MUCKRAKER REPORT**

**FBI says, "No hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11"**



Ed Haas

June 6, 2006 – This past weekend, a thought provoking e-mail circulated through Internet news groups, and was sent to the Muckraker Report by Mr. Paul V. Sheridan (Winner of the 2005 Civil Justice Foundation Award), bringing attention to the FBI’s Most Wanted Terrorist web page for Usama Bin Laden.<sup>[1]</sup> (See bottom of this web page for *Most Wanted page*) In the e-mail, the question is asked, “Why doesn’t Usama Bin Laden’s *Most Wanted* poster make any direct connection with the events of September 11, 2001?” The FBI says on its Bin Laden web page that Usama Bin Laden is wanted in connection with the August 7, 1998 bombings of the United States Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. According to the FBI, these attacks killed over 200 people. The FBI concludes its reason for “wanting” Bin Laden by saying, “In addition, Bin Laden is a suspect in other terrorists attacks throughout the world.”

On June 5, 2006, the Muckraker Report contacted the FBI Headquarters, (202) 324-3000, to learn why Bin Laden’s Most Wanted poster did not indicate that Usama was also wanted in connection with 9/11. The Muckraker Report spoke with Rex Tomb, Chief of Investigative Publicity for the FBI. When asked why there is no mention of 9/11 on Bin Laden’s *Most Wanted* web page, Tomb said, “The reason why 9/11 is not mentioned on Usama Bin Laden’s Most Wanted page is because the FBI has no *hard evidence* connecting Bin Laden to 9/11.”

Surprised by the ease in which this FBI spokesman made such an astonishing statement, I asked, “How this was possible?” Tomb continued, “Bin Laden has not been formally charged in connection to 9/11.” I asked, “How does *that* work?” Tomb continued, “The FBI gathers evidence. Once evidence is gathered, it is turned over to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice then decides whether it has enough evidence to present to a federal grand jury. In the case of the 1998 United States Embassies being bombed, Bin Laden has been formally indicted and charged by a grand jury. He has not been formally indicted and charged in connection with 9/11 because the FBI has no *hard evidence* connected Bin Laden to 9/11.”

It shouldn’t take long before the full meaning of these FBI statements start to prick your brain and raise your blood pressure. If you think the way I think, in quick order you will be wrestling with a barrage of very powerful questions that must be answered. First and foremost, if the U.S. government does not have enough hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11, how is it possible that it had enough evidence to invade Afghanistan to “smoke him out of his cave?” The federal government claims to have invaded Afghanistan to “root out” Bin Laden and the *Taliban*. Through the talking heads in the mainstream media, the Bush Administration told the American people that Usama Bin Laden was *Public Enemy Number One* and responsible for the deaths of nearly 3000 people on September 11, 2001. Yet nearly five years later, the FBI says that it has no hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11.

Next is the Bin Laden “confession” video that was released by the U.S. government on December 13, 2001. Most Americans remember this video. It was the video showing Bin Laden with a few of his comrades recounting with delight the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States. The Department of Defense issued a press release to accompany this video in which Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld said, “There was no doubt of bin Laden’s responsibility for the September 11 attacks before the tape was discovered.”<sup>[2]</sup> What Rumsfeld implied by his statement was that Bin Laden was the known mastermind behind 9/11 even before the “confession video” and that the video simply served to confirm what the U.S. government already knew; that Bin Laden was responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

In a BBC News article<sup>[3]</sup> reporting on the “9/11 confession video” release, President Bush is said to have been hesitant to release the tape because he knew it would be a vivid reminder to many people of their loss. But, he also knew it would be “a devastating declaration” of Bin Laden’s guilt. “Were going to get him,” said President Bush. “Dead or alive, it doesn’t matter to me.”

In a CNN article<sup>[4]</sup> regarding the Bin Laden tape, then New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani said that “the tape removes any doubt that the U.S. military campaign targeting bin Laden and his associates is more than justified.” Senator Richard Shelby, R-Alabama, the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said, “The tape’s release is central to informing people in the outside world who don’t believe bin Laden was involved in the September 11 attacks.” Shelby went on to say “I don’t know how they can be in denial after they see this tape.” Well Senator Shelby, apparently the Federal Bureau of Investigation isn’t convinced by the taped confession, so why are you?

The Muckraker Report attempted to secure a reference to the U.S. government authenticating the Bin Laden “confession video”, to no avail. However, it is conclusive that the Bush Administration and U.S. Congress, along with the *dead stream* media, played the video as if it was authentic. So why doesn’t the FBI view the “confession video” as hard evidence? After all, if the FBI is investigating a crime such as drug trafficking, and it discovers a video of members of a drug cartel openly talking about a successful distribution operation in the United States, that video would be presented to a federal grand jury. The identified participants of the video would be indicted, and if captured, the video alone would serve as sufficient evidence to net a conviction in a federal court. So why is the Bin Laden “confession video” not carrying the same weight with the FBI?



Remember, on June 5, 2006, FBI spokesman, Chief of Investigative Publicity Rex Tomb said, "The FBI has no hard evidence connecting Usama Bin Laden to 9/11." This should be headline news worldwide. The challenge to the reader is to find out why it is not. Why has the U.S. media blindly read the government-provided 9/11 scripts, rather than investigate without passion, prejudice, or bias, the events of September 11, 2001? Why has the U.S. media blacklisted any guest that might speak of a government sponsored 9/11 cover-up, rather than seeking out those people who have something to say about 9/11 that is contrary to the government's account? And on those few rare occasions when a 9/11 dissenter has made it upon the airways, why has the mainstream media ridiculed the guest as a conspiracy nut, rather than listen to the evidence that clearly raises valid questions about the government's 9/11 account? Why is the *Big Media Conglomeration* blindly content with the government's 9/11 story when so much verifiable information to the contrary is available with a few clicks of a computer mouse?

Who is it that is controlling the media message, and how is it that the U.S. media has indicted Usama Bin Laden for the events of September 11, 2001, but the U.S. government has not? How is it that the FBI has no "hard evidence" connecting Usama Bin Laden to the events of September 11, 2001, while the U.S. media has played the Bin Laden - 9/11 connection story for five years now as if it has conclusive evidence that Bin Laden is responsible for the collapse of the twin towers, the Pentagon attack, and the demise of United Flight 93?

...No hard evidence connecting Usama Bin Laden to 9/11... Think about it.

[1] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Most Wanted Terrorists, Usama Bin Laden, <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/terbinladen.htm>, [Accessed May 31, 2006]

[2] United States Department of Defense, News Release, U.S. Releases Videotape of Osama bin Laden, December 13, 2001, [http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2001/b12132001\\_bt630-01.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2001/b12132001_bt630-01.html), [Accessed June 5, 2006]

[3] BBC News, [Bin Laden video angers New Yorkers](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1711874.stm), December 14, 2001, Peter Gould, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1711874.stm>, [Accessed June 5, 2006]

[4] CNN, [Bin Laden on tape: Attacks 'benefited Islam greatly'](http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/12/13/ret.bin.laden.videotape), December 14, 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/12/13/ret.bin.laden.videotape>, [Accessed June 5, 2006]

**If you enjoyed this article, please consider donating \$1 or more to the MUCKRAKER REPORT.  
Your donations keep the Muckraker Report subscription free!**



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!



ORDER A "GET MUCKED" TEE TODAY!

To comment or request reprint permission, please contact Ed Haas via e-mail at [efhaas@comcast.net](mailto:efhaas@comcast.net).

[Listen to I.N.N. World Report referencing this article by clicking on this link.](#)

[Click here to visit the I.N.N. World Report web site.](#)

Click on image for larger view.



**MURDER OF U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES; CONSPIRACY TO MURDER U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES; ATTACK ON A FEDERAL FACILITY RESULTING IN DEATH**

**USAMA BIN LADEN**



**Aliases:** Usama Bin Muhammad Bin Ladin, Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, The Prince, The Emir, Abu Abdallah, Mujahid Shaykh, Hajj, The Director

**DESCRIPTION**

<b>Date of Birth Used:</b>	1957	<b>Hair:</b>	Brown
<b>Place of Birth:</b>	Saudi Arabia	<b>Eyes:</b>	Brown
<b>Height:</b>	6'4" to 6'6"	<b>Sex:</b>	Male
<b>Weight:</b>	Approximately 160 pounds	<b>Complexion:</b>	Olive
<b>Build:</b>	Thin	<b>Citizenship:</b>	Saudi Arabian
<b>Language:</b>	Arabic (probably Pashtu)		
<b>Scars and Marks:</b>	None known		
<b>Remarks:</b>	Bin Laden is left-handed and walks with a cane.		

**CAUTION**

Usama Bin Laden is wanted in connection with the August 7, 1998, bombings of the United States Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. These attacks killed over 200 people. In addition, Bin Laden is a suspect in other terrorist attacks throughout the world.

**REWARD**

The Rewards For Justice Program, United States Department of State, is offering a reward of <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/terbinladen.htm>

6/5/2006

Click on image for larger view.

up to \$25 million for information leading directly to the apprehension or conviction of Usama Bin Laden. An additional \$2 million is being offered through a program developed and funded by the Airline Pilots Association and the Air Transport Association.

**SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND DANGEROUS**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE OR THE NEAREST AMERICAN EMBASSY OR CONSULATE.**

| [New York Field Office](#) | [Most Wanted Terrorists](#) |  
| [FBI Home Page](#) | [FBI Field Offices](#) |

<http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/terbinladen.htm>

6/5/2006

 [Subscribe to Muckraker Report RSS Feed](#)

**I make  
over \$1000 per hour**

**Find out how**



[www.thousanddollarprofits.com/51591](http://www.thousanddollarprofits.com/51591)

[Feedback - Ads by Google](#)

Copyright © 2002-2007 by MUCKRAKER REPORT.  
All rights reserved. For re-print permission, contact Ed Haas: (843) 817-9962.







## Influencing tomorrow's products today

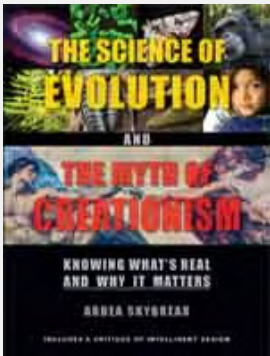


Home
Archive
Columnists
Video
Blogs
Discuss
About
Search
Donate
Advertise

Get AlterNet in your mailbox!




Advertisement



**Special Price for the Holidays**

**The Science of Evolution and the Myth of Creationism, Knowing What's Real and Why It Matters**

**"This book will be of tremendous benefit to many"**  
Richard Leakey

**"Fascinating"**  
PZ Myers, Pharyngula

[Read Excerpts](#)  
[Read more...](#)

Spread the word...



...with  
**AlterNet gear!**

[Read more...](#)

Reserve the Premium Ad Spot!

Advertisement

**Special Price for the Holidays**



## Environment

# Military Waste In Our Drinking Water

By [Sunaura Taylor](#) and [Astra Taylor](#), [AlterNet](#). Posted [August 4, 2006](#).

The U.S. military is poisoning the very citizens it is supposed to protect in the name of national security.

Tools

[EMAIL](#)

[PRINT](#)

[56 COMMENTS](#)

In 1982 our family was living on the southside of Tucson, Ariz., in a primarily working class and Latino neighborhood not far from the airport. That year Sunaura was born with a congenital birth defect known as arthrogyrosis, a condition that severely impedes muscle growth and requires her to use an electric wheelchair. On nearby blocks, women were giving birth to babies with physical disabilities and neighbors were dying of cancer at worrisome rates. Over time, we learned that our groundwater was contaminated.

Most of us are vaguely aware that war devastates the environment abroad. The Vietnamese Red Cross counts 150,000 children whose birth defects were caused by their parents' exposure to Agent Orange. Cancer rates in Iraq are soaring as a result of depleted uranium left from the Gulf War. But what about [closer to home](#)?

Today the U.S. military generates over one-third of our nation's toxic waste, which it disposes of very poorly. The military is one of the most widespread violators of environmental laws. People made ill by this toxic waste are, in effect, victims of war. But they are rarely acknowledged as such.

On Sept. 11, 2001, we were living together in New York City. In the months following the attack on the World Trade Center, the media and government routinely informed a fearful citizenry of the importance of clean drinking water. Terrorists, they warned, might contaminate public sources with arsenic. We were instructed to purchase Evian along with our duct tape.

In 2003, when the Defense Department sought (and later received) exemptions from America's main environmental laws, the irony dawned on us. The military was given license to pollute air and water, dispose of used munitions, and endanger wildlife with impunity. The Defense Department is willing to poison the very citizens it is supposed to protect in the cause of national security.

Our family knows of something much more dangerous than arsenic in the public aquifers: trichloroethylene, or TCE, a known carcinogen in laboratory animals and the most widespread industrial contaminant in American drinking water.

### Disturbingly common

Last week a [study](#) was released by the National Academy of Sciences, raising already substantial concerns about the cancer risks and other health hazards associated with exposure to TCE, a solvent used in adhesives, paint and spot removers that is also



'Depleted Uranium' (2003). Oil painting by Sunaura Taylor. You can see more of Sunaura's work at [sunnytaylor.org](http://sunnytaylor.org).

Share and save this post:



Also in [Environment](#)

[We Are What We Eat](#)

Jamey Lionette

[Animals Do the Cleverest Things](#)

Steve Connor

[Fighting Fat and Climate Change](#)

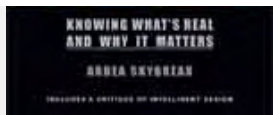
Seth Borenstein

[Has Europe Found a Way To Replace Fossil Fuels?](#)

Paul Rodgers

[Will the U.S. Impede World's Progress on Global Warming Again?](#)

[Internet Behemoth Google Throws Down Green Energy Gauntlet](#)



**The Science of Evolution and the Myth of Creationism, Knowing What's Real and Why It Matters**

"This book will be of tremendous benefit to many."  
**Richard Leakey**

"Fascinating."  
**PZ Myers, Pharyngula**

[Read Excerpts](#)  
[Read more...](#)

**People and Earth Friendly Gifts**



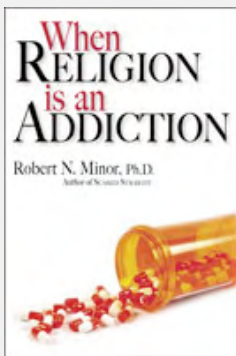
**The World's Best Organic and Fair Trade Chocolate  
Kid Powered Earth Friendly Toys**



*People and Earth Friendly Gifts*

The World's Finest Organic And Fair Trade Chocolate Assortments, Bars, And Collections, Kid Powered/Earth Friendly Toys, Natural and Organic Spa Lotions, Soaps, and Gift Baskets. Organic Gourmet Snacks and Gifts. Earth Friendly Accessories.  
[Read more...](#)

**This Book Tells You Why...**



The Right-Wing is on a Bender... Their Current Drink is Political... And Liberals have been Their Enablers.  
[Read more...](#)

[Reserve the Silver Ad Spot!](#)

Advertisement

**\*The Reason For The Season\***

"widely used to remove grease from metal parts in airplanes and to clean fuel lines at missile sites." The report confirms a 2001 EPA document linking TCE to kidney cancer, reproductive and developmental damage, impaired neurological function, autoimmune disease and other ailments in human beings.

The report has been garnering some publicity, but not as much as it deserves. TCE contamination is disturbingly common, especially in the air, soil and water around military bases. Nationwide millions of Americans are using what Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey, D-NY, has called "TCE-laden drinking water." The Associated Press [reports](#) that the chemical has been found at about 60 percent of the nation's worst contaminated sites in the Superfund cleanup program.

"The committee found that the evidence on carcinogenic risk and other health hazards from exposure to trichloroethylene has strengthened since 2001," the study says. "Hundreds of waste sites are contaminated with trichloroethylene, and it is well-documented that individuals in many communities are exposed to the chemical, with associated health risks."

The report urges the EPA to amend its assessment of the threat TCE poses, an action that could lead to stricter regulations. Currently the EPA limits TCE to no more than five parts per billion parts of drinking water. Stricter regulation could force the government to require more thorough cleanups at military and other sites and lower the number to one part per billion.

The EPA found it impossible to take such action back in 2001, because, according to the Associated Press, the agency was "blocked from elevating its assessment of the chemical's risks in people by the Defense Department, Energy Department and NASA, all of which have sites polluted with it." The Bush administration charged the EPA with inflating TCE's risks and asked the National Academy to investigate. Contrary to the administration's hopes, however, the committee's report has reinforced previous findings, which determined TCE to be anywhere from two to 40 times more carcinogenic than previously believed.

[1](#) [2](#) [Next page »](#)

[View as a single page](#)

[Digg This Story](#)

*Sunaura Taylor, a figurative painter, has written on disability for various publications. View her paintings online at [www.sunnytaylor.org](http://www.sunnytaylor.org). Astra Taylor is a writer and documentary filmmaker. Her first book, "Shadow of the Sixties," is forthcoming from the New Press in 2007.*

**Liked this story? Get top stories in your inbox each week from Environment! [Sign up now »](#)**

AlterNet Staff

More stories by [Sunaura Taylor](#) [Astra Taylor](#)

[Environment RSS Feed](#)

[Main AlterNet RSS Feed](#)

Get AlterNet in your mailbox!



E-mail address

ZIP/Postal code

Go

Advertisement

*The Easiest Way to Give Great Gifts*



**Save \$5 with code DECSAVE**





**Slightly Controversial Clothing For These Messed Up Times!**

Original Designs, Hand Screen Printed onto Sweatshop Free, US Made T-shirts and Skirts

Visit [www.AnarchTee.com](http://www.AnarchTee.com) for the most uniquely expressive Designs for the Masses

**Fast Free Shipping!**  
[Read More](#)

**Harry, pass the energy bill!**



The Senate is about to vote on a monumental energy bill.

But the bill will be meaningless without a CAFE standard of 35 mpg and a renewable electricity standard of 15%.

With oil approaching \$100/barrel, the Senate **must address our energy crisis.**

Tell the Senate to **pass a strong energy bill!**  
[Read More](#)



Supporting Environmental Protection and World Peace

Original signed photographic ArtCards with iridescent finish; romantic roses for the one you love; stunning canvas giclees; whimsical letterpress cards; Mauritius Island seashell greetings; gift box sets; committed to fair trade and community-friendly practices.  
[Read More](#)

Story Tools: [EMAIL](#) [PRINT](#) [56 COMMENTS](#)

[Environment](#) »



**STAY IN THE LOOP. GET ON THE LIST.**

AlterNet sends email newsletters almost every day to keep you up to date. To sign up, just enter your email address:

E-mail address

ZIP/Postal c  [SIGN UP](#)

Advertisement



Comments

[Turn comments off sitewide](#)

[Give us feedback](#) »

**Comments closed.**

The comments for this story have been closed. Thank you to everyone who participated.

View:

**criminals**

Posted by: rsaxto on Aug 4, 2006 3:31 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

We already knew that the Bushies are war criminals and environmental criminals but most of us were unaware of the huge amounts of toxic chemicals used and casually disposed of by the military, corporations and others. No wonder USA life expectancy is so far below that of England, for example. It is because our corporations and governments are poisoning us! Another reason to IMPEACH the rich criminals who profit from us and who poison us. Get these criminals out of office, out of corporations and out of the military before they bomb and poison the entire world.

[\[« Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment »\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

- » [RE: criminals...](#) Posted by: adp3d
- » [Intentional poisoning?](#) Posted by: colinmeister
  - » [RE: Intentional poisoning?](#) Posted by: babs
  - » [RE: Intentional poisoning?](#) Posted by: blitzmesser
- » [RE: criminals](#) Posted by: minny
  - » [I fear we are too late for that. Can't get rid of ourselves now can we???](#) Posted by: Propहित
  - » [RE: I fear we are too late for that. Can't get rid of ourselves now can we???](#) Posted by: DCostello
  - » [RE: How do we change that?](#) Posted by: DCostello
  - » [RE: How do we change that?](#) Posted by: dangerouslylsane
- » [RE: criminals](#) Posted by: sanngetalsson
  - » [RE: criminals](#) Posted by: symcokid
- » [RE: criminals](#) Posted by: DCostello
- » [RE: criminals](#) Posted by: joeaddison79
- » [The real criminals](#) Posted by: Conservasaurus

**This is happening all over the US**

Posted by: Lizmv on Aug 4, 2006 4:34 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

And it's not just TCE causing problems. Just ask the residents of Cape Cod. For over 20 years, they have been trying to get the contamination caused by Otis Air Force Base cleaned up. ALL of Cape Cod's water comes from the sole-source aquifer that lies under Cape Cod and the plume from Otis continues to grow. Is the huge increase in women suffering Hashimoto's Thyroiditis caused by perchlorate (known to inhibit thyroid production) that is leaching from the air force base? The Air Force refuses to release the study. Was my daughter's bladder defect caused by drinking the contaminated water (which was known at the time I was pregnant, but the information wasn't released until a year after her birth)? Do my daughter and I suffer from Hashimoto's because of the contamination? How much of the epidemic of thyroid disease in the US caused by our own military?

[\[« Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment »\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

- » [RE: This is happening all over the US](#) Posted by: Conservasaurus

**RE: crimlnals**

Posted by: commonMan on Aug 4, 2006 4:38 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

"In 1982 our family was living on the southside of Tucson, Ariz". It's a bi-partisan problem. Been going



**Backwards Bush Keychain**



Join over 100,00 other Backwards Bush owners and start counting down today! Get the Backwards Bush Keychain as seen on CNN & the Colbert Report!!!  
[Read More](#)



**Want to see your favorite TV shows again?**

Tell the network bosses what you think!

[Click here](#)

[Read More](#)

**Banned shirts are back in stock!**



Our anti-war shirts featuring names of 3,734 fallen U.S. troops have been banned in 5 states (TX, AZ, FL, OK & LA).

But we keep selling in every state.

We also sell magnetic bumper stickers, fridge magnets, mini stickers, buttons & more.

[CarryaBigSticker.com](#)  
[Read More](#)

Be 1 of up to 6 ads in this strip!

Advertisement



on for decades. Republican or Democrat, Frick or Frack; it's the rich screwing everyone else in the name of profit. Wake up. It's the wealth accumulation oriented society we live in that's the problem.

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**otto**

Posted by: otto on Aug 4, 2006 5:22 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Thanks for the informative article. It constantly amazes me how much government - and especially the Bush administration - does and gets away with!

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**What? ho hum just another "dumb and dumber" caused problem?**

Posted by: concerned Canadian on Aug 4, 2006 5:56 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Just goes to show again that this is not the land of the brave and the free, unless you translate that to mean that the land belongs to those who are brave enough and feel free enough to do whatever they want because they know that the passivity rate in the US is mighty high when it comes to actually confronting those that do these deeds because they feel comfortable in the knowledge that they will get away with it no problem.

Ever miss a tax payment? they are on you like a hungry vulture at a roadside feast. Ever NOT pay a parking ticket and then try to renew your driver's license? No way. But these perps walk around as if they own the land, so DO THEY???

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**US vs. UK life expectancy?**

Posted by: charlief on Aug 4, 2006 6:44 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Ok, whilst I appreciate the scare tactics about lower life expectancy here in the US than in "England", I'd really like to see some proof, stats, a link maybe, to substantiate your claim?

As a Brit living in New York for some years now, I know only too well the appalling record of companies [including the AEA in Britain] with regard to contamination of the land surrounding these facilities - whether they be chemical, nuclear or whatever.

Any Brit can tell you about Windscale, a nuclear reprocessing plant [in North West England], built in 1953. It leaked all kinds of radioactive contaminants into the surrounding countryside after a fire in its graphite cores in 1957. The seriousness was routinely covered up. Until Three-Mile-Island in 1979, it was the world's worst nuclear disaster. Both since dwarfed by Chernobyl.

So, as much as I want to vilify the US Defence Department as the next poster on here, let's have some supporting evidence when stats are thrown around.

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

>> **RE: US vs. UK life expectancy?** Posted by: Robinho

>> **RE: US vs. UK life expectancy?** Posted by: Angie

**Environmental Terrorism**

Posted by: rwa on Aug 4, 2006 7:17 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

These monsters are now blackmailing the world with environmental terrorism. If a nation resists persistent assault, as did Lebanon, oil storage can be bombed and clean-up can be stymied.

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

>> **RE: nvironmental Terrorism** Posted by: symcokid

**Clean drinkable water?**

Posted by: AlienSlave on Aug 4, 2006 9:22 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Now I understand the intense interest in the Triple Border area of South America. The Guarani Aquifer is the biggest reservoir of fresh, potable water in the world. And Guess what!!!! The terrorist must already be there, so now that Iraq and the middle East is in uncontrollable full blown civil war we will need open a new front in defense of the world's last clean water supply.

Alienslave

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**RE: Freedom and our Military are more important than the "environment"**

Posted by: Maryanne on Aug 4, 2006 9:33 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

I don't use questionable language but...

ARE YOU NUTS?

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]



Advertisement

**GREEN NEST**  
Healthy Home Products

**AIR**

**WATER**

**NON-TOXIC BUILDING PRODUCTS**

**ORGANIC BABY & BEDDING**

**AND MORE!**

**WIN A FREE Healthmate Air Purifier**  
**ENTER NOW!**  
**GREENNEST.COM**

- » [The only thing wrong with Jesse Cristo is his sense of humour.](#) Posted by: MatthewSavage
- » [RE: Freedom - why did you erase my post? hmmm](#) Posted by: Jesse Cristo
- » [RE: Freedom - why did you erase my post? hmmm](#) Posted by: Conservasaurus
- » [RE: Freedom - why did you erase my post? hmmm](#) Posted by: maxpayne
- » [RE: Freedom - why did you erase my post? hmmm](#) Posted by: Conservasaurus

**RE: Freedom and our Military are more important than the "environment"**

Posted by: ladywhosmokes on Aug 4, 2006 9:42 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

WHAT!!!!

Ok, how are we supposed to live if the destruction of Mother Earth continues, all for the sake of "freedom" and our "military." That makes no sense. To sacrifice our Mother Earth for those two illusions is demented.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

**distilled water bbbabies at play**

Posted by: timeless on Aug 4, 2006 9:53 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

distilled water may help the situation of babies at play poison is the game....hide under the sand another game....kill other self because of rejection,another game....and the children play and die.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

**RE: Freedom and our Military are more important than the "environment"**

Posted by: DCostello on Aug 4, 2006 10:09 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Except that our military has never fought for our freedom. The only thing our military fights for is corporate profits. Always has, always will.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

**RE: Freedom and our Military blah, blah----damn, Cristo, shoulda known**

Posted by: DCostello on Aug 4, 2006 10:10 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

That is was you. You're just as nutty and dangerous about national policy as you are about Christianity. Good to see you again, mush brain.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

- » [RE: Freedom and our Military blah, blah----damn, Cristo, shoulda known](#) Posted by: Jesse Cristo
- » [RE And you need a dose of thorazine in yours Cristo!!](#) Posted by: Againstthewindwalking

**More Government BS**

Posted by: NoPCZone on Aug 4, 2006 10:18 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

The Congress routinely exempts itself from many workplace laws and regulations while requiring it of everyone else. The problem is the basic attitude that rules, laws and regulations apply to everyone else. It's close relative is Bush's declaration that he is incapable of breaking the law in the performance of official duties. Arrogance and elitism, plain and simple.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

**Please do not feed the trolls!**

Posted by: Lizmv on Aug 4, 2006 10:25 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Jesse Crist? How original is that!

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

**US military bases cause health problems all over the world**

Posted by: Haz Mom on Aug 4, 2006 10:32 AM

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Unfortunately there is no shortage of communities with alarming health problems living near military bases with known contamination problems. Here are some more of them:

[Fallon childhood leukemia cluster](#) Reno Gazette Journal portal site to dozens of articles about the childhood leukemia cluster near Fallon, NV--home of the Navy's "Top Gun" flight training facility, and most severe leukemia cluster known in history

[Sierra Vista childhood leukemia cluster](#), near Fort Huachuca army base in AZ.

[Guam childhood leukemia cluster](#) Pacific Daily News profile of a father fighting to clean up PCBs and other military toxics.

AlterNet Your turn

**Support AlterNet**

Do you value the information you're getting from AlterNet? Please show your support with a [tax-deductible donation](#).

**Feedback**

Tell us [how we're doing](#).

Search:

[Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio](#) LA Times: "Cancer Stalks a Toxic Triangle."

[Military toxics in Alaska](#)

[Marine training base Camp Lejeune in NC](#) has a long history of toxics in the water and [contaminated base housing](#), with terrible health results.

[Toxic Kitsap and Polluted Puget](#) Puget Sound Naval Shipyard has a leukemia cluster in their workers.

[Pratt & Whitney Jet Engine Factory](#) in Connecticut, where 87 workers have been diagnosed with brain cancer since the 1960s, and 36 have died.

[Norwich England Esophageal Cancer Cluster](#), the British military tested chemical weapons spreading by dropping cadmium, a known carcinogen, on the townspeople of Norwich.

[BE SAFE](#) overview of military toxics.

It is easy for this subject to fall into an argument between the right and the left, but we should rise above these party lines. One of the most exposed populations are the enlisted personnel themselves. These exposures on military bases lead to an increase in infertility, birth defects, and children suffering chronic illnesses like cancer, asthma, ADD, autism, etc. Our troops are willing to risk their lives to defend our country, but they never agreed to sacrifice their children's lives as well.

We need to follow Europe's lead in shifting the burden of proof for toxicity to the polluters, not their victims. We need to take a precautionary approach, and find safe substitutes for the toxic chemicals currently in widespread use by the military and others.

For more information, visit [Families Against Cancer & Toxics](#)

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [\[Post a new comment »](#)] [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

#### **RE: Freedom and our Military are more important than the "environment"**

Posted by: babs on Aug 4, 2006 11:03 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Why doesn't he just post as Jesus Christ? how many stupid handles does he have?

There's a new breed of troll out there - they're called shills - can't the neocons hire somebody with a brain? Oh wait, I forgot, Bush is their leader so never mind.

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [\[Post a new comment »](#)] [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

[» RE: Freedom and our Military are more important than the "environment"](#) Posted by: siouxsee

#### **Terry**

Posted by: tctech on Aug 4, 2006 12:54 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

This article is just the very tip of the iceberg on toxic chemicals and their effects on health. I just finished my second reading of a really well-written and thoroughly documented new book, 'The Hundred Year Lie', 'How Food and Medicine Are Destroying Your Health', by Randall Fitzgerald, investigative journalist. There is also a website [www.hundredyearlie.com](http://www.hundredyearlie.com). The book documents the health disaster created by the last 100 years, during which synthetic chemicals have been introduced into our air, water, food and medicine at ever-increasing rates, with truly devastating and accelerating consequences for the health and reproduction of our own and many other species. The book is scary as hell, necessarily so; but the good news is that Fitzgerald demonstrates that these toxins can be cleaned out of the body. It is absolutely essential that people learn about issues like this one and global warming, and confront and overcome the inevitable denial that results when we are forced to make changes in our lives. Obviously we can't rely on the government to protect us...we have to make the choices about what goes into our bodies, and for detoxifying what winds up there because it is unavoidable. I highly recommend this book to everyone.

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [\[Post a new comment »](#)] [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

#### **POLLUTERS SELF- POLLUTED THEIR BRAINCELLS**

Posted by: chanceney on Aug 4, 2006 2:54 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

If these guys regard global warming as junk science and pay off faux experts to dissemble their bogus information to contest credible scientific data, why would they acknowledge the poisonous conditions created by their nifty killing machinery? Amass all the statistics you can, show slides of the deformities exemplifying what such pollutants produce, but it won't crack their reality-protected hardened shells formed by limitless callous greed and just plain sadistic warmongering warprofiteering that compose their governing principles. We need a documentary, ala Al Gore's "Inconvenient Truth", a Michael Moore expose or some vehicle that could reach enough Americans and inject enough anger that change is demanded!!!

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [\[Post a new comment »](#)] [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

#### **So this is what "trickle down" supply-side economics is all about?**

Posted by: Sojourner on Aug 4, 2006 3:04 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

It means living in a nation where the enemy seems to be everything alive. The importance of the story told in this piece is to help us all recognize that when measured against levels of toxic pollution, our system is broken.

China kills their own people with pollution. Russia, Poland, Germany, France, and the US likewise. The so-called First World is committing suicide.

I remember reading the novel "Amboy Dukes" as a teenager, where I learned that the gang members' motto was "Live fast, die young, and have a beautiful corpse."

We are now officially as sick as the criminal class. The US has become a criminal enterprise. As with all criminals, we eat our young.

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

**The Price We Pay for the Military-Industrial Complex**

Posted by: hotlipsin61 on Aug 4, 2006 4:23 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

You nearly had to turn your head away from the gruesome photo of the deformed child at the beginning of the article.

You can multiply that photo by X and see the results of pollution near a weapons plant in many American towns and cities.

I remember reading about Times Beach, Missouri, a dot of a town SW of St. Louis which was evacuated by a dioxin spill in the mid eighties. Let's say that dioxin is not something you add to Kool-Aid.

Anyway, lots of us work in weapons factories across the country and who knows how many of us are infected with military effluence. Are we willing to pay a very hefty price for being a part of the military-industrial complex?

We've bragged and boasted about how powerful our military is to the world, and now people's health is suffering.

Northwest of Los Angeles is a small town called Simi Valley, where high levels of waste from beryllium, molybdenum, copper, were found at the now closed Santa Susana Lab and there have been a number of former workers whose lives are wrecked from the contaminants left over from the Cold War lab.

Numerous lawsuits were filed. It takes years to get a judgment.

The area near the 118 Freeway heading into Simi is eerily void of life. Only a few homes are located there. Only the hardiest of chaparral and drought resistant vegetation can survive in this environment. There are few trees. The landscape is bleak.

Yes, the EPA says cleanup efforts are underway, but the money isn't enough and there are too few workers available to do this dirty and hazardous work.

We're trying, at least, to understand what is going on at Raytheon, Westinghouse, General Dynamics, Northrop, Boeing, TRW, etc. I know we all have to work, but ask yourself what price do we pay for the catastrophe we've created.

This is an indictment on the lives we lead. This is our lasting legacy. It is a footprint that can't be erased from our mental landscape.

We could quit making weapons but that would swell the unemployment ranks. Which way do we go?

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

**water filtration resources & FACTS**

Posted by: waterfilters on Aug 4, 2006 9:18 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Solid carbon block technology is considered the most effective method for reducing contaminants of health concern. In addition to the removal of cysts, a solid carbon block filter also reduces:

- chemicals;TCE, MTBE
- pesticides;
- herbicides;
- disinfection byproducts;
- heavy metals;
- cysts;crypto bug
- asbestos
- particulates
- chlorine.
- Arsenic

Chris Anderson

waterfilters@gmail.com

10 years Independent distributor Multipure Drinking Water Systems

#223193

www.multipureusa.com/canderson

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

**They planned to turn us all into nuclear waste:**

Posted by: pjrsullivan on Aug 4, 2006 9:27 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

If our nuclear war criminal elite had it to do over again, they may have made a different choice. As it stands, they planned all along to exterminate us with the use of nuclear weapons.



So if you child gets cancer or grows an extra head from drinking water contaminated with TCE from cleaning out the fuel lines of a missile, what the heck, that missile was designed to kill us all so that we would all die before we figured out that they are poisoning us.

America is more than an ordinary criminal enterprise, it is no longer a viable organization. At the moment the decision was made to go ahead with a build-up of nuclear weapons, and the plans were made to use them, any agreements that we had with our "Master" class, ended.

America is and has been operating strictly on the basis of Force and Fraud, a classic good old fashioned Extortion Murder racket.

Our nuclear war criminal elite have already pulled the nuclear trigger on us, though most people find it hard to believe. We continue to exist due only to the fact of the continuing intervention into our world from some still unknown "Higher Level Power."

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **RE: They planned to turn us all into nuclear waste:** Posted by: [symcokid](#)

**one mistake**

Posted by: [Status Quo Exile](#) on Aug 5, 2006 7:47 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

why do we need nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons? because "they" have them too. why do they have them? because we developed them to combat the pervious generations of weapons, e.g. h-bomb, a-bomb, ICBM's. why were those developed? so that fewer people would be in the way of machine guns, etc. and why were those developed? so people would be out of range of a sword or canon. why were those invented? longer range than a knife. why is a knife a weapon instead of a tool? because some fucker 20,000 years ago figured out that you could end an argument really fast with one. evolution of weaponry. darwinism in the arms race. and I just can't wait to see what crawls out of the soup next. humanity's one mistake was not stopping this accelerating cycle of its own destruction. and now...no one even wants to make the effort. why are weapons made? war. why is war made? greed. there is not one war in history that wasn't started by greed. and now greed is fashionable. what next?

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **RE: one mistake** Posted by: [maxpayne](#)

**Where are the "pro-life" shenanigans when you need them the most?**

Posted by: [maxpayne](#) on Aug 6, 2006 3:07 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Oh, I forgot, they must be bribed. According to them, poisoning and killing people is "pro-life". I guess for them, if they want to get all the bribes they can get, all they got to do is dangle a fetus around on the telly and government and distract the nation into being POISONED ! Tell the "pro-lifers" to protest the military instead of abortion clinics and they'll tell you the same old lie "support the troops" bullshit. If it weren't for the Laci Peterson distraction, the American people would have held our government accountable for drowning US into a war with Iraq. If it weren't for the media goose-chasing on Chanda vs Condit, our corrupt government wouldn't be able to allow 9/11 to slip through. Just terrorism, "pro-life" bullshit is a business in the worst regards.

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

**Do Not Need Terrorists**

Posted by: [PeaceThinkTank.org](#) on Aug 7, 2006 8:32 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

I bet if we counted up all of the dead bodies caused by the military and its pollution of the whole world, that it would dwarf by comparison all of those killed by all terrorists worldwide.

We do not need terrorists when the US military is doing it to us right here at home.

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

**H.A.A.R.P.**

Posted by: [saywhat](#) on Aug 9, 2006 10:28 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

You might want to view "Holes in Heaven? H.A.A.R.P. And Advances In Tesla Technology." It's about weather modification, mind control, and advanced surveillance. IT'S HAPPENING.

[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

**Let's fix the gaping head wound....with a bandaid!**

Posted by: [AFWXMAN](#) on Aug 24, 2006 9:54 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Yes the military made mistakes regarding toxic waste in the past, the same way many civilian corporations did. Love canal, Three Mile Island, and DDT overspraying were all civilian issues. These days the military bends over backwards to follow all federal and state environmental regulations. They don't

do this because they're altruistic; they do it because fighting lawsuits is a pain in the butt!




Do you know what I see civilians doing when military bases go away? Often I see them overdeveloping the heck out of it! I don't think the upper peninsula in Virginia would have any green areas left if it weren't for military reservations. The snowy plowers would be closer to extinction if it weren't for Vandenberg AFB. The only place I've seen wild antelope in Cheyenne WY was at FE Warren AFB. Pointing the finger at the military won't solve this type of problem. Respect for the environment and for the value of green spaces is the only thing that will help, but that requires a societal change.

[<< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >>] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

[Home](#) [Top Stories](#) [Columnists](#) [Video](#) [Blogs](#) [Discuss](#) [RSS/XML](#) [About](#) [Search](#) [Donate](#) [Contact Us](#) [Advertise](#)

Reproduction of material from any AlterNet pages without written permission is strictly prohibited.  
© 2007 Independent Media Institute. All rights reserved.



And now, introducing the all-new  
**SUZUKI SX4 SPORT**  
Coming in October

Home Archive Columnists Video Blogs Discuss About Search Donate Advertise

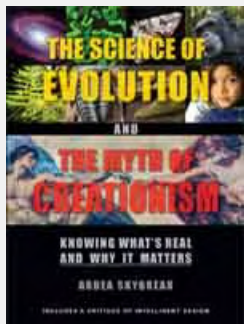
Get AlterNet in your mailbox!

E-mail address

ZIP/Postal code

Go

Advertisement



**Special Price for the Holidays**  
**The Science of Evolution and the Myth of Creationism, Knowing What's Real and Why It Matters**

"This book will be of tremendous benefit to many"  
**Richard Leakey**

"Fascinating"  
**PZ Myers, Pharyngula**

[Read Excerpts](#)  
[Read more...](#)

Spread the word...



...with  
**AlterNet gear!**

[Read more...](#)

Reserve the Premium Ad Spot!

Advertisement

**People and Earth Friendly Gifts**



**The World's Best Organic and Fair Trade Chocolate Bars, Kid Powered Earth Friendly Toys**

**People and Earth Friendly Gifts**  
The World's Finest **Organic And Fair Trade Chocolate Assortments, Bars, And Collections, Kid Powered/Earth Friendly Toys, Natural and Organic Spa Lotions**

## Evidence of Election Fraud Grows in México

By **Chuck Collins** and **Joshua Holland**, *AlterNet*. Posted **August 2, 2006**.

As the U.S. media distorts the aftermath of the July 2 election, evidence suggests there may be an attempted theft in progress.

Tools

[EMAIL](#)

[PRINT](#)

[116 COMMENTS](#)

A month after more than 41 million Mexicans went to the polls to elect their next president, the country is still awaiting a result. A preliminary count of polling station tally sheets put conservative Felipe Calderón of the National Action Party (PAN) ahead with a slight lead over left-populist Andres Manuel López Obrador of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD). Both candidates have claimed victory, with López Obrador and his supporters holding vigils and protests across the country and calling for a vote-by-vote recount.

That hasn't kept a consensus from emerging in the commercial media that Calderón won by a small margin in a squeaky-clean election. In a [hyperbolic editorial on July 30](#) -- one that bordered on the ridiculous -- the *Washington Post* accused López Obrador, known as AMLO to his supporters, of taking "a lesson from Joseph Stalin" and launching an "anti-democracy campaign" by demanding a manual recount and urging his supporters to take to the streets in peaceful protests. Calling the vote "a success story and a model for other nations," the editors concluded that it's "difficult to overstate the irresponsibility of Mr. López Obrador's actions."

Days after the election, the *New York Times* irresponsibly declared candidate Calderón the winner, even though no victor had been declared under Mexican law, and just this week, in [an article about López Obrador's protests](#), the *Times* reported that López Obrador had "escalated his campaign to undo official results."

But there are no "official" results and probably won't be until after Sept. 1. Under Mexican law, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) is charged with running the elections and counting the vote. But only the country's Election Tribunal, known by its Mexican nickname as the "TRIFE," has the power to declare a victor (See [here](#) for background on the TRIFE). They have until Sept. 6 to rule on the election.

It appears that the U.S. media has become so enamored with the construct of the "anti-democratic" left in Latin America -- the ubiquitous "fiery populists" (a term that has described everyone from the centrist Lula da Silva to Hugo Chávez) -- that they are incapable of fulfilling their basic mandate to inform their readers when it comes to the political landscape south of the border. It's nothing short of journalistic malpractice.

But back in the real world, a growing body of credible evidence from mainstream Mexican journalists, independent election observers and respected scholars indicates that an attempt was made to deliver the presidency to Calderón. It includes a pattern of irregularities at the polls, interference by the ruling party and some very suspicious statistical patterns in the "official" results.

The TRIFE is now sifting through 900 pages of formal complaints lodged by López Obrador. Their ruling on those challenges will indicate how well México's electoral process holds up in a closely fought and highly polarized race.

### Growing evidence of irregularities and fraud

México has a history of the party in power's using



Hundreds of thousands gather in the Mexican capital on July 16 to protest the election results.

Share and save this post:



Also in **Top Stories**

**The Perfect Storm of Campaign 2008**

Steve Fraser, Tomdispatch.com

**We Are What We Eat**

Jamey Lionette, South End Press

**Announcing the 2007 False Awards for the Biggest Fraudsters in the Media**

Diane Farsetta, Center for Media and Democracy

**Iowa: Hillary Looks Shaky in a Pivotal Contest**

Matt Taibbi, RollingStone.com

**The Roots of the Lending Crisis Run Through Wall Street**

Nomi Prins, The Nation

**This Generation's 'Winter Soldiers' to Expose Horrific Reality of U.S. Occupation**

Liam Madden, AlterNet

More stories by **Chuck Collins** and **Joshua Holland**

 [Main AlterNet RSS Feed](#)

Get AlterNet in your mailbox!



E-mail address

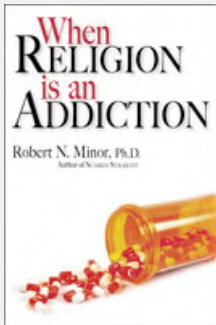
ZIP/Postal code

Go

Advertisement

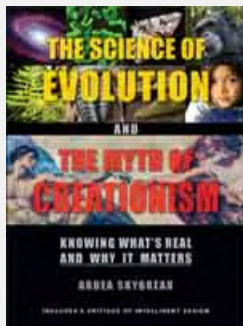
Natural and Organic Spa Lotions, Soaps, and Gift Baskets. Organic Gourmet Snacks and Gifts. Earth Friendly Accessories.  
[Read more...](#)

**This Book Tells You Why...**



The Right-Wing is on a Bender... Their Current Drink is Political... And Liberals have been Their Enablers.  
[Read more...](#)

**Special Price for the Holidays**



**The Science of Evolution and the Myth of Creationism, Knowing What's Real and Why It Matters**

"This book will be of tremendous benefit to many."  
**Richard Leakey**

"Fascinating."  
**PZ Myers, Pharyngula**

[Read Excerpts](#)  
[Read more...](#)

[Reserve the Silver Ad Spot!](#)

Advertisement

**Banned shirts are back in stock!**



**Our anti-war shirts featuring names of 3,734 fallen U.S. troops have been banned in 5 states (TX, AZ, FL, OK & LA).**

**But we keep selling in every state.**

**We also sell magnetic bumper stickers, fridge magnets, mini stickers, buttons & more.**

[CarryaBigSticker.com](#)  
[Read More](#)

its clout to tip the election in its favor, and strict laws prohibiting ruling party interference were enacted in the 1990s. Election law prevented Vicente Fox, the outgoing PAN president, from making public statements of a partisan or political nature. But he overstepped this line many times in the 2006 campaign, including dozens of speeches reinforcing candidate Felipe Calderón's basic message that López Obrador was a "danger to México." In a well-publicized speech, candidate López Obrador responded, "With all respect, Mr. President, shut up. You sound like a chattering bird." Fox continued with these speeches until election authorities and public commentators warned Fox he was violating election laws.

The Fox administration also ran public service announcements touting government programs and services and promoting the vote. PAN saturated the television airwaves with "swift-boat" style attack ads against López Obrador, comparing him to Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and calling him a "danger to México." Election authorities eventually ordered these commercials off the air on the grounds that they were untrue and maligned the candidate's character, but critics believe they moved too slowly.



[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [Next page »](#)

[View as a single page](#)

[Digg This Story](#)

*Chuck Collins is the co-author of "Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity" (New Press). He is a senior scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies and lives in Oaxaca, México. Joshua Holland is an AlterNet staff writer.*

**Liked this story? Get top stories in your inbox each week from AlterNet! [Sign up now »](#)**

Story Tools: [EMAIL](#) [PRINT](#) [116 COMMENTS](#)

[AlterNet Home »](#)

**STAY IN THE LOOP. GET ON THE LIST.**  
 AlterNet sends email newsletters almost every day to keep you up to date. To sign up, just enter your email address:

E-mail address   
 ZIP/Postal c  [SIGN UP](#)

Advertisement

[Why Mommy is a Democrat](#) - The book George Bush doesn't want your kids to read! [littledemocrats.net](#)

Comments [Turn comments off sitewide](#) [Give us feedback »](#)

**Comments closed.**

The comments for this story have been closed. Thank you to everyone who participated.

View:

**Lopez Obrador aka Joseph Stalin**

Posted by: HeroesAll on Aug 2, 2006 2:32 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

*the Washington Post accused López Obrador, known as AMLO to his supporters, of taking "a lesson from Joseph Stalin" and launching an "anti-democracy campaign" by demanding a manual recount and urging his supporters to take to the streets in peaceful protests.*

Because it's well known that Stalin's most feared tactic was the street protest. And a manual recount of votes, as we all know, is contrary to all democratic principles, and will undoubtedly destroy Civilisation As We Know It (hereinafter referred to as CAWKI).

Ptchah. WaPo is such a handmaiden of the right (and I'm using the very genteel term here, not the one that springs to mind). I'm just waiting for one of the doofus posters here to do the usual whining about the 'left wing media'.

**Harry, pass the energy bill!**



The Senate is about to vote on a monumental energy bill.

But the bill will be meaningless without a CAFE standard of 35 mpg and a renewable electricity standard of 15%.

With oil approaching \$100/barrel, the Senate **must address our energy crisis.**

Tell the Senate to **pass a strong energy bill!**  
[Read More](#)

**Backwards Bush Keychain**



Join over 100,000 other Backwards Bush owners and start counting down today! Get the Backwards Bush Keychain as seen on CNN & the Colbert Report!!!  
[Read More](#)

**\*The Reason For The Season\***



**Slightly Controversial Clothing For These Messed Up Times!**

Original Designs, Hand Screen Printed onto Sweatshop Free, US Made T-shirts and Skirts

Visit [www.AnarchTee.com](http://www.AnarchTee.com) for the most uniquely expressive Designs for the Masses

**Fast Free Shipping!**  
[Read More](#)



Very nice work again, Josh and Chuck. Looking forward to more in this saga. It's going to be a long-running one, I can tell. Like *Days of Our Lives*.

Actually, on further thought, a recount probably **would** destroy CAWKI. Remember 2000? Who did, and who didn't, want a recount? Can't let that sort of thing catch on, you know.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- >> **RE: Lopez Obrador aka Joseph Stalin** Posted by: willymack
- >> **RE: Lopez Obrador aka Joseph Stalin** Posted by: El\_Cid
- >> **RE: Lopez Obrador aka Joseph Stalin** Posted by: ivansg

**Plutocratic back-scratching**

Posted by: shangrilalad on Aug 2, 2006 4:06 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Can anyone remember an election in Mexico that the "RIGHT" didn't win?

Strange how the plutocracy in the U.S. always supports the plutocracy in other countries. Both the Washington Post and New York Times are owned by multimillionaires which I think includes them in our plutocracy.

Even after all the Republican tax cuts they've received, our billionaires are reportedly still cheating on the taxes. How much money do they need to satisfy them? I have a theory that goes like this: Some rich people act as if they think they can bribe death if they have enough money. It works with politicians, so maybe it will work with the Grim Reaper.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- >> **RE: Plutocratic back-scratching** Posted by: Lauren
- >> **RE: Plutocratic back-scratching** Posted by: peridot

**only good conclusion**

Posted by: rsaxto on Aug 2, 2006 4:21 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Since there is so much real evidence of vote fraud in the Mexican election the only good way to explain the refusal to recount votes and the big media drumbeat against recounting of votes follows: the best conclusion is that there is enormous collusion in government/major media to cover up vote fraud and to have a false president elected just as happened in 2000 USA. The same people, organizations, medias and corporations that stole 2000 are hard at work to try to steal the 2006 Mexico election. If they succeed it will be clear that most USA people still! believe the crooks.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**Fraud -- or politics as usual?**

Posted by: jules\_siegel on Aug 2, 2006 4:32 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

It all still looks like politics as usual to me. The undue influence charges are serious, but they aren't the same as voter fraud.

The argument about the higher vote count in the voting stations without PRD observers raises the question why the PRD would expect a lot of votes in areas in which it couldn't even come up with poll watchers.

The statistical arguments are highly speculative, at best. Using the PREP is considered poor statistical practice. That's why López Obrador got off the cyberfraud charges right away and, in fact, explicitly denied any claims of cyberfraud. He then reversed himself a day later. I checked with R. Mansilla, who did the Benford's Law study on the PREP results and he admitted that he could not say if the variations he saw were statistically significant -- a minor point, I'm sure.

**Vote buying or providing social services?**

Vote buying is an old story that has never been proven to have any effect on how people actually vote. It was raised during the 2000 election, but an opinion study at the time clearly demonstrated that even if true (dubious in most cases) it was not in any way a significant factor.

A survey carried out in May, 2000, by the nonprofit watchdog group Alianza Cívica (reported by Mexico Solidarity Network, Weekly News Summary May 22-31 2000) suggested that of the 24% of the Mexican population which receives federal welfare aid of some sort, 11% feel obligated to vote for a particular party (in most cases, the PRI) in return for their aid. In the countryside the figure rises to 14%, and is 18% among those Mexicans living in extreme poverty. The story also reported that the opposition in Guerrero (if I remember correctly), then a PRI stronghold, admitted it was unable to come up with any concrete examples of vote-buying.

Assuming that the survey is properly constructed (a very big assumption) what it is really saying is that 89% don't feel obligated. Of those who do feel obligated, not all will vote for the PRI. Then there is the semantic question of what "obligated" means. How would this change if the question were phrased differently? Gratitude? Loyalty? Finally, how many votes does this all add up to? At the most, a *part* of 11% of those receiving the benefits?

This is an area in which you should be especially wary. Vote buying is usually a neo-Liberal code word for providing desperately needed public assistance and social services. Hugo Chávez is routinely accused of vote buying, isn't he? That would include setting up free medical clinics all over Venezuela, I guess, staffed by Cuban doctors.



Original signed photographic ArtCards with iridescent finish; romantic roses for the one you love; stunning canvas giclees; whimsical letterpress cards; Mauritius Island seashell greetings; gift box sets; committed to fair trade and community-friendly practices.  
[Read More](#)



Want to see your favorite TV shows again?

Tell the network bosses what you think!

[Click here](#)

[Read More](#)

Be 1 of up to 6 ads in this strip!

Advertisement



Advertisement

### Criminal fraud

The area you should look into is criminal fraud, which would be handled by the Fedape, the Federal District Attorney for Election Crime. Is the PRD pressing any charges of criminal voter fraud? If so, what are they?

Their web page is at <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/fepade/fepade/ANTECEDENTES.htm>

Email: [fepadenet@pgr.gob.mx](mailto:fepadenet@pgr.gob.mx) and [fiscalenlinea@pgr.gob.net](mailto:fiscalenlinea@pgr.gob.net)

At <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/fepade/directorio/mapa.asp> you will find a directory of contacts with telephone and fax numbers.

The top person is María de los Ángeles Fromow Rangel. Her phone number is (0155) 5346-3101 in Mexico.

I'll be very interested to learn what you find out. I am in the middle of a huge and very demanding project on a very tight deadline. Otherwise, I'd do this myself. Good luck to you.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- >> **RE: Fraud -- or politics as usual?** Posted by: HeroesAll
- >> **RE: Fraud -- or politics as usual?** Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> **RE: Fraud -- or politics as usual?** Posted by: jules\_siegel
- >> **RE: Fraud -- or politics as usual?** Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> **RE: Fraud -- or politics as usual?** Posted by: Jane Doe

### WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE

Posted by: Liberalandproudfit on Aug 2, 2006 4:49 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[Open Voting Foundation](#) Managed to acquire a Diebold TS Voting Machine and discovered that a screwdriver is all that is needed to get the machine to load uncertified code.

**ALL** the certification and testing in the world is useless if a person managed to get physical access to the machine. And cities and counties are asking for "volunteers" to move the machines.

Sounds like herr Bush and company are already planning to rig the election

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- >> **RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE** Posted by: boydranchitos
- >> **RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE** Posted by: Liger
- >> **except....** Posted by: brasilaron
- >> **RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE** Posted by: wilymack
- >> **RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE** Posted by:

» [RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE](#) Posted by: marklar

» [RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE](#) Posted by: pzzp

» [RE: WORST EVER SECURITY FLAW FOUND IN DIEBOLD TS VOTING MACHINE](#) Posted by: Liger

#### "Lies, damned lies, and statistics." -- Mark Twain

Posted by: Sojourner on Aug 2, 2006 6:45 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

The statistical studies are interesting but hardly conclusive of anything. Statistics are a tool. They are not knowledge. Rather than revise reality because a set of statistics comes up in an unexpected fashion, maybe it's the tool that needs revising.

Yes, I expect that computer voting needs more safeguards. But sometimes tea leaf readers do a better job than number technicians.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» [Depends who's got their hands on the stats](#) Posted by: HeroesAll

» [RE: Depends who's got their hands on the stats](#) Posted by: Sojourner

» [RE: Depends who's got their hands on the stats](#) Posted by: HeroesAll

#### Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore

Posted by: Uncle Tupelo on Aug 2, 2006 7:35 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Don't be timid. Demand a full and accurate count, and fight in every court of law and court of opinion to get that and nothing less. Get your people on the street and keep them there. If people in your inner circle are advising you to back down, kick them to the curb. Ignore the establishment media, or make the case directly to the people that they too are part of the corrupt system. Don't be timid.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Liger

» [yes, Democracy means accepting, unquestioningly everything that winners say](#) Posted by: brasilaron

» [RE: yes, Democracy means accepting, unquestioningly everything that winners say](#) Posted by: Liger

» [Should we accept without question everything the losers say?](#) Posted by: jules\_siegel

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Liger

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Liger

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Liger

» [RE: Maybe AMLO has learned from Gore](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland

#### on the right

Posted by: mrjones on Aug 2, 2006 8:45 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

They believe that all is fair in love, war, and elections! If there was fraud so what? Whoever wins wins because they had a stronger team willing to fight harder. Never mind that the other team outnumbers them and would win a truly free and fair election. Fairness doesn't count, only might makes right (no pun intended). And when anybody complains about the lack of fairness they can accuse them of being big cry babies. On the right they'll use any tactic they can get away with to achieve all that their little hearts desire. In many cases they know they're going to get caught sooner or later, and that justice may eventually triumph, but in the mean time they use their illegitimate power to wreak havoc and steal everything they can lay their gubby little paws on, so even if they lose they still win. Sometimes it seems that there's no real way to fight against the unjust who are willing to pepetrate every kind of injustice in order to obtain and maintain power for their selfish ends.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» [RE: on the right](#) Posted by: Liger

» [RE: on the right](#) Posted by: harinama

» [RE: on the right](#) Posted by: bassman

#### arguments and beliefs

Posted by: aemulus on Aug 2, 2006 10:31 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

As you have noticed, constructive discussion may be performed when everybody understands the topics and the evidence. In this case, the arguments are in a special level of knowledge. Ciberfraud and statistics are not stuff that every mexican may talk about, so argumentation falls in the level of what people believes. Politicians and media know that, so we are in a war about credibility.

Which one would you believe most?

a)A candidate able to speak to bankers, middle class, CEO ´s, but not identified with low-income mexicans ; or

b) a candidate that speaks directly to the people ("el pueblo"), and likes to send malicious messages to bankers, commerce and industrial associations and even the president.

And seeing this in a different perspective, a peer told me, "if there is a fraud, involving IFE, international observers, civilians, media, and some organizations (almost a million and a half people)...and if there is a person leading it , that is the person we need to lead the country"

AlterNet Your turn

#### Support AlterNet

Do you value the information you're getting from AlterNet? Please show your support with a [tax-deductible donation](#).

#### Feedback

Tell us [how we're doing](#).

Search:

Go



It is all about beliefs and credibility...

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- » **RE: arguments and beliefs** Posted by: jules\_siegel
- » **Not yet convinced that large-scale vote fraud impossible** Posted by: El\_Cid
- » **RE: Not yet convinced that large-scale vote fraud impossible** Posted by: jules\_siegel
  - » **Fraud and Astrophysics** Posted by: YinRising
- » **RE: arguments and beliefs** Posted by: ivansg

**Not to worry (hopefully)**

Posted by: Patrick\_Ross on Aug 2, 2006 10:35 AM [[Report this comment](#)]  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Historically, Mexico is a fairly politically volatile society with a strong revolutionary tendency. This tends to go hand-in-hand with a government that, in many respects, follows the populist tendency to listen to the people. It's considered that people marching in the streets are a breath away from a civilian coup d'etat.

The recount will happen. Whether or not any of the candidates in this election are fit to lead is another question entirely.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**Your theory is right on!**

Posted by: starvinmarvy on Aug 2, 2006 11:26 AM [[Report this comment](#)]  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Thats it brother! And they STILL DON`T GET IT! The filthy rich have an unquenchable desire for more wealth.Fact is... they`re still gonna die.Fact is....they`ll see after their last breath how they`ve done so many wrong!!Fact is...after that last breath and they review that life that they once thought of as "brilliant maneuvers and HARD WORK"...as now a "pathetic, rueful,...SAD waste of a lifetime. Until these so called "human beings" that hold the wealth of this planet in their hands..... finally realize that its so much more important to help your fellow man ...than to build personal wealth and power....we will all continue to do ....and die....whatever and whenever they want. And that includes the so called leaders of this country!

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- » **this was a "reply" to the second post...** Posted by: starvinmarvy

**US will never have to worry about a populist government**

Posted by: jreinhardt1 on Aug 2, 2006 11:30 AM [[Report this comment](#)]  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

The Secret State of America could care less about votes. It's all been decided before the elections except for some local issues. I certainly won't vote again until Diebold is killed off and evoting machines can print out a pair of "carbon" copies, one for the voter and the copy for QA against the electronic voting machine tally.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**THAT'S WHY IT IS TIME FOR US TO DO THE SAME THING**

Posted by: krose on Aug 2, 2006 6:43 PM [[Report this comment](#)]  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

NEXT TIME, IF OUR VOTE IS TAMPERED WITH LIKE THE LAST 2 TIMES.....

WE MUST TAKE TO THE STREETS, LIKE THEY DID IN THE UKRAINE, AND IN MEXICO!

IT IS THE ONLY ANSWER TO TAKING OUR COUNTRY BACK FROM THE CROOKS, LIARS, AND THIEVES WHO HAVE IT NOW!

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- » **The Revolution will NOT be televised, it will be blogged** Posted by: YinRising
- » **RE: The Revolution will NOT be televised, it will be blogged** Posted by: Jane Doe
- » **RE: The Revolution will NOT be televised, it will be blogged** Posted by: alternorock

**What fraud?**

Posted by: Mex on Aug 2, 2006 6:53 PM [[Report this comment](#)]  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

*But back in the real world, a growing body of credible evidence from mainstream Mexican journalists, independent election observers and respected scholars indicates that an attempt was made to deliver the presidency to Calderón.*

There is only one important newspaper (La Jornada, not "La Journada") who claims that there was a fraud and this newspaper is very well know to be very attached to the PRD party and his candidate.

About the international observers, non of them found any evidence or indication of fraud before or during the election and Chuck Collins' article doesn't give any sustainable evidence of a "fraud", he even write that non of the reports that he has quoted "constitute a smoking gun".

Is very valid to demand a recount, but that decision doesn't belong to the candidates, belongs to the electoral court, 'El TRIFE', according to the electoral law (approved even by the PRD).

Comparing this election with the fraud of 1988, or with the USA election of 2000, is a BIG disproportion.

The electoral system right now is much better than the one in 1988 and even better than the USA. By the way, one of the Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) supporters, Manuel Barlett (from the PRI party) among others, were one of the architects of the 1988 election fraud against Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas [linked text](#)

Now, does AMLO represent the real left in México, I don't think so. He represents the old PRI with a democrat custom or, if you want, that "exotic populism" that some progressive people in the USA love, but damage the economy and the institutions of a country.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

- >> [RE: What fraud?](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [if there is an elephant in front of you and you don't see it...](#) Posted by: wake-up
- >> [RE: if there is an elephant in front of you and you don't see it...](#) Posted by: Jane Doe

**Mea Culpa**

Posted by: YogiBear on Aug 2, 2006 7:16 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Wait a minute. I coulda sworn that the Alternet was sure that Mexico's election would be the bastion of democratic fairness compared to the USA. Will someone be eating his words?

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

- >> [Maybe Tea Culpa](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [Retract this](#) Posted by: YogiBear

**Felipe Calderon chosen by God.**

Posted by: Jesse Cristo on Aug 2, 2006 8:43 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Clearly God's hand is behind the wonderful victory of Felipe Calderon. It is a message from Heaven itself that only our President's fervent supporters will enjoy victory. Scurrilous accusations of election fraud from leftists cannot sully the beauty of Calderon's divine legitimacy. Obrador represents the Mexican rabble, whose collective mind is as dark as it is ignorant. They will believe any lie which elevates their victim status and whets an appetite for entitlements. These people cannot be trusted to make good political choices any more than the Palestinians - who elected Hamas. May the Lord bless Mexico and Calderon as they join America in a righteous turn to neo-conservatism.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

- >> [RE: Felipe Calderon chosen by God.](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [RE: Felipe Calderon chosen by God.](#) Posted by: xbj
- >> [RE: Felipe Calderon chosen by God.](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [RE: Felipe Calderon chosen by God.](#) Posted by: Jesse Cristo
- >> [Sacrilige](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [RE: Sacrilige](#) Posted by: xbj
- >> [xbj](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [RE: xbj](#) Posted by: xbj

**Glad to See Democracy still survives in NA in Mexico and Canada**

Posted by: xbj on Aug 2, 2006 9:02 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

On the eve of Democracy's death and complete morphing into Fascism and Fascist Empire in the United States, it sure is encouraging to see it still alive and kicking in Mexico and Canada.

Perhaps there is hope after all, without China and Russia having to nuke the US off the face of the planet.

Time WILL tell.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

- >> [RE: Glad to See Democracy still survives in NA in Mexico and Canada](#) Posted by: Jesse Cristo
- >> [RE: Glad to See Democracy still survives in NA in Mexico and Canada](#) Posted by: xbj

**In the meantime...**

Posted by: AnaB on Aug 2, 2006 9:48 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Im not sure how many people are aware but Vicente Fox has already named an interim president in case the controversy is not settled by the time he leaves office. This person is one of the founders of the PRD party and a sort of creepy power hungry former presidential candidate in 1994. His name is Chuautemoc Cardenas and many believe he won the 1994 election but was bribed by the PRI into keeping quiet and accept defeat. Ironically the only other candidate from 1994 to protest the election on behalf of Cardenas was the PAN candidate and he was myseriously killed shortly after the election. Cardenas ran for president in 2000 and wanted to run in 2006 but he had little support. It is a well known fact that he doesnt like AMLO and refused to throw his support behind his own party's candidate during this presidential election.

One can only interpret Fox naming him interim president as another effort to bribe a powerful figure withing the PRD party. And, its a well known fact that Cardenas is open for business.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

- >> [RE: In the meantime...](#) Posted by: Joshua Holland
- >> [RE: In the meantime...](#) Posted by: JDMB
- >> [AMLO HAS SAID HE WILL ABIDE BY THE RECOUNT](#) Posted by: ignition

» **RE: In the meantime...** Posted by: AnaB

**if there is an elephant in front of you and you don't see it...**

Posted by: wake-up on Aug 3, 2006 2:53 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

mexican society is polarized, so people are a bit to keen on quick answers with little reflection or analysis. if people took their time, did a little reading and went beyond their partisan feelings perhaps they would by now know that the math doesn't add up. there are a total of around 1.5 million votes that have no backing on paper. what that means is that after a comparison of copies of certificates from every electoral booth (which all parties now have) with the information from the electronic counting of the votes which is posted on the internet by the federal electoral institute (IFE), there are more votes than voters. 1,5 million of them... when mr.calderon's advantage in the official count is of around 240,000 it makes it hard not to DEMAND a vote by vote recount. I would think any citizen that believes in democracy regardless of who they voted for would agree with this.

[[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**Statistician uses Benford's Law to Conclude Recount Needed**

Posted by: El\_Cid on Aug 3, 2006 5:35 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Walter R. Mebane, Jr., political scientist and scholar in the application of statistical methods to political behavior, has performed a statistical test to the published IFE results and concluded that a recount is likely needed, though of course he is only concluding that the election results have deviated too much from an expected distribution than desirable, and cannot conclude why.

In a paper prepared for 23rd Annual Summer Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology, July 20-22, 2006 ([available as a PDF for download HERE](#)) he studies election results from Florida in 2004 and from Mexico in 2006.

He employs a statistical analysis based on Benford's law, which has to do with the observation that in looking to large samples (such as voting or census data), there is actually a predictable distribution of how often the digits (i.e., 0-9) should appear in a certain position (in Mebane's analysis, the 2nd digit from the left), and that if the digits appear to skew very far from the expected distribution, then there may be a problem, such as errors or some type of fraud ('fraud' may include cases in which data is made up or manipulated for other reasons than aiming at a desired result, i.e., no one ever originally gathered the data and they're making it up).

*In this paper I study a statistical method intended to help detect election fraud. Other methods, using regression- based techniques for outlier detection, have previously been proposed to help detect election anomalies... The method described here is distinctive in that it does not require that we have covariates to which we may reasonably assume the votes are related across political jurisdictions. **The method is based on tests of the distribution of the digits in reported vote counts, so all that is needed are the vote counts themselves.** Being based on so little information, the method cannot in itself diagnose whether an anomaly it may flag is a consequence of fraud or of some other kind of irregularity. But, as I show, some patterns of fraud will cause the method to trigger. So **the method is best understood as an indicator for places where investigations that use other kinds of information -- for instance, audits of election administration records and manual ballot recounts -- might best be targeted.***

He concludes that there is enough departure from the expected model at his level of analysis to warrant a manual recount, whether of a sample or, of course, a complete recount.

*The 2BL {2nd digit Benford's Law} test results for secciones **certainly suggest there are problems with the 2006 presidential vote counts in many Mexican states, although probably not in most of them.** More refined analysis is needed to reach sharper conclusions, but the general impression is that **more intensive investigation of the election results is in order. That might include doing a manual recount of many -- perhaps all -- of the individual ballots.** A cost efficient method may be to begin by recounting a random sample of the ballots -- all the ballots in a sample of secciones -- where the probability that a seccion is selected for recounting is greater in places where the 2BL test results are worse. For such an exercise it may be reasonable to conduct 2BL tests for secciones collected into sets that correspond to the legislative districts they are part of, with sampling for purposes of initial recounting done at the level of districts. Perhaps a two-stage sampling plan could be used, with districts selected at the first stage (weighted by the 2BL test results) and secciones within each district selected at the second stage. If such an initial sampling did identify problems with the vote tabulations, then the case for a comprehensive manual recount would become extremely strong.*

[[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**My friend in Mexico tells me.....**

Posted by: harvsss on Aug 3, 2006 11:19 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

My friend in Mexico tells me that it is true that the court will give it's decision in Sept.

He also told me that Obrador was too far to the left and he did not vote for him.

See the propaganda machine works just fine in Mexico too. He voted against his own best intrest. Somehow(the media), he had been convinced that Obrador was just like the commie Chaves. I explained to him that all the BS about Chavez was just that. I told him about what I know about Chavez that he did not know. He thought that Chavez was a commie and bad for his country(the usual BS). I told him how Chavez had done many good things for his country and the Republican press has painted him a bad picture. Obrador is a man of the people and I hope he prevales. I hope that Mexico can have the democracy they should have and not one like here in the EEUU(Estadoe Unidos-USA).

[[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» **RE: My friend in Mexico tells me....** Posted by: wake-up

### REBUTTAL, part 1

Posted by: JDMB on Aug 3, 2006 5:29 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

There are so many factual errors in this piece, it's really disappointing (especially considering that Chuck Collins "...lives in Oaxaca, Mexico"; he either wrote the inaccuracies, or at least vetted the article and didn't catch them), and I don't know where to start. And would that this post not get lost among all the other posting in this blog, but rather received similar prominence as the original article. And for the record: I'm not a Republican, Conservative or Right-Winger: I consider myself a progressive, open-minded, bi-cultural individual who appreciates few things as much as looking at both sides of an issue.

*In a hyperbolic editorial on July 30 ... the Washington Post accused López Obrador, ... of taking "a lesson from Joseph Stalin":* Actually, it was AMLO (or at least his party, PRD) that quoted Stalin (and Wikipedia, curiously) in its 800-plus page complaint lodged before TRIFE, where, incidentally, they never ask for a full recount: that has been handled exclusively in the media, *never in the formal petition before TRIFE* (although they did present arguments for the annulment of the election, which they have publicly stated they do not seek: then why present arguments for something you don't want?).

*The Fox administration also ran public service announcements touting government programs and services and promoting the vote.* In the interests of fairness and balance ( :D ) you should have pointed out that all governments do the same in Mexico: indeed, some of the allegations in this regard concern not only the federal government but state governments as well ((PAN & PRI, of course, never PRD). The Mexico City (PRD) government did the same, and continues to this date, with huge banners hanging from government buildings in support of AMLO during the election and now during the recount effort. And when AMLO "suggested" ("*What do you say, shall we stay here until we get the recount? All those in favor raise your hands. Those opposed raise your hands. Motion carried.*") I wouldn't raise my hand in objection in that crowd) taking over the *Zócalo* and blocking the main thoroughfares of the city (which is something he said he would not do, and is in direct violation of an edict AMLO personally put into place while mayor of Mexico City: look up *Bando 13* forbidding setting up camps on city thoroughfares), the city's PRD government refuses to enforce the law citing the protesters' right to assembly and free speech. Isn't the government supposed to enforce the laws for everyone, not just those with whom it agrees? But I digress...

*López Obrador's campaign and hundreds of independent election observers documented several hundred cases of "old fashioned" election-day fraud in making their case for a recount.* Actually, they haven't presented any such proof: the lower courts in the TRIFE system are rejecting virtually all such claims because the proof just isn't there. For instance, a video of "ballot-box stuffing" turned out to be the precinct president placing ballots for a different race (senator, congressman) that were incorrectly deposited in the presidential ballot-box – *as required under law and with the consent of the party reps, including PRD's*. This incident led to said rep's public disavowal of AMLO's charges, which in turn led him to say that "some party reps sold out." Talk about being loyal to your troops...

*... there weren't enough independent and party observers to go around. In regions where one party was dominant, this created opportunities for vote shaving, ballot stuffing, lost ballots and other forms of fraud.* Again: not documented at all. I believe a famous Greek philosopher summed it up nicely: "Woulda, coulda, shoulda."

To be continued...

[\[« Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment »\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: BUTTAL, part 1** Posted by: alternorock

### REBUTTAL, part 2

Posted by: JDMB on Aug 3, 2006 5:32 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

*One analysis of IFE results found that there were 2,366 polling places where only a PAN observer was present. In these districts, Calderón beat López Obrador by a whopping 71-21 margin.* Where were these districts? If they were in PAN strongholds, wouldn't you expect a result like that? And why weren't there any observers from different parties? Could they have concluded that they were going to lose in those districts anyway and decided to concentrate on those districts where the results might be closer? Getting more "bang for their buck", as it were?

*Other elements of PRD's legal challenge include documentation of several ballot boxes found in dumps in the PRD stronghold of México City.* This was investigated and turned out to be a red herring (or is it a Macguffin?), just like the ballot-box-stuffing video. *They also point to evidence such as the nonpartisan Civic Alliance's report documenting 17 polling sites in PAN-dominated Nuevo León, Michoacán and Querétaro, where the number of votes cast vastly exceeded the number of registered voters at a site.* This is more serious, and is one of the (few) legitimate questions raised being dealt with by TRIFE.

*... But the cumulative evidence is damning in such a closely contested race.* Again: What evidence? I'm not a lawyer (thank God), but it seems to me that there has to be an intention, a will to do something wrong for it to be fraud, otherwise it can be something as simple as human error due to lack of education, lack of training, unintentional transposition of numbers, writing the number in the wrong box, not pressing down hard enough on the carbon copy, etc.

*In the weeks after the election, PRD observers again sounded the alarm as sealed ballot packets were being illegally opened at IFE district offices in several PAN-dominated regions.* You might have mentioned that these packets were being opened at the request of PRD reps (PRD sure didn't mention it; I wonder why?); and in any event, the ballots themselves were not touched (they're sealed in a separate bag within the packet), only the tally sheets and other documentation was being withdrawn – at the request of PRD in most cases. *The TRIFE ordered these offices to stop opening vote packets:* to avoid malicious

allegations of wrongdoing, because the procedures were legal and done with the knowledge of party officials.

To be continued again...

[< Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

### REBUTTAL, part 3

Posted by: JDMB on Aug 3, 2006 5:34 PM

[Report this comment]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

*For the 2006 election, the IFE had developed a sophisticated system to provide preliminary results called the PREP. Actually, PREP has been in place since 2000. Relying on results being phoned in from a sample of precincts, the IFE could compile a credible picture of the vote. First of all, the PREP is the tally of all the precincts, not of a sample: the sampling is done with some 7,000-plus precincts, geographically and socio-economically distributed to give a 0.3% (not a typo: zero point three percent) margin of error. This "quick count" or *conteo rápido* is what would have ...allowed Mexicans to go to sleep on election night knowing who their next president would be. But the result was so close no winner could be determined this way, so IFE didn't release the results that night (as it turns out, probably a mistake). IFE's chairman went on national TV to say just that, and ask the candidates to please refrain from claiming victory until the formal count on Wednesday. President Fox went on TV right after to say the same thing. So within minutes, AMLO went out to claim victory by half a million votes, claiming to have the *actas* to prove it. (He's never produced those *actas*; they would seem to constitute evidence, don't you think?). Calderón (in a political mistake, in my opinion), felt obliged to follow with his own claim of victory, citing half a dozen exit polls and PAN's own copies of the *actas* (and PAN has set up an exhibit in Mexico City of copies of all 130,477 *actas* for all to see – now *that* sounds like evidence).*

I'm not a statistician, so I can't comment on the work of López and Mochan. However, other statisticians have taken issue with their conclusions. And Mochan states that "...I understand that no booth was to receive more than 750 votes." This is a mistake: special polling booths were set up all over the country for people who were traveling or otherwise out of their immediate city of residence, to vote for president only; all the parties unanimously agreed to have only 750 ballots available at these special booths, and it is well documented that they were grossly insufficient for the demand (and surely had some impact on the level of non-voting registered).

*Whether it was human error or intentional vote shaving, in a tight election race, these examples gain heightened significance.* Completely agree: but to imply by inference that there was fraud no matter what, you do a disservice to your readers.

*None of these reports in and of themselves constitute a smoking gun.* Again: the inference is that there was a smoking gun, it just hasn't been found.

*A poll released this week found that Mexicans, by a 20-point margin (48-28), want a vote-by-vote count.* What about the other polls that show Mexicans believe by an even larger margin that the elections were clean and transparent? And that IFE did a good job despite the criticisms? And that AMLO's support is dropping steadily? *López Obrador has said he will call off protests when the Tribunal agrees to a recount and will honor its final decision.* Actually, he has said he will honor the decision – provided it isn't that Calderón won. Repeatedly.

Just one more...

[< Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- » **RE: BUTTAL, part 3** Posted by: ivansg
- » **re: REBUTTAL, part 3** Posted by: JDMB
- » **RE: re: REBUTTAL, part 3** Posted by: ivansg
- » **RE: BUTTAL, part 3** Posted by: ivansg
- » **re: REBUTTAL, part 3** Posted by: JDMB

### REBUTTAL, part 4 (and last)

Posted by: JDMB on Aug 3, 2006 5:34 PM

[Report this comment]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

*President and PAN leader Vicente Fox called for direct action when he believed he was victimized by electoral fraud in his race for the governorship of Guanajuato in 1991. Key point: 1991. The current rules were enacted in 1996, and you yourselves point out that the situation today is very different. Fox called on thousands of supporters to take to the streets and block highways, ... Asked before the 2000 presidential election if he would do the same thing if he suspected fraud, he didn't hesitate to say "... If there is any instability ... it will be due to whatever they have done fraudulently to avoid recognizing our victory." 2000 was the first election under the new rules, and nobody knew what to expect; besides, PRI was still in power and has a well-earned reputation for electoral dirty tricks; and it wasn't a statistical tie, Fox was way ahead in the polls. To not mention these differences in this paragraph is misleading.*

*While Calderón has opposed a ballot-by-ballot recount, he has stated that he will abide by whatever the TRIFE decides, including recognizing AMLO as the winner if that is what the recount shows. AMLO has said just the opposite. And indeed, Calderón's opposition is a political mistake: rather than insist that the votes have been counted and that he is the winner, he should just keep quiet and go along with whatever TRIFE decides. But AMLO is imploding: even *La Jornada* is starting to criticize his stance and actions. But in the end, you're right: everybody must wait for TRIFE's decision and abide by it. And when AMLO doesn't, I'll be back to say "I told you so."*

[< Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- » **RE: BUTTAL, part 4 (and last)** Posted by: wake-up
- » **RE: BUTTAL, part 4 (and last)** Posted by: JDMB



- » [RE: BUTTAL, part 4 \(and last\)](#) Posted by: JDMB
- » [RE: BUTTAL, part 4 \(and last\)](#) Posted by: wake-up
- » [RE: BUTTAL, parts 1 through 4](#) Posted by: Jane Doe

**He's baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaack!**

Posted by: bettyn on Aug 3, 2006 6:01 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Welcome back Danny Ortega! The former Sandinista honcho is about to be elected President of Nicaragua.

Another thorn in Dumbya's side.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**Is the Fraud in the mexican elections ever going to get discovered?**

Posted by: Juan2 on Aug 3, 2006 7:03 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Very doubtfull if you only look at the last few months of news abot the mexican elections. The real fraud started by people connected with the Brother in Law of a third class politician named Felipe Calderon back when he was one obscure Minister of Foxilandia. that Mr Zorrry had filled that position because he had to have some one there. Something or some one gave that Brother in Law the Idea tht by stealing the documents of the IFE. (Institute of Federal Electors) which could have been sold to the USA Government and other takers at a fairly good price mainly to know who is in those Lists, that could have been of good use to the Secretary of State of the USA or other companies interested in knowing names and addresses of most mexican people.

In order to understand why a Third Class Politician has made it to be a contender in a presidential race you need to have a real method to pick a winner for it and since the favorite to succed Mr Zorro in keeping in Mexico the most perfect Dictatorship in the World. Which was started back almost 8, decades ago, which started when a bunch of so called Revolutionaries they named a Political Party the PRI (Party Revolutionary Institutional) and within a few more years was eventually coming to be known as the PRIAN, under those names the dupped the poor people of Mexico for soo many years.

So knowing that the oposition was going to be strong from the PRD Mr. Zorro asked his wife to join efforts with another Dark Person in the mexican political arena, Elba Ester Gordillo a Former PRI Secretary and head of the Teaches Association one of the strongest groups that any politician would love to lead or to have in their side. Maybe th efforts of Mr Zorro to have an strong sucesor made him dump his former Peon and accept the named Candidate by the Governor of Jalisco a strong party hold for the PAN or maybe PRIAN so Calderon won the acceptance of the bunch of the potential largest Fraudulent bunch of polititians in any voting poll in the World.

Having the List of all the people that could vote in the country and having the President of Instituto Federal Electoral which is a close friend of the Calderon Bunch they started to nominate Directors of the Voting Polls that were either personnel of the PAN, PRI or PRIAN and the new PANAL that Elba was the main person in charge. Having also in their side most of the Governors of the PRI and PAN which also had chances to make good their usual customs of having Fraudulent Polls for soo many years that winning the 2006 Elections which hardly any body really has made any notice of how one soo powerfull document can make wonders and the document is the List of the Instituto Federal Electoral that The Director of the IFE Knew that is was stolen and sold in the uSA and never dis any thing about it or went after any one because he knew of its future use?. But to put the Cherry on the cake the reason for the alliance of those two named Ladies martita and Elbita was to brake the one time strong party the PRIAN and to end usinf its 5 letters that standd for Partido Republicano Institucional Accion Nacional and now because their involvement on both of their former Parties they will use a name for each ans since the PAN with Mr. Zorro was in Power the new name of their Party was going to brak Off of the PRI nd wwill be known exclusivly as the PAN. and since Elbita was trown out of the Bank Account that with the name of the Former party name those Ladies were going to rename the other Party and usung the Sixth letter for the Party they changed the firts letter of the party and putting it on the last to be known henceforth as the RIP Party.

What ever s going to happen with the Presidential election Some one should have thought of this obscure piece of widly known information the Stealing of the List of the IFE by Hildebrando????

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

- » [RE: Is the Fraud in the mexican elections ever going to get discovered?](#) Posted by: ivansg

**Just a really great piece.**

Posted by: kenhymes on Aug 4, 2006 9:05 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

That's one of the best, most helpful pieces I've read on Alternet in a long time. It clarified a lot of things for me about the Mexican electoral system that are important to understanding what's going on now. And it demonstrated a strength of the best non-MSM journalism (when it avoids rushed, sloppy outrage-mongering): the ability to make a decisive judgement about where the problem is, and present a clear and compelling case for that judgement, combined with offering an understanding of what might change things. I just want to give Josh a big thumbs up.,

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

**Let's start Alternet bashing**

Posted by: vescalant on Aug 4, 2006 5:17 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Now that Alternet has decided to publish right wing propaganda to bash the left, like its anti-Chavez "Modern-Day-Tyrant" article , I think it is time to get even and do some Alternet bashing here.

Alternet coverage of the Mexican election has been tainted with inaccuracies, and more importantly, with a total lack of understanding of how the political and economic system works in modern day capitalism. Inaccuracies in reporting are common in the main stream media, but the lack of understanding seems a unique trait of the left these days. At least of the new left.

To mention a few inaccuracies, the PREP did not relied a sample of results as Chuck Collins "reports". The IFE was supposed to give a statistical projection of results on election night, Sunday July 2, from a sample of polling stations as had been done in the past. Exit polls were conducted, but IFE was supposed to report a projection of results from the actual tally sheets of selected stations. This time, however, IFE chose not to report the results because the difference between the leading candidates was too small. The PREP was a *second attempt* to announce the results to the public. The PREP was supposed to give a near-total tally during the next day after the election by using a computer network connected to main servers at the National University of Mexico. It did so and those results were supposed to be highly reliable because the data came from almost all the tally sheets. The right wind candidate came some 400,000 votes ahead of AMLO in the PREP. Doubts arose when it was know that many tally sheets had not been counted because of "inconsistencies" in them. When they were counted the difference in votes became 200,000 plus votes. *The actual count of the tally sheets* began on Wednesday at IFE district offices around the country. TV stations had continuous coverage and reported the results as IFE officers read and counted the tally sheets. The law does not allow to recount the ballots except in a few cases. The final tally reproduced the PREP results to a great extend and Calderón celebrated victory at 4 AM on Thursday when the tally sheet count was nearing completion. *In his victory speech on TV Calderón said that the count had been purposely devised in such a way that tally sheets from the state of Guanajuato, were he had won by a large margin, were to be counted last.* That way he had lagged behind López Obrador all day, but came ahead of him in the early morning and stayed ahead until the end of the count on Thursday afternoon.

After all this it is clear that a well mounted charade has taken place. To find a fraud, if there was one, is going to be next to impossible. It is obvious that the whole system is against a victory of the left in Mexico. Past reports of annulled governor's elections in Tabasco and Colima don't mean much because those elections were won by the right in the end. In Colima in 2003 the Federal Tribunal annulled an election that had been won by PRI candidate Vázquez Montes because of interference of the governor in office. What nobody says, and that includes Alternet, is that the Tribunal called for a new election that was *won again by Vázquez Montes* . Similar story for Tabasco. We have yet to see a ruling by the Tribunal that actually leads to a victory by the left. What Alternet editorialists don't want to understand is that the system is designed to keep the left out of real power in Mexico. Whether the fraud was in the PREP computer system or in the manual count of the votes (there are no voting machines in Mexico, thank God), not to say of the dirty smear campaign by the right against López Obrador, is irrelevant here, and my guess is whatever the outcome, recount or not, the left won't be allowed to rule Mexico, least a revolution takes place.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **RE: Let's start Alternet bashing** Posted by: JDMB

#### Jury will rule August 5

Posted by: ivansg on Aug 4, 2006 8:41 PM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Not a final ruling for all allegations, but they will decide if they should proceed to a full recount right away, a partial recount (which might lead back to a full recount), or none at all.

This will happen at 10:00am Central Time. It will be televised in the judicial channel in cable.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

#### Mexican Election Decision Very Important For Oaxaca

Posted by: mdenevan on Aug 5, 2006 7:24 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Here in Oaxaca, Mexico one of the poorest southern states, Calderón's anointing by federal election officials could mean big trouble for the union and civic groups demanding the ouster of Gov. Ulises Ruiz. There has been a "war of low intensity" here for the past two years with incredible impunity by the state government in killing and imprisoning local leaders. (For more info on this protest contact [denevan2001@yahoo.com](mailto:denevan2001@yahoo.com)) Calderón and the PAN in general have made an ally of the PRI against López Obrador and there could be military reprisals, not just the local police, against the protesters here if Calderón gives the go ahead, a la Chiapas.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

#### Large Partial Recount Ordered

Posted by: El\_Cid on Aug 5, 2006 12:19 PM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

The Tribunal (TEPJF) has clarified its ruling today: it has ordered that there be a manual (hand) recount of the paper ballots for a specified list of 11,839 polling stations (out of 130,000+ stations throughout the country), representing a (non-random) 9.07% of total stations.

<http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/366854.html>

With an average of often 200+ votes per polling stations, this could represent over 2.5 million votes out of a total vote of 42 million.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

#### Josef Stalin Again

Posted by: sofia100 on Aug 5, 2006 9:22 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

This reminds me of another quote by Josef Stalin,  
"it is not who votes that matters, it is he who counts the votes"

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

[» RE: Josef Stalin Again](#) Posted by: El\_Cid

#### Calderon - the new Bush

Posted by: Ray S on Aug 7, 2006 8:08 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Well, I guess in the interest of accuracy, the PRESS should begin referring Calderon as his alter ego, the premier of stolen elections, George W. Bush.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

#### Ballots, We Don't Need No Stinkin' Ballots!

Posted by: albrechtkrause on Aug 8, 2006 7:38 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Yup, with electronic voting and strong-arm tactics the oft heard phrase from the mexicans in the early 20th century immortalised in 'Treasures of the Sierra Madre' is now applicable for voting. Laughably funny (if it wasn't so true.)

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

[» RE: Ballots, We Don't Need No Stinkin' Ballots!](#) Posted by: JDMB

[» RE: Ballots, We Don't Need No Stinkin' Ballots!](#) Posted by: albrechtkrause

#### Latest Developments, protests in Mexico

Posted by: Jane Doe on Aug 14, 2006 12:11 AM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Source: "La Esquina" [La Cronica, August 14, 2006.](#)

On the same date and place where the military parade **(1)** of September the 16th must take place, AMLO **(2)** will head a "National Democratic Convention". He will attempt to prevent the designation of the presidential election winner.

And on "la noche del grito" **(3)** at the Zocalo he will, right there, host a popular celebration. Sheer defiance. What a shame: he has proved us right all along.

1- The 16th of september marks the anniversary of Mexico's Independence (1810), contrary to popular belief in the U.S.'s celebration of 5 de Mayo.

2- AMLO (**A**ndres **M**anuel **L**opez **O**brador, for the uninitiated) the losing candidate.

3- "La noche del grito" "The night of the cry (of freedom)". A popular celebration held on the night of September the 15th to commemorate the onset of the war of independence, hosted by the President in turn at Mexico City's central square "El Zocalo". The President opens the ceremonies by ringing the historic liberty bell that Father Hidalgo once rang to rouse the people. Then he gives the "El Grito," shouting, "Viva Mexico!" The crowd echoes back.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

#### Latest Developments, protests in Mexico

Posted by: JDMB on Aug 14, 2006 10:43 AM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

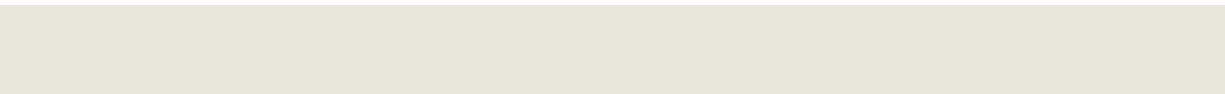
Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

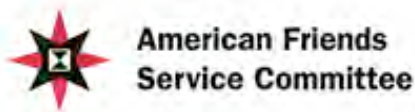
*"Sheer defiance. What a shame: he has proved us right all along."*

Precisely. I find it somewhat distressing that so many take him on face value without looking deeper into his character, his past actions... No one is perfect, but there are some who are less imperfect than others. Still, Altnet is to be commended for bringing these issues to the attention of its readers, focusing on Latin America (like today's article by J. Holland on Hugo Chavez for instance) when the rest of the media don't even care.

(And thank you for your kind words in your other post!)

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]





# trade matters

Home > Issues > Trade Matters > Trade Agreements > FTAA

## Is the US Free Trade Model Losing Steam?

### Trade Matters Update

Providing Summarized Updates on Trade Issues , May 3, 2006



Protesting free trade. Photo: Jessica Walker  
Beaumont, AFSC

While the Bush Administration continues to push its free trade agenda around the globe there are signs of progress for communities of resistance, and signs that the Bush Administration itself is adjusting its priorities in the face of worldwide resistance to the Free Trade model. In mid-April it was announced that Rob Portman was resigning as

the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to become the Director of the President's Office of Management and Budget. Portman is a man of considerable clout in Washington, and the President's choice to re-locate him may be a sign that he is lowering expectations for advancing his trade agenda. This comes on the heels of a year that has seen several victories for popular resistance against neo-liberal free trade agreements imposed by the U.S. on trading partners in the Global South. Evidence of the growing strength of this resistance recently materialized in Southern Africa and has been particularly evident in Latin America where massive opposition to U.S. economic domination among the population, including massive street demonstrations, have enabled populist leaders and parties to gain control of national governments in Bolivia, Ecuador, and possibly Peru, joining other countries in a shift to the left.

*Presidential candidates have promised to fix the economic reforms of the last 25 years, and this promise has won elections in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Uruguay and Venezuela. This is not surprising if one looks at the basic economic facts: the last 25 years have been an unprecedented failure for Latin America. (1)*

Newly elected president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, has declared Bolivia will never negotiate a free trade agreement with the U.S., and recently released a Peoples Trade Agreement (PTA) outlining guiding principles for the type of trade agreements Bolivia seeks with other countries.

The PTA prioritizes protecting national industries and internal production, and human well being.

### U.S.-SACU



Subscribe for  
email updates:



#### Back To:

[US-Colombia FTA](#)

#### See Also:

[Additional Resources on the US-Colombia FTA >](#)



The United States-Southern Africa Customs Union FTA (U.S.-SACU FTA) negotiations began in June 2003 and have been in a state of start and stop ever since. On April 18th, the SACU countries again rejected a "comprehensive" FTA that would have included all economic sectors, and worked from the same template the U.S. has used for trade agreements in Latin America, Southeast Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. SACU countries were particularly concerned about protecting post-apartheid affirmative action policies and against aggressive liberalization demands in the services negotiations. Instead, discussion appears to be heading down a path of a "Trade Investment Cooperation Agreement" (TICA) — the first of its kind. The TICA steps away from the all-or-nothing agenda and sets up a mechanism for developing work programs in areas that could lead to memoranda of understanding around certain areas typically included in an FTA like customs, trade facilitation, and even intellectual property. This is in part a victory because the U.S. has been unwilling to set a precedent of an agreement that is less aggressive than CAFTA and the recent U.S.-Peru agreement. However, this new strategy may be even less transparent and a back door mechanism for avoiding a need for Congressional approval.

## WTO

Negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) continue to flounder. The 6th Ministerial in Hong Kong last December produced a more aggressive negotiating framework in services (GATS) negotiations and an aggressive timeline for concluding the Doha Round by the end of the year. Although the last two months have seen a number of negotiating efforts in the form of a mini-ministerial between select WTO members, the WTO did not meet the April 30th deadline for finalizing "modalities" in agriculture and manufacturing (NAMA) casting the meeting of other deadlines into doubt. In an attempt to save the negotiations, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy has called for continuous negotiations over the first few weeks of May. [\(2\)](#)

## CAFTA

Last July the U.S. Congress ratified the Central American FTA (CAFTA) by a mere two votes after extensive arm twisting and pork barrel deals by the Bush Administration. U.S., El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic have ratified the agreement, Costa Rica, has yet to do so. The closeness of the vote in Congress was a significant accomplishment for AFSC's *Stop the CAFTA Vote* campaign and others. Thanks to continued work by U.S. activists, many Representatives' pro-CAFTA vote may cost them their office come November elections. In Costa Rica, a virtually unknown opposition candidate, Otton Solis of the Citizens' Action Party, who ran primarily on an anti-CAFTA platform, almost defeated former President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias in the Presidential election last February. The election was a virtual tie that took several weeks and a recount to determine Arias as the winner.

## Andean FTA's

Because of strong opposition to the Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) in Ecuador, the U.S. shifted to negotiating individual agreements with Peru and Colombia. Peru and the U.S. officially signed the **U.S.-Peru FTA** on April 12, 2006. After presidential elections that gave nationalist and anti-FTA candidate Ollanta Humala a small majority in a

three-way race, Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo flew to D.C. to witness the signing of the agreement, which he made sure took place before leaving office on July 28. The FTA faces strong opposition from the Peruvian public. A referendum against the deal gained 60,000 signatures and after being accepted by the National Elections Board the referendum will now move on to the Peruvian Congress. The future of the FTA depends largely on who wins the run-off Presidential election in late May, which is reflected in the U.S. Trade Representative's recent announcement that they will not take it before Congress until after Peru does.

The **U.S.-Colombia FTA** negotiations were completed on February 27, 2006. This FTA is being pushed forward despite considerable opposition in rural areas, particularly among indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians; and widespread concern that the implementation of the FTA will intensify violence in the country (see [Trade and Militarization in Colombia](#)). In pursuing a policy of "democratic security" similar to the United State's Patriot Act the Colombian government has singled out indigenous and Afro-Colombia communities as "terrorists" for resisting their policies of militarization and trade with the U.S. When leaders from the Nasa indigenous community organized a referendum on the free trade agreement in six mostly indigenous municipalities of the southwestern province of Cauca that mobilized 51,330 voters out of a total of 68,448 registered voters with 98 percent voting against the FTA, the President stated that there were "dark forces of terrorism" organizing these plebiscites and accused indigenous peoples of knowing nothing about trade.

In **Ecuador**, popular opposition to AFTA or a bilateral trade agreement with the U.S. in part led to the ousting of President Lucio Gutierrez last April and continues to apply extensive pressure on the current administration. Beginning on March 13, 2006, massive mobilizations led by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador (CONAIE) with the support of a broad cross-section of Ecuador's population forced the government and business leaders to publicly debate the implications of a free trade agreement with the U.S., an unprecedented achievement. To learn more about how CONAIE and Ecuadorian civil society are holding their government accountable in the defense of life and national sovereignty visit [CONAIE's website](#)

## The Peoples Trade Agreement

Strong ties between Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Cuba's Fidel Castro, and Bolivia's Evo Morales, along with other major economies like Argentina and Brazil charting their own path and rejecting U.S. dictated economic policy has created the potential for real alternatives in the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, with Venezuela's massive oil revenues it can extend credit to countries that no longer want to march to the tune of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other lending institutions. The Bolivian Peoples Trade Agreement (PTA) released in April 2006 represents an exciting alternative to the neo-liberal free trade model. The PTA emphasizes indigenous culture, reciprocity, solidarity, and national sovereignty. Above all the PTA emphasizes improved human well being for the whole population as the desired outcome of trade and investment, rather than wealth accumulation for the few.

Bolivia was one of the first countries to implement the IMF's structural adjustment policies which have since become a staple of neo-liberal

economic globalization. Beginning in the mid 1980s Bolivia followed almost all the recommendations coming from the IMF including raising interest rates, cutting public spending, privatizing state owned industries and public services, and opening their economy to foreign trade. While the initial "shock therapy" package created by the IMF succeeded in reigning in hyper-inflation the long term performance of these reforms has been poor and Bolivia's per capita income is lower today than it was in 1978.(3)

On January 22, 2006, Evo Morales of the Movement for Socialism Party assumed the presidency with a clear majority of 54% of the vote. Morales, who is Quechua, is the first indigenous president of this predominantly indigenous nation. Previously, Morales was a leader of the largely indigenous coca growers union, and led workers, peasants, and ingenious peoples in stopping a deal that would have given control of Cochabambas' water services to the transnational corporation Aguas de Tanari during the Water War of 2000. The deal would have made water services unaffordable for the majority of Cochabambinos (the term for residents of Cochabamba).

Last May Bolivia passed a Hydrocarbons Law that raised royalties paid by foreign gas companies. While this has angered many in the U.S. and goes against free trade ideology it has provided tens of millions of dollars in revenue for the government(4) and may enable them to sever ties with the IMF, as Brazil and Argentina are working towards. The PTA released by the Morales government outlines the type of trade policy Bolivia now seeks. In its own prose, the PTA is what free trade is not:

*If the FTA's are negotiated in secret, the PTA needs the active participation and discussion of social movements, who through using our new political instrument, have begun to govern Bolivia for Bolivians.*

*The objectives [of the PTA] are to strengthen small producers, micro-businesses, cooperatives and communitarian enterprises and to facilitate the interchange of goods with external markets.(5)*

The PTA also emphasizes that it serves to rebuild the state rather than dismantle it, and to foster an indigenous vision of development:

*Recovering the essence of indigenous culture, the PTA postulates complementarity rather than competition, living in harmony with nature rather than irrational resource exploitation; defense of social property versus extreme privatization; the promotion of cultural diversity rather than mono-culture and uniformity of markets and consumption patterns.*

The PTA sets forth 10 principles for developing trade agreements that reemphasize micro-production, solidarity, sustainability, and communitarian development. Central to the philosophy of the PTA is that countries must be free to determine what development path suits their respective history and culture ([view the entire PTA proposal](#)).

## Conclusion

The people of Latin America know how free trade has impacted their lives – negatively. Because of the massive failure of neo-liberal economic reforms in the region(6) people have called for change, and political change has taken place in six South American countries. This

to an extent is the fruit of long term movement against corporate-globalization, and also indigenous peoples' and other movements that proceeded. Changing economic dynamics globally, such as the growth of China and India, and the recent economic success of Argentina and Venezuela are opening up new possibilities for regional economic relationships. The U.S. economy is no longer the only game in town, but can Bolivia and other countries seeking alternative economic policies turn their vision into reality? If the global solidarity movement against corporate globalization can bring the "free trade" steamroller to a crawl, then their alternative vision might be possible.

1. Weisbrot, Mark, "Latin American 'Populism' Doing Well" *Charlotte Observer*, 3-20-2006
2. Pruzin, Daniel., "Lamy Calls for Non-stop Ag, NAMA Talks After Admitting Missing Modalities Deadline" *BNA: Daily Report for Executives* 4-25-2006
3. Dolan, Mike, "Bolivia seen likely to end IMF financing ties.," *Reuters* 4-12-2006
4. Weisbrot, Mark, "Latin American 'Populism' Doing Well," *Charlotte Observer*, 3-20-2006
5. Proposal from Bolivian President Evo Morales concerning: A Peoples Trade Agreement <http://quest.quixote.org/node/295>
6. See Baker, Dean, Rosnick, David and Weisbrot, Mark, *Scorecard on Development: 25 Years of Diminished Development*. Center for Economic and Policy Research, September 2005

# Vermont Journal of Environmental Law

JOURNAL BOOKS EDITORIALS NEWS ESSAY CONTEST EVENTS RESOURCES ABOUT VJEL

## EDITORIALS 2006-2007

Current  
Editorials

2006-2007

2005-2006

2004-2005

2003-2004

2002-2003

2001-2002

2000-2001

Print This  
Copy

PDF  
Version

### RESPONSE TO ANDREW KOHN: THE ANIMAL ENTERPRISE TERRORISM ACT IS INVIDIOUSLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL AS WELL)

DAVID HOCH\* AND ODETTE WILKENS\*\*

MARCH 9, 2007

Andrew Kohn's editorial,[1] for those who missed it, was an enthusiastic apologia defending and supporting the recently passed Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA).[2] It was an interesting essay, in which Mr. Kohn implied sympathy with animal rights causes and activists by at one point stating "[t]hose of us in the animal rights movement,"[3] but showed no such sympathy in his arguably odious characterization of animal rights activists, at one point in his paper, labeling these activists as "terrorists,"[4] a strange expression of camaraderie, indeed.

The Act in question has the ostensible intent to "provide the Department of Justice the necessary authority to apprehend, prosecute, and convict individuals committing animal enterprise terror." [5] Not to worry if you don't know what "animal enterprise terror" is, for it is too vague a term to mean anything either definable or adjudicable, but it seems under the Act to include anything which in any way interferes with the conduct of any commerce whatsoever, be it legal or illegal, involving animals or animal products. It also, as will be shown below, tramples upon First and Fourteenth Amendment rights, but in our war on terror, the first casualty is constitutionalism.

Pointing out that the law was passed under Congress' Commerce Clause power,[6] Mr. Kohn quite correctly asserts that "precious little will be able to escape the reach of this bill as 'animal enterprises' can almost always make a plausible argument for influence on interstate and foreign commerce." [7] That is why this invidiously discriminatory Act, which also flagrantly chills constitutionally protected speech, should be opposed with vigor and, let us hope, efficacy.

AETA promotes the maximization of profits for all industries that use animals as commodities and inanimate disposables, and the minimization of interference with those enterprises by those concerned with the wretched suffering of animals. How does the Act pursue this end? It simply risks categorizing all animal activists who in any way "interfere" with "animal enterprises," as terrorists.

Mr. Kohn points out that the Act punishes any intentional act which, either by "damaging or causing the loss of any real or personal property," or placing a "person in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury to that person." [8] Mr. Kohn states that "[t]he most important word in the entire Act is 'intentional,' " explaining it is "outrageous that animal terrorists believed intentionally harassing fast-food executive and/or his family is consistent with ethical behavior." [9] Leaving aside the fact that the nearly unanimous majority of animal rights activists would never dream of harassing anyone, let alone placing a person in reasonable fear of anything, he didn't mention that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) requested that the phrase "loss of any real or personal property" be amended to say tangible property, because otherwise one might be found guilty of terrorism if she or he, by wholly nonviolent and constitutionally protected behavior, caused someone to lose profits. [10]

The legislative committee added the words "loss of profits" as a basis for liability in the penalty section of the Act, a decision Mr. Kohn understands the importance of, because he placed this phrase in italics in his editorial, stating that "[l]oss of profits' is a blanket term that could apply to any number of activities undertaken by animal rights groups." [11] Leaving aside the ambiguity of that statement, Mr. Kohn's explanation that "there would be a level of reasonableness involved in this form of economic damage as it must be defined under a cloud of intentional behavior" [12] is truly remarkable. It seems reasonable to conclude that Mr. Kohn is presuming that animal activists will be treated fairly under an Act that was designed to imprison them for engaging in the nonviolent exercise of constitutionally permissible free expression.

He then asks if complaints about the Act are a publicity ploy by those "unable to effectively fight for animal rights because of their already marginalized status." [13] Mr. Kohn has employed both tortured logic and syntax in defending



the equity of AETA.

He then assures the reader that the Act makes an exception for "lawful economic disruption (including a lawful boycott)."[14] However, the seeming exemptions for First Amendment rights are illusory, because the Act's language emphatically restricts the very rights it later alleges to protect. Stating that lawful boycotts are protected does not make it so. One person's boycott is another person's interference, which, under AETA, spells terrorism. Mr. Kohn further opines that "[t]he distinction between lawful loss of profits and those that create an economic damage seem readily apparent and contestable in a court of law." [15] This distinction is only readily apparent to Mr. Kohn and the four hundred twenty nine members of the House that never voted on the Bill. How then, did the Bill pass the House?

The House Judiciary Committee placed AETA on the suspension calendar, under which process, bills that are non-controversial can be passed by voice vote.[16] Then the vote on the bill was held hours earlier than scheduled, with what appears to have been only six Congresspersons present.[17] Five voted for the bill, and Dennis Kucinich, who said that "[t]his bill will have a real and chilling effect on people's constitutionally protected rights," [18] voted against it. Was this a non-controversial bill, belonging on the suspension calendar? One hundred and sixty groups, including the National Lawyers' Guild, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the League of Humane Voters, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, and the New York City Bar Association opposed its passage.

Mr. Kohn admits that the universally respected Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) was also troubled by the chilling effect the bill would have on "a broad range of lawful, constitutionally protected, and valuable activit[ies] undertaken by citizens and organizations seeking change," [19] but he dismisses the reservations of Kucinich, the HSUS, and the more than two hundred groups opposing the bill, [20] by explaining that "[a] chilling, however, is not an end. It is a cautionary flag that asks groups to carefully think about their decision before they act," [21] and even more incredulously adds that "thoughtful groups should not have difficulty in either working around these new limitations or successfully litigating unconstitutional provisions of the Act." [22] Thoughtful groups might, however, find difficulty in working around these new limitations if their members are imprisoned for engaging in activities that, prior to AETA's passage, were protected by the Constitution.

Mr. Kohn posits a unique notion of governance, by essentially suggesting that the burden of assuring constitutional legislation falls on a vigilant citizenry, rather than its elected representatives in Congress.

The patina of "reasonableness" that Mr. Kohn casts over this Act, and his allusion to the ease with which its unconstitutional provisions might be litigated, are too facile. AETA does have a chilling effect on advocacy, that being the reason the law was passed, and no "cautionary flag" is justified when it means that people must pause or stop exercising their First Amendment rights, lest they go bankrupt defending themselves against unconstitutional charges, while the threat of extensive fines and incarceration hang over their heads like the sword of Damocles.

Mr. Kohn assures those suspicious of AETA that the political process can bring about "other bills with the power to counter such legislation," [23] rationalizing his support of a bad bill by assuring us that future legislation can neutralize its detrimental consequences. He unsympathetically adds that positive change will not come "from the subversive fringe that look (sic) to disrupt society in the ill-fated hope of raising awareness and succeeding in their (sic) mission." [24]

In his concluding paragraph, Mr. Kohn counsels us to ask why we have AETA and "what can be done to overcome it," [25] a strange query from an ardent defender of the Act. As an alleged member of the animal rights movement, he should know that this law was passed to chill constitutionally protected activities that would increase public awareness of the brutality employed by "animal enterprise" industries.

Space precludes a lengthy analysis of the Act's particulars, but a brief consideration of some of its other shortcomings may buttress the fact that Mr. Kohn was cavalier in dismissing the concerns of AETA's critics.

Under AETA, merely intending to engage in acts that cause no harm or damage, but interfere with an animal enterprise, may result in fine and imprisonment. For example, if two people living in different states exchange e-mails evidencing a clear intention to cause "economic damage" to an animal enterprise, by persuading customers to purchase less veal at a supermarket, their conduct may constitute both legal "attempt" and "conspiracy" under AETA, subjecting the e-mailers to electronic surveillance [18 USC Section 2516(1)(c)] and a fine and up to a year in prison. [26]

The law targets animal rights activists, subjecting them to stiffer criminal sanctions than others who commit identical "crimes" not aimed at animal enterprises. AETA's disproportionate penalties exceed the 2005 federal sentencing guidelines, and single out animal activists for negatively disparate treatment, in violation of equal protection guarantees under the Fourteenth Amendment. [27]

The language in AETA is unconstitutionally void for vagueness. The term "animal enterprise" is subject to countless

interpretations, and the word "interfere," which suffers from similarly obfuscatory imprecision, could be used to chill and proscribe undercover investigations and whistle-blowing activities that expose illegal animal enterprises. It may also bar acts of civil disobedience. Under the provisions of this Act, Martin Luther King, Jr. might have been convicted of animal enterprise terrorism if a lunch-counter he sat at lost profits that day. The penalties for nonviolent acts of civil disobedience, such as sitting in front of an office door, are "...a fine or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both." [28]

The threshold of proof for alleged profit loss, the causing of which constitutes animal terrorism under AETA, [29] appears to be nil. Glaringly absent from the Act are provisions for restitution for wrongful arrest or prosecution, loss of reputation, lost wages, attorneys' fees, etc., although anyone wrongfully arrested under the Act risks being humiliated, disgraced, and permanently branded as a terrorist in the court of public opinion. The Act also serves as a predicate for wiretapping animal rights advocates [18 USC Section 2516(1)(c)], as intent to interfere with an animal enterprise appears to be sufficient cause to justify surveillance.

It is not likely that all legitimate protest activities will necessarily be exempted from prosecution under the Act. AETA's vague and overly broad wording would likely subject even lawful protestors to wrongful arrest and prosecution. So thought the ACLU, when in March, 2006, it argued that "...AETA criminalizes First Amendment activities such as demonstrations, leafleting, undercover investigations, and boycotts. The bill is overly broad, vague, and unnecessary..." [30] The Act's boilerplate words assuring constitutional protections are not a panacea, but a Pandora's Box.

Mr. Kohn is entitled to his opinion of AETA, but as Bobby Kennedy once advised, "[w]isdom can only emerge from the clash of contending views," [31] and in that spirit, this alternative assessment of the Act, for all the above-stated reasons, considers Mr. Kohn's dismissal of legitimate concerns regarding AETA to be unwise and naive.

Perhaps Congressman Dennis Kucinich, a Democrat from Ohio, best captured AETA's failings, when he said, "[m]y concern about this bill is that it does nothing to address the real issue of animal protection but, instead targets those advocating animal rights." [32] AETA is an unconstitutional and mean-spirited product of "animal enterprise" lobbying that should be overturned by wise judges serving as "a counter-friction to stop the machine," [33] or repealed by a Congress which passed this bill through a glass darkly, but then came face to face with compassion.

---

\*Adjunct professor who teaches an animal rights seminar at the University of Florida Levin College of Law.

\*\* Executive Director of the Equal Justice Alliance located in Bethesda, Maryland.

[1] Andrew Kohn, *The Animal Terrorism Enterprise Act: A positive for the animal rights movement?*, Vt. J. Env'tl. L., Dec. 14, 2007, <http://www.vjel.org/editorials/2006F/Kohn%20HTML.html>.

[2] The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374 (2006).

[3] Kohn, *supra* note 1.

[4] *Id.*

[5] The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374, Preamble (2006).

[6] U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 2.

[7] Kohn, *supra* note 1.

[8] *Id.* (citing The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374 § 2 (a) (2) (A-B) (2006)). Kohn's quotation of § (a) (2) (A) is not verbatim, as that section of the statute actually states "intentionally damages or causes the loss of any real or personal property... ."

[9] Kohn, *supra* note 1.

[10] Letter from Caroline Fredrickson & Mark Johnson, American Civil Liberties Union, to Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner & Honorable John Coyens, respectively Chair and Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, ACLU Urges Needed Minor Changes to AETA, But Does Not Oppose Bill (Oct. 30, 2006), [http://www.aclu.org/images/general/asset\\_upload\\_file809\\_27356.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/images/general/asset_upload_file809_27356.pdf).

- [11] Kohn, *supra* note 1.
- [12] *Id.*
- [13] *Id.*
- [14] *Id.* (citing The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374 § (d)(3)(B) (2006)).
- [15] *Id.*
- [16] The Library of Congress, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:SN03880:@@@@S>.
- [17] Equal Justice Alliance, <http://noaeta.org/report.htm>.
- [18] Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich, Statement of Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH) on the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, <http://www.greenisthenewred.com/blog/2006/12/01/kucinich-aeta-statement> (posted on Dec. 1, 2006).
- [19] Kohn, *supra* note 1 (quoting The Humane Society of the United States, Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, at [http://www.hsus.org/legislation\\_laws/federal\\_legislation/animals\\_in\\_research/animal\\_enterprise\\_terrorism.html](http://www.hsus.org/legislation_laws/federal_legislation/animals_in_research/animal_enterprise_terrorism.html) (last visited Nov. 30, 2006)).
- [20] Equal Justice Alliance, AETA Opposition List, <http://www.noaeta.org/opposition.htm>.
- [21] Kohn, *supra* note 1.
- [22] *Id.*
- [23] *Id.*
- [24] *Id.*
- [25] *Id.*
- [26] The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374 § 2 (b) (2006).
- [27] U.S. Const. amend. XIV, §2.
- [28] The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374 § 2 (b)(1) (2006).
- [29] The Animal Terrorism and Enterprise Act, Pub. L. No. 109-374 § 2 (d) (3) (A) (2006).
- [30] Letter from Carolin Fredrick & Lisa Graves, American Civil Liberties Union, to Congress, Urging Opposition to the Animal Enterprise Act, S. 1926 and H.R. 4239 (Mar. 3, 2006), *available at* <http://www.aclu.org/freespeech/gen/25620leg20060306.html>. In October 2006, the ACLU inexplicably withdrew its opposition to the Act, although it still recommended several changes in the law. *See* Fredrickson & Johnson, *supra* note 9.
- [31] Robert F. Kennedy, quoted in *Dissent from Poverty-Kennedy: Civil Rights*, The Daily Californian, Oct. 24, 1966.
- [32] Kucinich, *supra* note 15.
- [33] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, 396 (1849).



Article from Oxfam International: [http://www.oxfam.org/en/news/pressreleases2006/pr060629\\_wto\\_geneva](http://www.oxfam.org/en/news/pressreleases2006/pr060629_wto_geneva)  
Published: 29 June 2006

**Oxfam Press Release – 29 June 2006**

## **US seeks “get-out clause” for illegal farm payments**

The US is maneuvering at world trade talks in Geneva this week to insert a special clause in trade negotiations that would make its illegal use of farm subsidies immune from prosecution, international agency Oxfam said today.

The euphemistically named “Peace Clause” is better described as a “get-out clause” or a “license to dump” heavily subsidized farm goods, because it prevents other WTO member countries from challenging the farm subsidies through the WTO dispute settlement process.

Celine Charveriat, head of Oxfam’s Make Trade Fair Campaign, said: “A new Peace Clause would be scandalous. Giving immunity from legal challenges gives the green light to the US and EU to break the rules, leading to market distortions that hurt poor farmers. This is another nail in coffin for development in this Round.

“A new Peace Clause will be a step back for development. The US and EU currently pay at least \$13bn (Oxfam’s [Truth or Consequence Briefing Paper \( /en/policy/briefingpapers/bp81\\_truth \)](/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp81_truth), 2005) worth of illegal subsidies for agriculture. If the Peace Clause were reintroduced, no poor country would be able to take them to the WTO court for this, for possibly up to 10 years.”

Pascal Lamy, director general of the WTO, admitted yesterday that even though the Peace Clause was not part of the Doha Mandate, and isn’t in the framework agreement (or modalities), it is still likely to be included in the final deal. It’s expected that the EU would not oppose any such move and some EU members have already said that they need it in a Doha agreement.

“Members of the WTO, including the EU, should recognize this outrageous goalpost-shifting and stand against the peace clause effort,” said Charveriat. “The Doha Mandate laid out what was, and was not, going to be included in this round of trade talks. You can’t just put something on the table at the last minute that totally undermines what has already been agreed,” said Charveriat.

The US said last week that it needs the Peace Clause to be renewed to protect itself from litigation while it is in the process of reducing its trade-distorting subsidies. But instead of cutting subsidies, its current Doha proposal would actually allow the US to increase its farm support from \$19.7bn (2005 level) to \$22.7bn. Similarly the EU offer would allow it to increase its farm subsidies from \$22.9bn (post CAP estimate) to \$33.1bn.

Oxfam International analysis shows that 38 developing countries are suffering from unfair competition as a result of trade distorting subsidies by the EU and US, including larger countries such as Mexico and Brazil as well as poor countries like Malawi, Mozambique and West African cotton growing countries.

A new “Peace Clause” would protect US cotton subsidies from further challenges and negotiations on a



big reduction in US cotton subsidies are stalled.

“This would mean West African countries could be worse off after a Doha Round than they are now. This is just unbelievable. The EU and US have already shown their willingness to sacrifice this trade round by refusing to address key issues of market access and real subsidy reform,” added Charveriat.

The Peace Clause was introduced at the eleventh hour during the Uruguay Round as a “take-it-or-leave-it” condition for signing a deal. After protecting illegal subsidies for nine years, that Peace Clause elapsed in 2003. While the details of a new Peace Clause are not known it is almost certain that it would block developing countries from taking a raft of new cases to the WTO.

## Contact

For more information, please contact:  
Harriet Binet +44 (0) 7786 110054, or  
Romain Benicchio +41 797979 990

---

© 2007 Oxfam International all rights reserved. [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

Tomdispatch.com is for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of our post-9/11 world and a clear sense of how our imperial globe actually works. Read more about the site's founder and editor [Tom Engelhardt](#) and his [guest authors](#). Click [here](#) to e-mail Tom.

**SIGN UP TODAY**

Tomdispatch is published 3 to 4 times a week. Sign up today to get it delivered to your e-mail inbox.

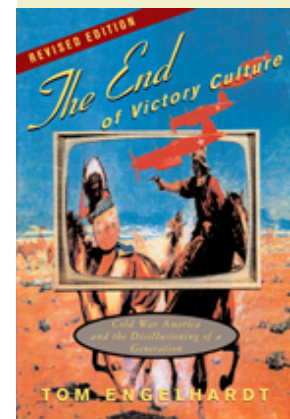
posted September 19, 2006 8:25 pm

## Tomgram: Mike Davis on Manifest Destiny, the Sequel

TOM ENGELHARDT:  
READ THE LATEST

Recently, when the Saudi government announced plans to build a 560-mile electrified fence along its border with Iraq, U.S. officials were angered. According to Yochi J. Dreazen and Philip Shishkin of the *Wall Street Journal* ("Growing Concern: Terrorist Havens in 'Failed States,'" September 13), they "communicated 'unease'" to the Saudis, seeing their decision as a potential "slap in the face of the new Iraqi government." And remember, the people heading across the Saudi border from Iraq are far less likely to be carrying snipping shears and hoes than your basic set of bombs and RPGs.

-  [RSS](#)
-  [Digg](#)
-  [StumbleUpon](#)
-  [Reddit](#)
-  [Yahoo](#)
-  [Google](#)



The End of Victory Culture

[Excerpt \(Updated Preface\)](#)

[Excerpt \(Updated Afterword\)](#)

America Victorious has been our country's postulate since its birth. Tom Engelhardt, with a burning clarity, recounts the end of this fantasy, from the split atom to Vietnam. It begins at our dawn's early light and ends with the twilight's last gleaming. It is as powerful as a Joe Louis jab to the solar plexus.  
--Studs Terkel

Click to read [about this book](#), [author interview](#), [reviews and blurbs](#), or [to buy](#).

Now, tell that to the House of Representatives which [just passed a bill](#) that included support for a 700-mile-long, double-layered fence on the Mexican border. Okay, it won't make it through the Senate and was essentially meant to embarrass the Democrats -- especially in southwestern states -- on the immigration issue as mid-term elections near, and it's not a slap in the face of Iraq, but still...

NEW THIS WEEK  
FROM NATIONBOOKS



**Blood of the Earth**  
THE BATTLED FOR THE WORLD'S VANISHING OIL RESOURCES  
BY DILIP HIRO

Our image of the West was once, "Don't Fence Me In." Of course, that song was written by Cole Porter, who never made it much west of New York City, and was most famously sung by Bing Crosby, son of Tacoma, Washington, resident of Hollywood (both on the west coast but not in the official "West"). So maybe it was all entertainment myth and someone should produce a new all-American song called, "Please Fence Me In."

Let me point out one problem though: Fences don't work if you've got your own plane. As Mike Davis points out below, no one is paying a whit of attention to the reverse immigration crisis in which Orange County Republicans (and other Americans of a certain age) leave their (illegal) Mexican gardeners behind to make sure the weeds don't push the plants out of the old California *hacienda*, and fly down to their property on Mexico's Baja peninsula. They are part of an overflow of largely unnoticed gringos heading south for Mai Tais and retirement. So consider the latest piece from Mike Davis, co-author of a new book, [No One is Illegal](#), actual news about an overlooked reverse immigration crisis. *Tom*

### Border Invaders The Perfect Swarm Heads South

By Mike Davis

The visitor crossing from Tijuana to San Diego these days is immediately slapped in the face by a huge billboard screaming, "Stop the Border Invasion!" Sponsored by allies of the rabidly anti-immigrant vigilante group, the Minutemen, the same truculent slogan reportedly insults the public at other border crossings in Arizona and Texas.

The Minutemen, once caricatured in the press as gun-toting clowns, are now haughty celebrities of grassroots conservatism, dominating AM hate radio as well as the even more hysterical ether of the right-wing blogosphere. In heartland as well as in border states, Republican candidates vie desperately for their endorsement. With the electorate alienated by the dual catastrophes of Baghdad and New Orleans, the Brown Peril has suddenly become the Republican *deus ex machina* for retaining control of Congress in the November elections.

A faltering GOP hegemony, too long sustained by the scraps of 9/11 and the imaginary weaponry of Saddam Hussein, now has a new urgency in its appeal to the suburbs. Not since Kofi Annan conspired to send his black helicopters to terrorize Wyoming, has such a clear-and-present danger threatened the Republic as the sinister armies of would-be busboys and gardeners gathered at the Rio Grande.

To listen to some of these demagogues, one would assume that the Twin Towers had been blown up by followers of the Virgin of Guadalupe or that Spanish had recently been decreed the official language of Connecticut. Having failed to scourge the world of evil by invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, Republicans, supported by some Democrats, now propose that we invade ourselves: sending the Marines and Green Berets, along with the National Guard, into the hostile deserts of California and New Mexico where national sovereignty is supposedly under siege.

As in the past, nativism today is bigotry as surreal caricature, reality stood on its head. The ultimate irony, however, is that there really is something that might be called a "border invasion," but the Minutemen's billboards are on the wrong side of the freeway.

### The Baby-Boomers Head South

What few people -- at least, outside of Mexico -- have bothered to notice is that while all the nannies, cooks, and maids have been heading north to tend the luxury lifestyles of irate Republicans, the Gringo hordes have been rushing south to enjoy glorious budget retirements and affordable second homes under the Mexican sun.

Yes, in former California Governor Pete Wilson's immortal words, "They just keep coming." Over the last decade, the U.S. State Department estimates that the number of Americans living in Mexico has soared from 200,000 to 1 million (or one-quarter of all U.S. expatriates). Remittances from the United States to Mexico have risen dramatically from \$9 billion to \$14.5 billion in just two years. Though initially interpreted as representing a huge spike in illegal workers (who send parts of their salaries across the border to family), it turns out to be mainly money sent by Americans to themselves in order to finance Mexican homes and retirements.

Although some of them are certainly naturalized U.S. citizens returning to

This vivid history of oil--and the way it revolutionized civilian life, war, and world politics--sets the stage for the coming oil wars of the 21st Century.

In a recent edition of Yale Global Online, Dilip Hiro explains why playing the oil card only goes so far in international diplomacy. Read it [here](#).

[Nation Books](#) ▶

## SEARCH

## DISPATCH ARCHIVES

## THINK LINKS

### Websites

[After Downing Street](#)  
[Alternet](#)  
[Antiwar.com](#)  
[Atlantic Free Press](#)  
[Black Agenda Report](#)  
[Buzzflash](#)  
[Commondreams](#)  
[Cursor.org](#)  
[Electronic Iraq](#)  
[Foreign Policy in Focus](#)  
[History News Network](#)  
[Iraq Slogger](#)  
[Juan Cole's Informed Comment](#)  
[Lew Rockwell](#)  
[Open Democracy](#)  
[PEJ](#)  
[The Smirking Chimp](#)  
[Talking Points Memo](#)  
[TomPaine](#)  
[Truthdig](#)  
[Truthout](#)  
[War in Context](#)  
[Working for Change](#)  
[ZNET](#)

### Blogs

[The American Empire Project](#)  
[Barbara's Blog](#)  
[Democrats.com](#)  
[Dahr Jamail's MidEast Dispatches](#)  
[Dan Froomkin's White House Watch](#)  
[Direland](#)  
[The Dreyfuss Report](#)  
[Eric Alterman's Altercation](#)  
[Firedoglake](#)  
[Gristmill Blog](#)  
[Lobelog](#)  
[The Notion at the Nation](#)  
[This Modern World](#)  
[A Tiny Revolution](#)  
[Tony Karon's Rootless Cosmopolitan](#)  
[William Arkin's Early Warning](#)

towns and villages of their birth after lifetimes of toil *al otro lado*, the director-general of FONATUR, the official agency for tourism development in Mexico, recently characterized the typical investors in that country's real estate as American "baby boomers who have paid off in good part their initial mortgage and are coming into inheritance money."

Indeed, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The land rush is occurring at the beginning of a demographic tidal wave. With more than 70 million American baby boomers expected to retire in the next two decades... some experts predict a vast migration to warmer -- and cheaper -- climates. Often such buyers purchase a property 10 to 15 years before retirement, use it as a vacation home, and then eventually move there for most of the year. Developers increasingly are taking advantage of the trend, building gated communities, condominiums, and golf courses."

The extraordinary rise in U.S. Sunbelt property values gives gringos immense economic leverage. Shrewd baby-boomers are not simply feathering nests for eventual retirement, but also increasingly speculating in Mexican resort property, sending up property values to the detriment of locals whose children are consequently driven into slums or forced to emigrate north, only increasing the "invasion" charges. As in Galway, Corsica, or, for that matter, Montana, the global second-home boom is making life in beautiful, natural settings unaffordable for their traditional residents.

Some expatriates are experimenting with exotic places such as the Riviera Maya or Tulum in Quintana Roo, but more prefer such well-established havens as San Miguel de Allende and Puerto Vallarta. Here the *norteamericanos* make themselves at home in more ways than one.

An English-language paper in Puerto Vallarta, for instance, recently applauded the imminent arrival of a new shopping mall that will include Hooters, Burger King, Subway, Chili's and Starbucks. Only Dunkin' Donuts (*con salsa?*), the paper complained, was still missing.

The gringo footprint is largest (and brings the most significant geopolitical consequences) in Baja California, the 1,000-mile long desert appendage to the gridlocked state-nation governed by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Indeed, Baja real-estate websites ooze almost as much hyperbole as those devoted to stalking the phantom menace of illegal immigrants -- just in a far more upbeat tone when it comes to the question of immigrant invasions.

In essence, Alta (Upper) California is beginning to overflow into Baja, an epochal process that, if unchecked, will produce intolerable social marginalization and ecological devastation in Mexico's last true frontier region. All the contradictions of post-industrial California -- runaway land inflation in the coastal zone, sprawling suburban development in interior valleys and deserts, freeway congestion and lack of mass transit, and the astronomical growth of motorized recreation -- dictate the invasion of the gorgeous "empty" peninsula to the south. To use a term from a bad but not irrelevant past, Baja is Anglo California's *Lebensraum*.

Indeed, the first two stages of informal annexation have already occurred. Under the banner of NAFTA, Southern California has exported hundreds of its sweatshops and toxic industries to the *maquiladora* zones of Tijuana and Mexicali. The Pacific Maritime Association, representing the West Coast's major shipping companies, has joined forces with Korean and Japanese

## Foreign

[AlArab Online](#)  
[Agence France Presse](#)  
[Asia Times](#)  
[BBC](#)  
[Foreign Press Review](#)  
[The Guardian](#)  
[Haaretz](#)  
[The Independent](#)  
[Middle East On-Line](#)  
[LeMonde Diplomatique](#)  
[Le Monde Diplomatique \(English Language\)](#)  
[Outlook India](#)  
[Watching America](#)

## Magazines

[American Prospect](#)  
[Bulletin of Atomic Scientists](#)  
[Grist](#)  
[Guernica](#)  
[LA Weekly](#)  
[The London Review of Books](#)  
[Mother Jones](#)  
[The Nation](#)  
[The New York Review of Books](#)  
[Salon.com](#)

## Media Criticism

[Editor and Publisher FAIR](#)  
[Media Matters](#)  
[The News Dissector](#)  
[Neiman Watchdog](#)  
[PressThink](#)  
[Romenesko](#)

## Resources

[Arms Trade Resource Center](#)  
[Defense Tech](#)  
[Global Security.org](#)  
[Jim Lobe's Interpress Archive](#)  
[The National Security Archives](#)  
[Natural Resources Defense Council](#)  
[Noah Schachtman's Danger Room](#)  
[Right Web](#)  
[Secrecy News](#)  
[USC Center on Public Diplomacy](#)  
[Wikipedia](#)

## Comics

[Doonesbury](#)  
[Life During Wartime](#)  
[Tom Tomorrow's This Modern World](#)

## Polling

[Donkey Rising](#)  
[Pollster.com](#)  
[ProfessorPollkatz's Pool of Polls](#)  
[Program on International Policy Attitudes](#)  
[Real Clear Politics](#)  
[Zogby](#)

## Iraq Casualty Figures

[Antiwar.com Casualties Page](#)  
[Antiwar.com Daily Casualty Update](#)  
[Iraq Body Count](#)  
[Iraq Coalition Casualties](#)

## Mainstream Media

[Christian Science Monitor](#)  
[Los Angeles Times](#)  
[Newsweek](#)  
[New York Times](#)  
[Washington Post](#)



corporations to explore the construction of a vast new container port at Punta Colonel, 150 miles south of Tijuana, which would undercut the power of longshore unionism in San Pedro and San Francisco.

Secondly, tens of thousands of gringo retirees and winter-residents are now clustered at both ends of the peninsula. Along the northwest coast from Tijuana to Ensenada, a recent advertisement for a real-estate conference at UCLA boasts that "there are presently over 57 real-estate developments... with over 11,000 homes/condos with an inventory value of over \$3 billion... all of them geared for the U.S. market."

Meanwhile, at the tropical end of Baja, a gilded gringo enclave has emerged in the twenty-mile strip between Cabo San Lucas and San Jose de Cabo. Los Cabos is part of that global archipelago of real-estate hot spots where continuous double-digit increases in property values suck in speculative capital from all over the world. Ordinary gringos can participate in this glamorous Los Cabos real-estate casino through the purchase and resale of fractional time-shares in condominiums and beach homes.

Although Western Canadian and Arizona speculators have taken large bites out of Baja's southern cape, Los Cabos -- at least judging from the registration of private planes at the local airport -- has essentially become a resort suburb of Orange County, the home of the most vehement Minutemen chapters. (Many wealthy Southern Californians evidently see no contradiction between fuming over the "alien invasion" with one's conservative friends at the Newport Marina one day, and flying down to Cabos the next for some sea-kayaking or celebrity golf.)

### **Manifest Destiny, the Sequel?**

The next step in the late-colonization of Baja is the "Escalera Nautica," a \$3 billion "ladder" of marinas and coastal resorts being developed by FONATUR that will open up pristine sections of both Mexican coasts to the yacht club set.

Meanwhile, *The Truman Show* has arrived in the picturesque little city of Loreto on the Gulf side of the peninsula. There, FONATUR has joined forces with an Arizona company and "New Urbanist" architects from Florida to develop the Villages of Loreto Bay: 6,000 homes for expatriates in colonial-Mexico motif on the Sea of Cortez.

The \$3 billion Loreto project boasts that it will be the last word in Green design, exploiting solar power and restricting automobile usage. Yet, at the same time, it will balloon Loreto's population from its current 15,000 to more than 100,000 in a decade, with the social and environmental consequences of a sort that can already be seen in the slum peripheries of Cancun and other mega-resorts.

One of the irresistible attractions of Baja is that it has preserved a primordial wildness that has disappeared elsewhere in the West. Local residents, including a very eloquent indigenous environmental movement, cherish this incomparable landscape as they do the survival of an egalitarian ethos in the peninsula's small towns and fishing villages.

Thanks to the silent invasion of the baby-boomers from the north, however, much of the natural history and frontier culture of Baja could be swept away in the next generation. One of the world's most magnificent wild

### **Tom Engelhardt's articles from around the web**

[Why the US Military Loves Ron Paul](#)  
July 23, 2007, [The Nation website](#)

[Order 17](#)  
September 24, 2007, [The Nation website](#)

[We Count, They Don't](#)  
October 4, 2007, [The Nation website](#)

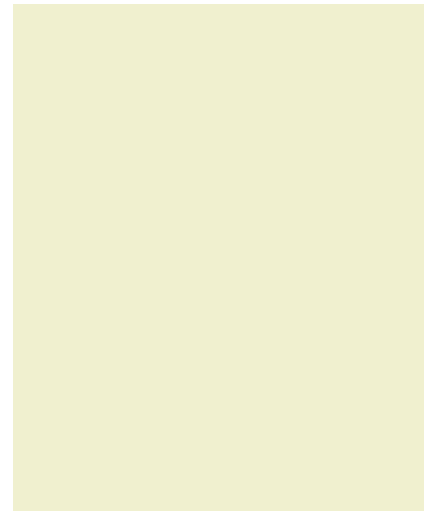
[Medal Inflation](#)  
October 9, 2007, [The Nation website..](#)

coastlines could be turned into generic tourist sprawl, waiting for Dunkin' Donuts to open. Locals, accordingly, have every reason to fear that today's mega-resorts and mock-colonial suburbs, like FONATUR's entire tourism-centered strategy of regional development, are merely the latest Trojan horses of Manifest Destiny.


*Mike Davis is the author, most recently, of [Planet of Slums](#) (Verso 2006), and, with Justin Chacon Akers, [No One is Illegal](#) (Haymarket 2006). His history of the car bomb -- **Buda Wagon's** -- which grew out of a two-part Tomdispatch article, will be published by Verso early next year.*

Copyright 2006 Mike Davis

[E-mail to a Friend](#) | [Printer-Friendly Version](#)




- ▣ home
- ▣ music & nightlife
- ▣ movies
- ▣ the arts
- ▣ restaurants
- ▣ classifieds
- ▣ columns
- ▣ news & features
  - ▣ SONOMA / NAPA / MARIN
  - ▣ SILICON VALLEY
  - ▣ SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
- ▣ the papers
- ▣ advertise
- ▣ about us
- ▣ contact



WE BUY YOUR USED CD'S

DVD'S LP'S VIDEO GAMES

WE PAY THE MOST CASH!



## news

JANUARY 24-30, 2007

[home](#) | [metro silicon valley index](#) | [news](#) | [silicon valley](#) | [news article](#)

### Senator Feinstein's Iraq Conflict

As a member of the Military Construction Appropriations subcommittee, Sen. Feinstein voted for appropriations worth billions to her husband's firms



By Peter Byrne

IN THE November 2006 election, the voters demanded congressional ethics reform. And so, the newly appointed chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is now duly in charge of regulating the ethical behavior of her colleagues. But for many years, Feinstein has been beset by her own ethical conflict of interest, say congressional ethics experts.

As chairperson and ranking member of the Military Construction Appropriations subcommittee (MILCON) from 2001 through the end of 2005, Feinstein supervised the appropriation of billions of dollars a year for specific military construction projects. Two defense contractors whose interests were largely controlled by her husband, financier Richard C. Blum, benefited from decisions made by Feinstein as leader of this powerful subcommittee.

Each year, MILCON's members decide which military construction projects will be funded from a roster proposed by the Department of Defense. Contracts to build these specific projects are subsequently awarded to such major defense contractors as Halliburton, Fluor, Parsons, Louis Berger, URS Corporation and Perini Corporation. From 1997 through the end of 2005, with Feinstein's knowledge, Blum was a majority owner of both URS Corp. and Perini Corp.

While setting MILCON agendas for many years, Feinstein, 73, supervised her own staff of military construction experts as they carefully examined the details of each proposal. She lobbied Pentagon officials in public hearings to support defense projects that she favored, some of which already were or subsequently became URS or Perini contracts. From 2001 to 2005, URS earned \$792 million from military construction and environmental cleanup projects approved by MILCON; Perini earned \$759 million from such MILCON projects.

In her annual Public Financial Disclosure Reports, Feinstein records a sizeable family income from large investments in Perini, which is based in Framingham, Mass., and in URS, headquartered in San Francisco. But she has not publicly acknowledged the conflict of interest between her job as a congressional proprietor and her husband's longtime control of Perini and URS—and that omission has called her ethical standards into question, say the experts.

### Insider Information

The tale thickens with the appearance of Michael R. Klein, a top legal adviser to Feinstein and a long-time business partner of Blum's. The vice-chairman of Perini's board of directors, Klein was a partner in Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, a powerful law firm with close ties to the Democratic Party, for nearly 30 years. Klein and Blum co-own ASTAR Air Cargo, which has military contracts in Iraq and at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Klein also sits on the board of SRA International, a large defense contractor.

In an interview with this reporter in September, Klein stated that, beginning in 1997, he routinely informed Feinstein about specific federal projects coming before her in which Perini had a stake. The insider information, Klein said, was intended to help the senator

**silicon valley**

Ads by Google

#### ["Barack Obama Exposed"](#)

A Free special report on the real Barack Obama - get your copy today!

[www.HumanEvents.com](http://www.HumanEvents.com)

#### [Open Military Contracts](#)

DOD & federal - no state or local Try it for Free

[www.bidlink.net](http://www.bidlink.net)

#### [The Armenian Genocide](#)

Eyewitness testimonies, photos, ABC news reports.

[www.theforgotten.org](http://www.theforgotten.org)

#### [EADOC](#)

Simplifying construction management for owners and CM's

[www.eadocsoftware.com](http://www.eadocsoftware.com)

avoid conflicts of interest. Although Klein's startling admission was intended to defuse the issue of Feinstein's conflict of interest, it had the effect of exacerbating it.

Klein said that he regularly gave Feinstein's chief of staff, Mark Kadesh, lists of Perini's current and upcoming contractual interests in federal legislation, so that the senator would not discuss, debate, vote on or participate in matters that could affect projects in which Perini was concerned.

"Earmarks, you know, set asides, you name it, there was a system in place which on a regular basis I got notified, I notified her office and her office notified her," Klein said.

"We basically identified any bid that Perini was going for and checked to see whether it was the subject of already appropriated funds or funds yet to be appropriated, and if it was anything that the senator could not act on, her office was alerted and she did not act on it."

This is an extraordinary thing for Klein and the senator to do, since the detailed project proposals that the Pentagon sent to Feinstein's subcommittee for review do not usually name the firms already contracted to perform specific projects. Nor do defense officials typically identify, in MILCON hearings, which military construction contractors were eligible to bid on upcoming work.

In theory, Feinstein would not know the identity of any of the companies that stood to contractually benefit from her approval of specific items in the military construction budget —until Klein told her.

Klein explained, "They would get from me a notice that Perini was bidding on a contract that would be affected as we understood it by potential legislation that would come before either the full Congress or any committee that she was a member of. And she would as a result of that not act, abstain from dealing with those pieces of legislation."

However, the public record shows that contrary to Klein's belief, Feinstein did act on legislation that affected Perini and URS.

According to Klein, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics ruled, in secret, that Feinstein did not have a conflict of interest with Perini because, due to the existence of the bid and project lists provided by Klein, she knew when to recuse herself. Klein says that after URS declined to participate in his conflict of interest prevention plan, the ethics committee ruled that Feinstein could act on matters that affected URS, because she did not have a list of URS' needs. That these confidential rulings are contradictory is obvious and calls for explanation.

Klein declined to produce copies of the Perini project lists that he transmitted to Feinstein. And neither he nor Feinstein would furnish copies of the ethics committee rulings, nor examples of the senator recusing herself from acting on legislation that affected Perini or URS. But the Congressional Record shows that as chairwoman and a ranking member of MILCON, Feinstein was often involved in supervising the legislative details of military construction projects that directly affected Blum's defense contracting firms.

After reviewing the results of this investigation, Wendell Rawls, executive director of the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C., observes that by giving Feinstein notice of Perini's business objectives, Klein achieved the opposite of preventing a conflict of interest.

Rawls comments, "Sen. Feinstein has had a serious conflict of interest, a serious insensitivity to ethical considerations. The very least she should have done is to recuse herself from having conversations, debates, voting or any other kind of legislative activity that involved either Perini Corporation or URS Corporation or any other business activity where her husband's financial interests were involved.

"I cannot understand how someone who complains so vigorously as she has about conflicts of interest in the government and Congress can have turned such a deaf ear and a blind eye to her own. Because of her level of influence, the conflict of interest is just as serious as the Halliburton-Cheney connection."

## Called Into Question

Here are a few examples from the Congressional Record of questionable intersections between Feinstein's legislative duties and her financial interests:

- At a MILCON hearing in 2001, Feinstein interrogated defense officials about the details of constructing specific missile defense systems, which included upgrading the early warning radar system at Cobra Dane radar on Shemya Island, Alaska. In 2003, Perini reported that it had completed a contract to upgrade the Cobra Dane radar system. It has done similar work at Beale Air Force Base in California and in the United Kingdom. URS also bids on missile defense work.
- In the 2002 MILCON hearings, Feinstein questioned an official about details of the U.S. Army's chemical demilitarization program. URS is extensively involved in performing chemical demilitarization work at key disposal sites in the United States.
- At that same hearing, Feinstein asked about the possibility of increasing funding for anti-terrorism-force protection at Army bases. The following year, on March 4, 2003, Feinstein asked why the anti-terrorism-force protection funds she had advocated for the year before had not yet been spent. On April 21, 2003, URS announced the award of a \$600 million contract to provide, among other services, anti-terrorism-force protection for U.S. Army installations.
- Beginning in 2003, both Perini and URS were awarded a series of open-ended contracts for military construction work around the world, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. Under Feinstein's leadership, MILCON regularly approved specific project "task orders" that were

issued to Perini and URS under these contracts.

- At a March 30, 2004, MILCON hearing, Feinstein grilled Maj. Gen. Dean Fox about whether or not the Pentagon intended to prioritize funding the construction of "beddown" maintenance facilities for its new airlifter, the C-17 Globemaster. After being reassured by Fox that these funds would soon be flowing, Feinstein said, "Good, that's what I really wanted to hear. Thank you very much. Appreciate it very much, General." Two years later, URS announced a \$42 million award to build a beddown maintenance facility for the C-17 at Hickam Air Base in Hawaii as part of a multibillion dollar contract with the Air Force. Under Feinstein's leadership, MILCON approved the Hickam project.
- In mid-2005, MILCON approved a Pentagon proposal to fund "overhead coverage force protection" in Iraq that would reinforce the roofs of U.S. Army barracks to better withstand mortar rounds. On Oct. 13, 2005, Perini announced the award of a \$185 million contract to provide overhead coverage force protection to the Army in Iraq.
- In the 2005 MILCON hearings, Feinstein earmarked MILCON legislation with \$25 million to increase environmental remediation at closed military bases. Year after year, Feinstein has closely overseen the environmental cleanup and redevelopment of McClellan Air Force Base near Sacramento, frequently requesting that officials add tens of millions of dollars to that project. URS and its joint ventures have earned tens of millions of dollars cleaning up McClellan. And CB Richard Ellis, a real estate company headed by Feinstein's husband Richard Blum, is involved in redeveloping McClellan for the private sector.

This investigation examined thousands of pages of documents, including transcripts of congressional hearings, U.S. Security and Exchange Commission filings, government audits and reports, federal procurement data and corporate press releases. The findings were shared with contracting and ethics experts at several nonpartisan, Washington, D.C.-based government oversight groups. Danielle Brian, executive director of the Project on Government Oversight, a nonprofit organization that analyzes defense contracts and who examined our evidence says, "The paper trail showing Sen. Feinstein's conflict of interest is irrefutable."

On the face of it, there is nothing objectionable about a senator closely examining proposed appropriations or advocating for missile defense or advancing the cleanup of a toxic military base. Blum profitably divested himself of ownership of both URS and Perini in 2005, ameliorating the conflict of interest. But Feinstein's ethical dilemma arose from the fact that, for five years, the interests of Perini and URS and CB Richard Ellis were inextricably entwined with her leadership of MILCON, which last year approved \$16.2 billion for military construction projects.

Melanie Sloan, executive director of Citizens for Responsible Ethics in Washington, remarks, "There are a number of members of Congress with conflicts of interest. [California Republican Congressman John T.] Doolittle, for example, hired his wife as a fundraiser, and she skimmed 15 percent off of all campaign contributions. Others, like [former] Speaker [Dennis] Hastert and Cong. [Ken] Calvert, were earmarking federal money for roads to enhance the value of property held by their families.

"But because of the amount of money involved," Sloan continues, "Feinstein's conflict of interest is an order of magnitude greater than those conflicts."

## Family Matters

Californians elected San Francisco's former Mayor Dianne Feinstein to the Senate in 1992. She was overwhelmingly re-elected in November 2006. She is well liked by both liberals and conservatives. She supports abortion rights and gun control laws. She politicized this year for renewal of the Patriot Act and sponsored a constitutional amendment to ban American flag burning. She is currently calling for President Bush to set a timetable for withdrawing troops from Iraq, but she strongly supported the invasions, occupations and "reconstructions" of both Iraq and Afghanistan. She sits on the Defense Appropriations subcommittee and the Senate Intelligence Committee, and she is a consistent hawk on matters military.

And she is wealthy. In 2005, *Roll Call* calculated Feinstein's wealth, including Blum's assets, at \$40 million, up 25 percent from the year before. That made her the ninth wealthiest member of Congress. Feinstein's latest Public Financial Disclosure Report shows that in 2005 her family earned income of between \$500,000 and \$5 million from capital gains on URS and Perini stock combined. From CB Richard Ellis, Blum earned between \$1.3 million to \$4 million. (The report allows for disclosure of dollar amounts within ranges, which accounts for the wide variance.)

A talented financier and deal-broker, Blum, 70, presides over a global investment empire through a labyrinth of private equity partnerships. His flagship entity is a merchant banking firm, Blum Capital Partners, L.P., of which he is the chairman and general partner. Through this bank, Blum bought a controlling share of Perini in 1997, when it was nearly broke. He named his close associate, the attorney Michael R. Klein, to represent his interest on the board of directors. Blum declined to comment for this story. Perini CEO Robert Band deferred to Klein for comment.

In 2000, according to public records, Perini—which partly specializes in erecting casinos—earned a mere \$7 million from federal contracts. Post-9/11, Perini transformed into a major defense contractor. In 2004, the company earned \$444 million for military construction work in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for improving airfields for the U.S. Air Force in Europe and building base infrastructures for the U.S. Navy around the globe. In a remarkable financial recovery, Perini shot from near penury in 1997 to logging gross revenues of \$1.7 billion in 2005.

In December 2005, Perini publicly identified one of its main business competitors as Halliburton. The company attributed its growing profitability, in large part, to its Halliburton-like military construction contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the company



warned investors that if Congress slammed the brakes on war and occupation in the Middle East, Perini's stock could plummet.

According to Klein and to public records, Blum's firm originally paid \$4 a share for a controlling interest in Perini's common stock. After a series of complicated stock transactions, Blum ended up owning 13 percent of the company, a majority interest. In mid- and late 2005, Blum and his firm took their profits by selling about 3 million Perini shares for \$23.75 per share, according to Klein and reports filed with the SEC. Klein says Blum personally owned 100,000 of the vastly appreciated shares when they were sold. Shortly thereafter, Feinstein began calling for winding down the Iraq war while urging that the "global war on terror" continue indefinitely.

## Perini's Payday

It is estimated that Perini now holds at least \$2.5 billion worth of contracts tied to the worldwide expansion of American militarism. Its largest Department of Defense contracts are "indefinite delivery-indefinite quantity" or "bundled" contracts carrying guaranteed profit margins. As is all too common, competitive bidding was minimal or nonexistent for many of these contracts.

In June, U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, released a report by the House Committee on Government Reform criticizing the Pentagon's growing use of bundled contracts. Waxman complained that these contracts give companies an incentive to increase costs. One of the "problem contracts" identified by Waxman was a no-bid, \$500 million contract held by Perini to reconstruct southern Iraq's electrical grid.

In fact, bundled military construction contracts fueled Perini's transformation from casino builder to major war contractor. As of May 2006, Perini held a series of bundled contracts awarded by the Army Corps of Engineers for work in the Middle East worth \$1.725 billion. Perini has also been awarded an open-ended contract by the U.S. Air Force for military construction and cleaning the environment at closed military bases. Perini shares that \$15 billion award with several other firms, including URS.

Perini regularly performs military construction jobs from Afghanistan to Alaska. It built a biological warfare laboratory for the Navy in Virginia. It built fuel tanks and pipelines for the Navy in North Africa. Details of these projects are typically examined and approved or disapproved by MILCON.

At a 2001 MILCON hearing, Feinstein, attending to a small item, told Maj. Gen. Earnest O. Robbins that she would appreciate receiving an engineering assessment on plans to build a missile transport bridge at Vandenberg Air Force Base. He said he would give it to her. She also asked for and received a list of unfunded construction projects, which prioritize military construction wish lists down to the level of thousand-dollar light fixtures. While there is no evidence to point to nefarious intent behind Feinstein's request for these details, it is worth noting that Perini and URS have open-ended contracts to perform military construction for the Air Force. The senator could have chosen to serve on a subcommittee where she had no potential conflict of interests at all.

In 2003 hearings, MILCON approved various construction projects at sites where Perini and/or URS are contracted to perform engineering and military construction work. The sites included: Camp Lejeune; the Underwater Systems Lab in Newport, R.I.; Hill Air Force Base, Utah; the Naval facilities at Dahlgren, Va.; projects at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Ind., and Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico; and military bases in Guam, Diego Garcia and Crete.

There are some serious problems with Perini's work in Iraq. In June 2004, the Government Accountability Office reported that Perini's electrical reconstruction contract in southern Iraq suffered from mismanagement and lack of competition. In 2006, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction found that Perini was paid to construct multimillion-dollar electrical substations in the desert that could not be connected to the electrical grid. And the company was billing the government for purchasing and subcontracting costs that were not justified, according to the Defense Contract Audit Agency. An October 2005 audit by the Defense Department's Inspector General criticized the execution of Perini's cost-plus military construction work in Afghanistan, saying, "The contractor had an incentive to increase costs, because higher costs resulted in higher profit."

## URS and McClellan

URS dwarfs Perini. With more than 100 subsidiaries, it employs nearly 30,000 engineers and workers worldwide. The firm's largest customer is the U.S. Army, from which it booked \$791 million in work in 2005 out of a total revenue of \$3.9 billion.

URS is not just a construction company; it also develops and maintains advanced weapons systems. In 2002, URS purchased weaponry firm EG&G Technical Services from the Carlyle Group, in which former President George H.W. Bush was a principal. But as profitable as its arms dealing division is, URS reports that its growth sectors are military construction, homeland security and environmental services for military sites under existing Defense Department contracts.

According to a database of federal procurement records made available for this investigation by Eagle Eye Publishers of Fairfax, Va., URS's military construction work in 2000 earned it a mere \$24 million. The next year, when Feinstein took over as MILCON chair, military construction earned URS \$185 million. On top of that, the company's architectural and engineering revenue from military construction projects grew from \$108,726 in 2000 to \$142 million in 2001, more than a thousandfold increase in a single year.

As Congress gave the Bush administration the green light on military spending after 9/11, the value of Blum's investment in URS skyrocketed. Between 2003 and 2005, URS' share price

doubled. In late 2005, Blum resigned from the URS board of directors, after 30 years as a member. Simultaneously, he sold 5.5 million URS shares, worth about \$220 million at market price.

The Congressional Record shows that in year after year of MILCON hearings, Feinstein successfully lobbied defense officials to increase the budget for military base cleanup and redevelopment, especially at the decommissioned McClellan Air Force Base. The detoxification of McClellan is a plum job: it is estimated to cost \$1.3 billion and take many years to complete. There is, of course, nothing unusual about a senator advocating for projects that improve environmental health, particularly when the project is in her home state; and the Pentagon is notoriously lax about cleaning up its Superfund sites.

It turns out, though, that URS specializes in environmental consulting and engineering work at military installations. It holds a \$69 million contract to manage the cleanup of Hill Air Force Base in Utah, which was awarded in 2004. It has a \$320 million contract to remediate pollution at U.S. Army bases in the United States and the Caribbean, which was awarded in 2005. And from 2000 to 2005, URS and its partners were paid \$204 million for work at McClellan Air Force Base, according to Eagle Eye.

At a MILCON hearing in 2001, Feinstein cited the environmental work at McClellan as needing more money. "That is a base that I am very familiar with, and I am glad that we were able to provide that funding so that work at McClellan can proceed," she said. Feinstein then asked for and received detailed information concerning the Pentagon's projected schedule to finish the McClellan cleanup and the effect of delaying cleanup upon its potential for commercial reuse.

At a MILCON hearing in March 2002, Chairwoman Feinstein interrogated Assistant Secretary of Defense Nelson F. Gibbs:

**Sen. Feinstein:** Is the Air Force capable of executing greater [cleanup] funding in 2003 at McClellan?

**Mr. Gibbs:** Yes, ma'am.

**Feinstein:** And how much would that be? How about \$22 million?

**Gibbs:** That would be very close. That would be almost exact as a matter of fact. ... If you would like, I can provide for you a list of those individual projects.

**Feinstein:** I would. If you would not mind. Thank you very much.

The next week, Gibbs sent Feinstein a memo showing the addition of \$23 million to the McClellan environmental budget, mostly for groundwater remediation, URS' specialty.

In the 2003 MILCON hearings, Feinstein told Dov S. Zakheim, then the Defense Department comptroller, that she "was really struck by the hit that environmental remediation [at McClellan Air Force Base] took. ... However, I have just [received] a list from the Air Force of what they could use to clean up ... McClellan, and one other base, and it is 64 million additional dollars this year."

Dr. Zakheim replied, "Well, let me first say that I remember your concern last year, and I am glad that we took care of [McClellan]. That is important."

Feinstein remarked that the Pentagon had already spent \$7 billion on environmental cleanup of closed bases, and that another \$3.5 billion should be immediately allocated so that the clean bases can be transferred to the private sector. Demonstrating her grasp of technical details, she remarked, "I am particularly concerned with the dilapidated condition of the sewer line at McClellan that continues to impede significant economic redevelopment of the base."

That is where CB Richard Ellis comes in.

The real estate firm is politically well-connected. Sen. Feinstein's husband chairs the board of directors. Bill Clinton's secretary of commerce, Michael Kantor, joined in 2004. Former Senate Majority Leader Thomas A. Daschle signed on in 2005. The firm specializes in consulting with local governments and developers from California to Puerto Rico on how best to redevelop cleaned-up military bases. It also brokers the sale and lease of redeveloped base lands to the private sector. Since Blum took over CB Richard Ellis, for example, the company has closed deals leasing tens of thousands of square feet of commercial space on cleaned-up portions of McClellan to private developers.

In a 2003 MILCON hearing, Sacramento County redevelopment official Robert B. Leonard told Feinstein, "We wanted to express our appreciation for your efforts over the last year in supporting our needs at McClellan." During the five years that Feinstein led the subcommittee, support for the McClellan cleanup and the redevelopment deals were particular focuses of her attention.

URS declined to comment for this story. The sole comment that Feinstein's office made in response to a series of written questions about facts in this story is that "Sen. Feinstein has never had any knowledge nor has she exercised any influence on the award of environmental cleanup contracts under the jurisdiction of the Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee."

## Let the Sunlight In

Last week, the Senate voted to close some significant loopholes in its ethics rules. But it stopped short of creating an office of public integrity, which would independently monitor lobbyists and members of Congress for ethical compliance. Setting her own limits on the extent of reform she will countenance, Feinstein says she is opposed to the creation of an independent congressional ethics watchdog. "If the law is clear and precise, members will follow it," she assured *The New York Times* on Nov. 18, 2006.

The problem with the existing rules governing congressional ethics is that they are neither clear nor precise, and neither are they effective. Senate rules governing conflicts of interest are so vaguely worded, say government watchdogs, that short of stashing cash bribes in the refrigerator, the line between serving constituents and serving oneself is often blurred. The public record shows that Feinstein has a history of crossing that blurry line.

Charles Tiefer is a professor of law specializing in legislation and government contracting at the University of Baltimore in Maryland. He served as solicitor and deputy counsel to the House of Representatives for 11 years. He has taught at Yale Law School and written books on congressional procedures and separation of powers. Tiefer observes that, unlike the executive and judiciary branches of government, Congress does not have enforceable conflict of interest rules. It is up to Sen. Feinstein's constituents, Tiefer says, to decide if she has a conflict of interest and to take whatever action they want. To make that possible, Feinstein should have publicly disclosed the details of her family investments in Perini, URS and CB Richard Ellis as they related to her actions on MILCON. Tiefer avers that when Klein gave Feinstein lists of Perini's interests, he worsened her conflict of interest.

"The senator should, at a minimum, have posted Klein's lists on her Senate website, so that the press and the public would be warned of her potential conflicts," Tiefer says, noting that she should also make public her correspondence with the Senate Ethics Committee.

As the arbiter of Senate rules on ethics, it is incumbent on Feinstein to provide the public with an explanation of why she did not recuse herself from acting on MILCON details that served her financial interests, and why she failed to resign from the subcommittee after she recognized the potential for conflicts of interest, which, unfortunately, materialized in an obvious way and over a long period of time.

*Research assistance for this story was provided by the Investigative Fund of the Nation Institute.*

[Send a letter](#) to the editor about this story.

---

 [SAVE THIS](#)  [EMAIL THIS](#)  [PRINT THIS](#)  [MOST POPULAR](#)  [RSS FEEDS](#)

December 10, 2007

## "Wiped Off The Map" - The Rumor of the Century

by Arash Norouzi

Global Research, January 20, 2007

[The Mossadegh Project](#)

 [Email this article to a friend](#)

 [Print this article](#)

Across the world, a dangerous rumor has spread that could have catastrophic implications. According to legend, Iran's President has threatened to destroy Israel, or, to quote the misquote, "Israel must be wiped off the map". Contrary to popular belief, this statement was never made, as the following article will prove.

### BACKGROUND:

On Tuesday, October 25th, 2005 at the Ministry of Interior conference hall in [Tehran](#), newly elected Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivered a speech at a program, reportedly attended by thousands, titled "The World Without Zionism". Large posters surrounding him displayed this title prominently in English, obviously for the benefit of the international press. Below the poster's title was a slick graphic depicting an hour glass containing planet Earth at its top. Two small round orbs representing the [United States](#) and Israel are shown falling through the hour glass' narrow neck and crashing to the bottom.

Before we get to the infamous remark, it's important to note that the "quote" in question was itself a quote— they are the words of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, the father of the Islamic Revolution. Although he quoted Khomeini to affirm his own position on Zionism, the actual words belong to *Khomeini* and not Ahmadinejad. Thus, Ahmadinejad has essentially been credited (or blamed) for a quote that is not only unoriginal, but represents a viewpoint already in place well before he ever took office.

### THE ACTUAL QUOTE:

So what did Ahmadinejad actually say? To quote his exact words in farsi:

**"Imam ghoft een rezhim-e ishghalgar-e qods bayad az safheh-ye ruzgar mahv shavad."**

That passage will mean nothing to most people, but one word might ring a bell: *rezhim-e*. It is the word "Regime", pronounced just like the English word with an extra "eh" sound at the end. Ahmadinejad did not refer to Israel the country or Israel the land mass, but the Israeli *regime*. This is a vastly significant distinction, as one cannot wipe a *regime* off the map. Ahmadinejad does not even refer to Israel by name, he instead uses the specific phrase "rezhim-e ishghalgar-e qods" (regime occupying Jerusalem).

So this raises the question.. what exactly did he want "wiped from the map"? The answer is: *nothing*. That's because the word "map" was never used. The Persian word for map, "nagsheh", is not contained anywhere in his original farsi quote, or, for that matter, anywhere in his entire speech. Nor was the western phrase "wipe out" ever said. Yet we are led to believe that Iran's President threatened to "wipe Israel off the map", despite



[Home Page](#)

[Latest News/Top Stories](#)

[USA](#)

[Canada](#)

[Latin America & Caribbean](#)

[Europe](#)

[sub-Saharan Africa](#)

[Russia and FSU](#)

[Middle East](#)

[Oceania](#)

[South & East Asia](#)

[US War Agenda](#)

[Global Economy](#)

[Crimes against Humanity](#)

[Environment](#)

[Biotechnology and GMO](#)

[Military and WMD](#)

[Oil and Energy](#)

[Police State](#)

[Women's Rights](#)

[9/11 & 'War on Terrorism'](#)

[Media Disinformation](#)

[Politics and Religion](#)

[United Nations](#)

[Law and Justice](#)

[Science and Medicine](#)

[Intelligence](#)

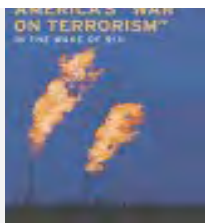
Search

[Archives](#)

[Author Index](#)

 [Global Research RSS Feed](#)

[America's "War on](#)



by Michel Chossudovsky  
also available in pdf format

### Seeds of Destruction



by F. William Engdahl

### The Globalization of Poverty



by Michel Chossudovsky  
now available in pdf format

### Celsius 911 World Takeover & the War of Terror



Produced by  
Jeremy Wright

never having uttered the words "map", "wipe out" or even "Israel".

### THE PROOF:

The full quote translated directly to English:

**"The Imam said this regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time".**

Word by word translation:

Imam (Khomeini) ghoft (said) een (this) rezhim-e (regime) ishghalgar-e (occupying) gods (Jerusalem) bayad (must) az safheh-ye ruzgar (from page of time) mahv shavad (vanish from).

Here is the full transcript of the speech in farsi, archived on Ahmadinejad's web site

[www.president.ir/farsi/ahmadinejad/speeches/1384/aban-84/840804sahyonizm.htm](http://www.president.ir/farsi/ahmadinejad/speeches/1384/aban-84/840804sahyonizm.htm)

### THE SPEECH AND CONTEXT:

While the false "wiped off the map" extract has been repeated infinitely without verification, Ahmadinejad's actual speech itself has been almost entirely ignored. Given the importance placed on the "map" comment, it would be sensible to present his words in their full context to get a fuller understanding of his position. In fact, by looking at the entire speech, there is a clear, logical trajectory leading up to his call for a "world without Zionism". One may disagree with his reasoning, but critical appraisals are infeasible without first knowing what that reasoning is.

In his speech, Ahmadinejad declares that Zionism is the West's apparatus of political oppression against Muslims. He says the "Zionist regime" was imposed on the Islamic world as a strategic bridgehead to ensure domination of the region and its assets. Palestine, he insists, is the frontline of the Islamic world's struggle with American hegemony, and its fate will have repercussions for the entire Middle East.

Ahmadinejad acknowledges that the removal of America's powerful grip on the region via the Zionists may seem unimaginable to some, but reminds the audience that, as Khomeini predicted, other seemingly invincible empires have disappeared and now only exist in history books. He then proceeds to list three such regimes that have collapsed, crumbled or vanished, all within the last 30 years:

- (1) The Shah of Iran- the U.S. installed monarch
- (2) The Soviet Union
- (3) Iran's former arch-enemy, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein

In the first and third examples, Ahmadinejad prefaces their mention with Khomeini's own words foretelling that individual regime's demise. He concludes by referring to Khomeini's unfulfilled wish: **"The Imam said this regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time. This statement is very wise"**. This is the passage that has been isolated, twisted and distorted so famously. By measure of comparison, Ahmadinejad would seem to be calling for *regime change*, not war.

### THE ORIGIN:

One may wonder: where did this false interpretation originate? Who is responsible for the translation that has sparked such worldwide controversy? The answer is surprising.



The inflammatory "wiped off the map" quote was first disseminated not by Iran's enemies, but by Iran itself. The Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran's official propaganda arm, used this phrasing in the English version of some of their news releases covering the World Without Zionism conference. International media including the BBC, Al Jazeera, Time magazine and countless others picked up the IRNA quote and made headlines out of it without verifying its accuracy, and rarely referring to the source. Iran's Foreign Minister soon attempted to clarify the statement, but the quote had a life of its own. Though the IRNA wording was inaccurate and misleading, the media assumed it was true, and besides, it made great copy.

Amid heated wrangling over Iran's nuclear program, and months of continuous, unfounded accusations against Iran in an attempt to rally support for preemptive strikes against the country, the imperialists had just been handed the perfect *raison d'être* to invade. To the war hawks, it was a gift from the skies.

It should be noted that in other references to the conference, the IRNA's translation changed. For instance, "map" was replaced with "earth". In some articles it was "The Qods occupier regime should be eliminated from the surface of earth", or the similar "The Qods occupying regime **must** be eliminated from the surface of earth". The inconsistency of the IRNA's translation should be evidence enough of the unreliability of the source, particularly when transcribing their news from Farsi into the English language.

### THE REACTION:

The mistranslated "wiped off the map" quote attributed to Iran's President has been spread worldwide, repeated thousands of times in international media, and prompted the denouncements of numerous world leaders. Virtually every major and minor media outlet has published or broadcast this false statement to the masses. Big news agencies such as The Associated Press and Reuters refer to the misquote, literally, on an almost daily basis.

Following news of Iran's remark, condemnation was swift. British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed "revulsion" and implied that it might be necessary to attack Iran. U.N. chief Kofi Annan cancelled his scheduled trip to Iran due to the controversy. Ariel Sharon demanded that Iran be expelled from the United Nations for calling for Israel's destruction. Shimon Peres, more than once, threatened to wipe Iran off the map. More recently, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, who has warned that Iran is "preparing another holocaust for the Jewish state" is calling for Ahmadinejad to be tried for war crimes for inciting genocide.

The artificial quote has also been subject to additional alterations. U.S. officials and media often take the liberty of dropping the "map" reference altogether, replacing it with the more acutely threatening phrase "wipe Israel off the face of the earth". Newspaper and magazine articles dutifully report Ahmadinejad has "called for the destruction of Israel", as do senior officials in the United States government.

President George W. Bush said the comments represented a "specific threat" to destroy Israel. In a March 2006 speech in Cleveland, Bush vowed he would resort to war to protect Israel from Iran, because, ".the threat from Iran is, of course, their stated objective to destroy our strong ally Israel." Former Presidential advisor Richard Clarke told Australian TV that Iran "talks openly about destroying Israel", and insists, "The President of Iran has said repeatedly that he wants to wipe Israel off the face of the earth". In an October 2006 interview with Amy Goodman, former UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter referred to Ahmadinejad as "the idiot that comes out and says really stupid, vile things, such as, 'It is the goal of Iran to wipe Israel off the face of the earth' ". The consensus is clear.

Confusing matters further, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pontificates rather than give a direct answer when questioned about the statement, such as in Lally Weymouth's Washington Post [interview](#) in September 2006:

**Are you really serious when you say that Israel should be wiped off the face of the Earth?**

We need to look at the scene in the [Middle East](#) — 60 years of war, 60 years of displacement, 60 years of conflict, not even a day of peace. Look at the war in [Lebanon](#), the war in [Gaza](#) — what are the reasons for these conditions? We need to address and resolve the root problem.

### **Your suggestion is to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth?**

Our suggestion is very clear:... Let the Palestinian people decide their fate in a free and fair referendum, and the result, whatever it is, should be accepted.... The people with no roots there are now ruling the land.

### **You've been quoted as saying that Israel should be wiped off the face of the Earth. Is that your belief?**

What I have said has made my position clear. If we look at a map of the [Middle East](#) from 70 years ago...

### **So, the answer is yes, you do believe that it should be wiped off the face of the Earth?**

Are you asking me yes or no? Is this a test? Do you respect the right to self-determination for the Palestinian nation? Yes or no? Is Palestine, as a nation, considered a nation with the right to live under humane conditions or not? Let's allow those rights to be enforced for these 5 million displaced people.

The exchange is typical of Ahmadinejad's interviews with the American media. Predictably, both Mike Wallace of 60 Minutes and CNN's Anderson Cooper asked if he wants to "wipe Israel off the map". As usual, the question is thrown back in the reporter's face with his standard "Don't the Palestinians have rights?, etc." retort (which is never directly answered either). Yet he *never* confirms the "map" comment to be true. This did not prevent Anderson Cooper from referring to earlier portions of his interview after a commercial break and lying, "as he said earlier, he wants Israel wiped off the map".

Even if every media outlet in the world were to retract the mistranslated quote tomorrow, the major damage has already been done, providing the groundwork for the next phase of disinformation: complete character demonization. Ahmadinejad, we are told, is the next Hitler, a grave threat to world peace who wants to bring about a new Holocaust. According to some detractors, he not only wants to destroy Israel, but after that, he will nuke America, and then [Europe](#)! An October 2006 memo titled [Words of Hate: Iran's Escalating Threats](#) released by the powerful Israeli lobby group AIPAC opens with the warning, "*Ahmadinejad and other top Iranian leaders are issuing increasingly belligerent statements threatening to destroy the [United States](#), [Europe](#) and [Israel](#)."* These claims not only fabricate an unsubstantiated threat, but assume far more power than he actually possesses. Alarmists would be better off monitoring the statements of the ultra-conservative Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, who holds the most power in [Iran](#).

As [Iran's](#) U.N. Press Officer, M.A. Mohammadi, complained to The Washington Post in a June 2006 letter:

*It is not amazing at all, the pick-and-choose approach of highlighting the misinterpreted remarks of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in October and ignoring this month's remarks by [Iran's](#) supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that "We have no problem with the world. We are not a threat whatsoever to the world, and the world knows it. We will never start a war. We have no intention of going to war with any state."*

The Israeli government has milked every drop of the spurious quote to its supposed advantage. In her September 2006 address to the United Nations General Assembly, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni accused [Iran](#) of working to nuke Israel and bully the world. "They speak proudly and openly of their desire to 'wipe Israel off the map.' And now, by their actions, they pursue the weapons to achieve this objective to imperil the region and threaten the world." Addressing the threat in December, a fervent

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert inadvertently disclosed that his country already possesses nuclear weapons: "We have never threatened any nation with annihilation. Iran, *openly, explicitly and publicly* threatens to wipe Israel off the map. Can you say that this is the same level, when they are aspiring to have nuclear weapons, as America, France, Israel, Russia?"

### **MEDIA IRRESPONSIBILITY:**

On December 13, 2006, more than a year after The World Without Zionism conference, two leading Israeli newspapers, The Jerusalem Post and Haaretz, published reports of a renewed threat from Ahmadinejad. The Jerusalem Post's headline was [Ahmadinejad: Israel will be 'wiped out'](#), while Haaretz posted the title [Ahmadinejad at Holocaust conference: Israel will 'soon be wiped out'](#).

Where did they get their information? It turns out that both papers, like most American and western media, rely heavily on write ups by news wire services such as the Associated Press and Reuters as a source for their articles. Sure enough, their sources are in fact December 12th articles by Reuter's Paul Hughes [[Iran president says Israel's days are numbered](#)], and the AP's Ali Akbar Dareini [[Iran President: Israel Will be wiped out](#)].

The first five paragraphs of the Haaretz article, credited to "Haaretz Service and Agencies", are plagiarized almost 100% from the first five paragraphs of the Reuters piece. The only difference is that Haaretz changed "the Jewish state" to "Israel" in the second paragraph, otherwise they are identical.

The Jerusalem Post article by Herb Keinon pilfers from both the Reuters and AP stories. Like Haaretz, it uses the following Ahmadinejad quote without attribution: ["Just as the Soviet Union was wiped out and today does not exist, so will the Zionist regime soon be wiped out," he added]. Another passage apparently relies on an IRNA report:

**"The Zionist regime will be wiped out soon the same way the Soviet Union was, and humanity will achieve freedom," Ahmadinejad said at Tuesday's meeting with the conference participants in his offices, according to Iran's official news agency, IRNA.**

**He said elections should be held among "Jews, Christians and Muslims so the population of Palestine can select their government and destiny for themselves in a democratic manner."**

Once again, the first sentence above was wholly plagiarized from the AP article. The second sentence was also the same, except "He called for elections" became "He said elections should be held..".

It gets more interesting.

The quote used in the original AP article and copied in The Jerusalem Post article supposedly derives from the IRNA. If true, this can easily be checked. Care to find out? Go to:

[www.irna.ir/en/news/view/menu-234/0612134902101231.htm](http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/menu-234/0612134902101231.htm)

There you will discover the actual IRNA quote was:

**"As the Soviet Union disappeared, the Zionist regime will also vanish and humanity will be liberated".**

Compare this to the alleged IRNA quote reported by the Associated Press:

**"The Zionist regime will be wiped out soon the same way the Soviet Union was, and humanity will achieve freedom".**

In the IRNA's actual report, the Zionist regime will **vanish** just as the Soviet Union **disappeared**. *Vanish. Disappear*. In the dishonest AP version, the Zionist regime will be

**"wiped out"**. And how will it be wiped out? **"The same way the Soviet Union was"**. Rather than imply a military threat or escalation in rhetoric, this reference to [Russia](#) actually validates the intended meaning of Ahmadinejad's previous misinterpreted anti-Zionist statements.

What has just been demonstrated is irrefutable proof of media manipulation and propaganda in action. The AP deliberately alters an IRNA quote to sound more threatening. The Israeli media not only repeats the fake quote but also steals the original authors' words. The unsuspecting public reads this, forms an opinion and supports unnecessary wars of aggression, presented as self defense, based on the misinformation.

This scenario mirrors the kind of false claims that led to the illegal U.S. invasion of [Iraq](#), a war now widely viewed as a catastrophic mistake. And yet the Bush administration and the compliant corporate media continue to marinate in propaganda and speculation about attacking [Iraq's](#) much larger and more formidable neighbor, [Iran](#). Most of this rests on the unproven assumption that [Iran](#) is building nuclear weapons, and the lie that Iran has vowed to physically destroy [Israel](#). Given its scope and potentially disastrous outcome, all this amounts to what is arguably the rumor of the century.

[Iran's](#) President has written two rather philosophical letters to America. In his first letter, he pointed out that "History shows us that oppressive and cruel governments do not survive". With this statement, Ahmadinejad has also projected the outcome of his own backwards regime, which will likewise "vanish from the page of time".

*[Arash Norouzi](#) is an artist and co-founder of [The Mossadegh Project](#).*

*[Global Research Articles by Arash Norouzi](#)*

---

**Please support Global Research**  
**Global Research relies on the financial support of its readers.**

[Make A Donation](#)

**Your endorsement is greatly appreciated**

---

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Centre for Research on Globalization.

[To become a Member of Global Research](#)

The CRG grants permission to cross-post original Global Research articles on community internet sites as long as the text & title are not modified. The source and the author's copyright must be displayed. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [crgeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:crgeditor@yahoo.com)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [crgeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:crgeditor@yahoo.com)

© Copyright Arash Norouzi, [The Mossadegh Project](#) , 2007

The url address of this article is: [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=4527](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=4527)

---

[Privacy Policy](#)

© Copyright 2005-2007 GlobalResearch.ca  
Web site engine by [Polygraphx Multimedia](#) © Copyright 2005-2007

# Native Energy Futures

*Renewable Energy,  
Actual Sovereignty,  
& the New Rush  
on Indian Lands*

by Brian Awehali  
06.05.2006

"Huge investments in electrical power grids, highways, and telecommunications would help Colombia open up its vast gas and oil resources and its largely undeveloped Amazonian territories; the projects, in turn, would generate the income necessary to pay off the loans, plus interest. That was the theory. However, the reality, consistent with our true intent around the world, was to subjugate Bogota, to further the global empire. My job...was to present the case for exceedingly large loans."

~ John Perkins,  
*Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*

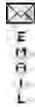
"The ability for tribes to obtain bonds in the hundred-million-dollar range to finance energy projects is now a reality. And the \$20 million a year for an Indian energy office at the Department of Energy is something that we started working on years ago under Energy Secretary Bill Richardson."

~ Chris Stearns,  
former Indian Affairs Director at the US DOE

It all started with a single 750kW wind turbine built by the Rosebud Sioux in South Dakota in 2003. At the time, the *Business Journal* called the turbine "a four-way transcontinental deal in which everyone makes money while fighting global warming, generating clean electricity and helping Native Americans." In other words, the *Journal* gushed, the wind project was "a 'green capitalist's' dream."

The editors at the *Business Journal* might have been a tad hyperbolic in their assessment, but energy on Indian land is certainly big business. In 2004, some \$400 million was split between 41 tribes for the sale of oil, gas, and coal on their lands. According to the Indigenous Environmental Network, 35% of the fossil fuel resources in the US are within Indian country; The Department of the Interior estimates that Indian lands hold undiscovered reserves of almost 54 billion tons of coal, 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 5.4 billion barrels of oil. Indian lands also contain enormous amounts of native energy: "Wind blowing through Indian reservations in just four northern Great Plains states could support almost 200,000 megawatts of wind power," Winona LaDuke told *Indian Country Today* in March 2005. "[And] tribal landholdings in the southwestern US...could generate enough power to eradicate all fossil fuel burning power plants in the US."

Now imagine, if you can, that you run a US-based energy company at a time when increasing resistance to US imperialism, coupled with rising business costs related to political instability, has made getting the oil, coal, and gas from foreign sources more difficult. Imagine that you're savvy enough to know that your fossil fuel-based business model is about to get dramatically less lucrative. If you didn't already have them, you'd probably want to start setting up operations in the more business-friendly, less regulated Wild West of Indian Country. If you were really devious—or maybe just smart—you



*LiP* Founder and Editor-in-Chief **Brian Awehali's** writing and interviews have appeared in or on Alternet, The Black World Today, *Z Magazine*, The Progressive radio show, Britannica.com, *ColorsNW*, *High Times*, *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Tikkun*, *Online Journalism Review*, *Native Nations Network*, and the Finland-based publications *Viikkolehti* and *Maailman Sivu*. His work has received a 2006 Project Censored Award, and a 2003 Washington State Excellence in Journalism award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

Much like the bumblebee, his main project, **LiP Magazine**, perplexes scientists with its ability to fly onward, in defiance of every known law. Awehali is a tribal member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

## BECOME A REGULAR LiP READER

EMAIL ADDRESS

- Subscribe
- Unsubscribe

Update

### related outposts

#### Indigenous Environmental Network

Check out this radical queer activist group in San Francisco.



#### Fighting Long Odds: Government Criminality Continues in Indian Trust Case

A film by Laura Poitras and Linda Goode Bryand about the damages of gay gentrification to an African American neighborhood in Ohio.



#### Little Big Companies

How did corporations like Halliburton get millions in government contracts designated for small minority



might want to have your cake and eat it too, by getting tax subsidies and favorable terms for developing your next business model while greenwashing your ongoing fossil fuel operations. Wouldn't you?

"Consistent with the President's National Energy Policy to secure America's energy future," testified Theresa Rosier, Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, "increased energy development in Indian and Alaska Native communities could help the Nation have more reliable home-grown energy supplies. [The Native American Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2003] promotes increased and efficient energy development and production in an environmentally sound manner."

The bill did not ultimately pass, but the idea that "America's energy future" should be linked to having "more reliable home-grown energy supplies" can be found in other native energy-specific legislation that has passed into law. What this line of thinking fails to take into consideration is that Native America is not actually USAmerica, and that the "supplies" in question belong to sovereign nations, not to the United States or its energy sector.

Rosier's statement conveys quite a lot about how the government and the energy sector intend to market the growing shift away from dependence on foreign energy, and how they plan to deregulate (by using "efficiency" as a selling point) and step up their exploitation ("development") of "domestic" native energy resources: by spinning it as a way to produce clean energy while helping Native Americans gain greater economic and tribal sovereignty.

Of course, if large companies can establish lucrative partnerships with tribes, largely free of regulation and federal oversight, then so much the better. In this regard, a look at the Alaska Native "communities" Rosier mentioned is instructive.

In 1971, Alaskan tribal companies were set up by Congress with roughly \$1 billion and 44 million acres of land to divide. Although the real reason for establishing these companies had to do with breaking down largely unified tribal opposition to the construction of an oil pipeline, they were pitched at the time as a way to help stimulate tribal economies and mitigate the scale of poverty on tribal lands. "Tribal companies [can] be considered small businesses even after winning billions of dollars in contracts, and there is no limit to the size of the no-bid awards they can win," reported Michael Scherer in an excellent 2005 *Mother Jones* article entitled "US: Little Big Companies."

The Alaska tribal companies have, according to Scherer, "become a way for large corporations with no Native American ownership to receive no-bid contracts, an avenue for federal officials to steer work to favored companies, and a device for speeding privatization." Evidence for this assertion abounds. From 2002 through the end of 2004, the Olgoonik Corporation, owned by the Inupiat Eskimo tribe, garnered revenues in excess of \$225 million for construction work on US military bases around the world. Because of its tribal status, Olgoonik procured this work without having to bid against others for it. It then subcontracted most of the work to the infamous multinational corporation Halliburton.

A November 2004 article in *The News & Observer* (UK) further reported that "Procurement rules allow native American-owned company, Alutiq, to provide favored entrée to government contracts and then outsource them to British-owned multinational, Wackenhut." The article also went on to note that the Chugach Alaska Corp., owned by 1,900 Alaska natives, "was ranked ahead of IBM, Motorola, Goodrich, Goodyear and AT&T in total value of defense contracts in 2003."

Apologists and professional flak catchers, of course,

businesses?

GO ▶

**Fighting Long Odds:  
Government  
Criminality Continues  
in Indian Trust Case**

A film by Laura Poitras  
and Linda Goode  
Bryand about the  
damages of gay  
gentrification to an  
African American  
neighborhood in Ohio.

GO ▶

**CorpWatch**

They investigate and  
expose corporate  
violations of human  
rights, environmental  
crimes, fraud, and  
corruption around the  
world, and work to  
foster global justice,  
independent media  
activism and democratic  
control over  
corporations.

GO ▶

**Islands in the  
Continent**

An Indigenous View of  
North America  
by Winona LaDuke

GO ▶

From  
**LiP Magazine**  
[www.lipmagazine.org]

*Media Dissidence &  
Uncivil Discourse  
Since 1996*

claim that this state of affairs is nothing more than an unfortunate, and unforeseen accident. But Michael Brown, a major player in the formation of Alaskan tribal companies and the so-called “godfather of tribal contracting,” told *Mother Jones* that this explosion in federal work was “exactly what he hoped for” when he went to work as the chief executive for a subsidiary of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation in 1982 and pioneered such practices. Arctic Slope is the state’s largest tribal corporation, and the single largest company in Alaska.

Now jump forward with me, to April 2003, and the completion of the first large-scale native-owned wind turbine in history—the aforementioned Rosebud Sioux project, built in partnership with NativeEnergy, LLC. During the preceding 21 years, reports ranging from the cautionary to the apocalyptic about carbon emissions and global warming have piled up, and all but the most pig-headed of carbon-emitting industrialists now concede that a fossil fuel-based business model is soon going to be a lot less lucrative.

NativeEnergy, which wants to help consumers “enjoy a climate neutral lifestyle,” was founded in 2000 with a mission “to get more wind turbines and other renewable energy systems built.” There were no Native Americans present in the management of NativeEnergy at the time of its founding. The multiphase wind development initiative, which began in earnest with the completion of the first wind turbine in 2003, was billed as a way to bring renewable energy-related jobs and training opportunities to the citizens of this sovereign nation, who are among the poorest in all of North America. NativeEnergy’s President and CEO Tom Boucher is an energy industry vet who formerly worked at Green Mountain Energy, a subsidiary of a company now controlled by oil industry giant BP and Nuon, a Netherlands-based energy company. Boucher was convinced there was profit to be made in alternative energy, and the Rosebud project was his test case. Boucher financed the project by selling, of all things, air. More specifically, he took advantage of the new “flexible emissions standards” created by the Kyoto Protocol. Essentially, the standards created tax-deductible pollution credits (or “green tags”) for ecologically responsible companies, which can then be sold to polluters wishing to “offset” their carbon dioxide generation without actually reducing their emissions.

As you might expect from a company staffed largely by energy industry vets, NativeEnergy was fiscally crafty. In a novel accounting move, they bought from the Rosebud Sioux, at deep discount, all the green tag pollution credits that they speculated would be accrued over the lifespan of the Rosebud wind project—a total of 50,000 tons of carbon dioxide—then made a lump-sum, one-time funding commitment to the construction of the project. In an April 2003 interview with the *Business Journal*, Boucher would not divulge how deep the discount he got was, nor would he divulge the terms of subsequent sales of green tags.

Since their first test case proved successful, NativeEnergy has moved forward with plans to develop a larger “distributed wind project,” located on eight different reservations. NativeEnergy also became a majority Indian-owned company in August 2005, when the pro-development Intertribal Council on Utility Policy (yes, Intertribal COUP), purchased a majority stake in the company on behalf of its member tribes.

Pat Spears, the President of COUP and a member of the lower Brule Sioux tribe, described the purchase as “a great day for Native American people everywhere, because we are demonstrating that living in harmony with our Mother Earth is not only good for the environment, it is also good business. We look forward,” he added, “to bringing in more tribes as equity participants and taking NativeEnergy to the next level.”

It's probably no coincidence that this purchase coincided with that month's passage of the 2005 Energy Policy Act, which contains native energy-specific provisions in its Title V. Supporters like Tex Hall, president of the National Congress of American Indians, touted the act as "one of the most important tribal pieces of legislation to hit Indian country in the past 20 years. [It] provides real incentives for energy companies to partner with Indian tribes in developing tribal resources." Keeping in mind that tribal-owned companies are exempt from a great deal of the regulation, oversight, and competitive bidding stipulations that apply to other businesses, and that the legislation increases subsidies for wind energy in particular, the act leaves NativeEnergy ideally situated to exploit its tribal status.

But there are a host of alarming provisions in the act. For starters, Section 1813 of Title V gives the US the obviously dangerous power to grant rights of way through Indian lands without permission from Indian tribes, if deemed to be in the strategic interests of an energy-related project. Other critics have derided the act as a fire sale on Indian energy, characterizing various incentives as a broad collection of subsidies for US energy companies, particularly those in Texas. And, according to a 2005 Democracy Now! interview with Clayton Thomas-Muller, Native Energy Organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network, the act "rolls back the protections of the National Environmental Policy Act and the protections of the National Historic Preservation Act, both of which are critical pieces of legislation that grassroots indigenous peoples utilize to protect our sacred sites."

Most importantly, under the guise of promoting tribal sovereignty (leaving out those aspects of sovereignty that have little or nothing to do with economics), the act also releases the federal government from its traditional trust responsibility to tribes where resource development is concerned.

The trust relationship between the US and native tribes has been a crucial way for Native Americans to hold the government legally accountable, as evidenced by the many recent court losses suffered by the Department of the Interior and Treasury during the years-long Indian Trust Case filed by Eloise Cobell on behalf of more than 500,000 Native American landholders. [See "[Fighting Long Odds](#)," November 2003.] The trust relationship was originally imposed on Native Americans in 1887, after the passage of the Dawes Allotment Act. This act was a fairly straightforward (and successful) attempt to break down tribal unity by dispersing parcels of land to individual Indian "heads of household" who signed on to the government's "tribal rolls." The land was not to be managed by Native Americans, however: It was held "in trust," and the government was supposed to disburse to Native landholders the royalties generated by the leasing of their lands to timber, mining, livestock, and energy interests. But for the most part, the government didn't disburse the money, and now admits that at least \$137 billion of it is simply missing. Without the trust relationship, which among other things makes the government legally responsible for the money it manages, Cobell and her coplaintiffs could not have sued.

The Energy Policy Act also shifts responsibility for environmental review and regulation from the federal to tribal governments. This, too, was promoted under the auspices of increasing tribal sovereignty, but it doesn't take a genius to know that Native Americans won't be any more successful in regulating the energy industry than the US government, a host of well-funded environmental groups, and the UN have been. In fact, it probably only takes a village-variety idiot to comprehend the predictably disastrous outcome of this shift for Native Americans.

It's hard to believe, in light of the relevant history, that an ever-avaricious energy industry—which has been all too willing to play a game of planetary ecological brinksmanship in the name of profit—places any value on tribal sovereignty unless there's a way to exploit it. It's hard to believe, after hundreds of years of plunder and unaccountability, that further deregulation, coupled with economic incentives, and even with the participation of some well-meaning “green” players on the field, is going to deliver anything but the predictable domination of Native Americans by white European economic powers.

In fact, I'll go out on a limb and say that the emerging Native American energy infrastructure looks more like the beginnings of a new rush on Indian lands than it does the advent of any kind of brave new sovereign era.

But don't take my word for it. Take it from Billy Connelly, the senior advisor on marketing and communications for NativeEnergy, the company, you'll recall, that helped usher in the dawn of this renewable energy rush. When asked during a March 2006 phone interview why the demonstration of a potentially viable renewable energy economy on Native American lands wasn't simply an example of small businesses laying the groundwork for the eventual control and megaprofits of major corporations, Connelly sighed and said simply, “I'd be pleasantly surprised if this didn't follow that age-old pattern.”

Perhaps, at a minimum, tribes can attain a modicum of energy independence from the development of wind, solar, and other renewable energy infrastructure on their lands. And there may well be a way to ride Native American renewable energy resources to a future of true tribal sovereignty. But it won't come from getting into bed with, and becoming indebted to, the very industry currently driving the planet to its doom.

**[LIP]**

Reproduction of material from any **LIP** pages without written permission is strictly prohibited | **Copyright 2006**

[LIPmagazine.org](http://lipmagazine.org) | [info@lipmagazine.org](mailto:info@lipmagazine.org)

