

Summer 2008

***Your Money: How to Weather
the Economic Storm***

yes!

Building a Just and Sustainable World

Superpower? Get Over It

How to Join the Community of Nations

✚ 12 DO-IT-YOURSELF FOREIGN POLICY HEROES

ISSUE 46

**Has Your Town Declared Peace Yet?
8 Foreign Policies You Could Love
To Heal the Country, Heal the Soldier
George Shultz: Cold Warrior Turns Against Nukes**

“I dream of a child who will ask, ‘Mother, what was war?’”

FROM THE SPLIT THIS ROCK COLLABORATIVE COLLAGE POEM

DELIVERED BY INDIVIDUAL POETS IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE, MARCH 23, 2008

 www.YesMagazine.org/split to read the entire poem



LOUISE REID RITCHIE

A Tallahassee, Florida-based group, “Tallahasseeans Who Believe It’s Time to Come Home,” advocating an end to the U.S. war in Iraq, hung more than 4,000 peace cranes in a sculpture garden in downtown Tallahassee. The installation was designed by artist Maureen Sullivan, and cranes were made by thousands throughout the community.



How to Join the Family of Nations

Superpowers rise and fall. Under better management, ours might, perhaps, have risen for longer. Under visionary leadership, it might even have been a force for shared prosperity, genuine democracy, and peace.

Regardless of what might have been, it's now becoming clear that our brief time as the world's sole superpower is drawing to a close. Global power is dispersing among China, the European Union, and smaller power centers, each of which is pursuing its own alliances and interests, often ignoring U.S. wishes.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq cost the U.S. much of its moral standing in the world and left our military stretched thin and increasingly unwelcome. Our reputation has been further damaged by our failure, thus far, to take responsibility for the climate impact of our wasteful ways.

Our dollar is tumbling, our federal budget is deep in the red, our trade deficit keeps mounting. The economic expansion, largely driven by consumer debt, is hitting the post-subprime wall; the problem is exacerbated by skyrocketing food and energy prices, and stagnant wages. Cash strapped state and local governments are cutting vital services.

The question now at hand is how—not whether—our reign as the world's sole superpower will end.

Given all that, there are surprisingly good options available to us—especially if we choose to gracefully relinquish the top-dog position. Instead of developing a new generation of nuclear weapons, for example, we may be nearing a tipping point in support for nuclear abolition, as former Secretary of State George Shultz suggests in our interview.

A coalition of candidates for Congress is offering a new plan that spells out how to get out of Iraq. And instead of attacking Iran, as some are advocating, sitting down to talk with that nation could help the U.S. out of our quagmire in Iraq and move us toward

solutions elsewhere in the region.

Joining the community of nations is a remarkably plausible option for us, and it won't require new spending. On the contrary, we would save billions by returning the military to its traditional role as a defender of the United States instead of a defender of global superpower interests. In addition to abolishing nuclear weapons, we could scrap other unneeded weapons systems, and close foreign military bases as demanded by many citizens who live near them.

The American people are still generally liked and admired around the world, even while our official foreign policy is widely rejected. Perhaps that is because so many Americans act as though we already are a member of a family of nations, not a global bully, even while our government does the reverse. Some Americans are involved in DIY (do-it-yourself) foreign policy—adopting town council resolutions for peace, pressing for Third World debt relief, exchanging music and scientific know-how across borders.

These actions are good, but not sufficient. We need to transition our country from a militaristic superpower to a post-empire partner among a community of nations. Our elected officials can only depart from the old superpower script if they have our support and vision. We need to bring our communities into the national dialogue on our place in the world. We need to communicate with elected officials and the news media.

This is a moment when many are prepared to consider fresh approaches. The good news is that, as the contributors to this issue demonstrate, there are already some great ideas out there about how to make the change.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sarah van Gelder'.

Sarah van Gelder
Executive Editor

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I7 GUIDE TO THE THEME SECTION



THE MISSION OF YES!

is to support you and other people worldwide in building a just, sustainable, and compassionate world. In each issue we focus on a different theme through these lenses ...

NEW VISIONS

Solving today's big problems will take more than a quick fix. These authors offer clarity about the roots of our problems and visions of a better way.

WORLD & COMMUNITY

New models that foster justice and real prosperity, and sustain the Earth's living systems. How can we bring these models to life and put them to work?

THE POWER OF ONE

Stories of people who find their courage, open their hearts, and discover what it means to be human in today's world.

BREAKING OPEN

Humor, story-telling, and the arts—taking you into unexpected spaces where business-as-usual breaks open into new possibilities.

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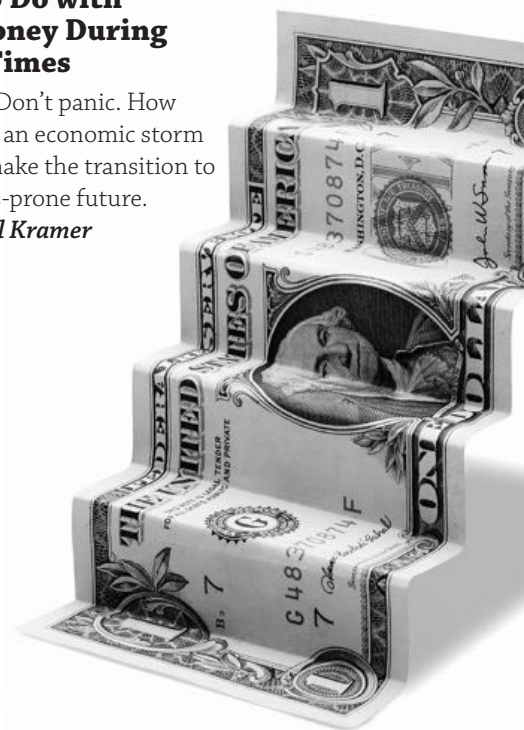
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READERS FORUM

Tell us. Send your response to an article, stories about making the world a better place, and ideas for connecting with other readers to 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or to editors@yesmagazine.org.



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Diet for a Warming Planet

I am thrilled to see the article by Bill McKibben in your climate change issue, and am thinking of starting a climate change awareness program here in Australia.

More global warming emissions come from animal agriculture than from all the world's motorized vehicles. I often wonder why that information is not available to the public at large, so they can make decisions about how their diet affects the planet.

Volunteers here in Australia are sending letters, DVDs and flyers to our councilors, leaders, and members of Parliament to get the word out.

PENNY BASSETT-SCARFE
Victoria, Australia

Climate Change and Stuff

Thank you for reviewing the film *Story of Stuff* in your Spring issue. It rounds out the discussion on global warming beautifully.

Since the birth of the Public Relations industry in the 1920s, we have been subjected to massive advertising campaigns that have had disastrous consequences for the planet.

LEN BEYEA
Santa Cruz, CA

Let's Talk Overpopulation

Your climate change issue is a great call to action. But I found no mention of overpopulation—a suitable topic for a next issue. I'll wait hopefully.

ERNIE LEVON
Evanston, IL

A Climate Mobilization

I am inspired by Sarah van Gelder's introduction to the climate change issue. I was 17 years old in 1941, when the United States entered World War II. We can and must mobilize as a nation now, as we did then. In the 1940s, we understood the threat and willingly accepted the conversion of industry and jobs as we became the "arsenal of democracy."

Thanks to YES! for providing the why and how for today's mobilization to combat global warming.

BILL DENSMORE
Worcester, MA

They Love Erica, Too

I shared the article about Erica Fernandez (featured in "People We Love," Spring 2008) with my 6th grade class, and had them write letters to Erica, who lives in a town near ours.

The students were moved by Erica's story and poured their hearts out in their letters. Erica responded, saying it was the best thing that has ever happened to her.

We have invited her to join us for "An Evening of Music from the Americas," so my students and the community will get to meet her.

Thank you, YES!, for helping us bridge our communities and make our world a healthier place for all.

BRETT DRUGGE
Huntington Park, CA

Your Backyard Footprint

The hypothetical Jones family's achievements ("Beyond Lightbulbs," Spring 2008) in reducing their carbon emissions from housing and transport are impressive. But why is noth-

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ing said about their yard? Surely, they don't continue to maintain the big lawn and alien ornamental plants that characterize suburban landscaping. A lawn small enough for a push mower and the use of native, rather than alien, plants would reduce the Joneses' carbon footprint further, save water, and support wildlife.

NANCY SMALL
Kalamazoo, MI

Simplistic on Bolivia

Your article on Bolivia's new constitution ("Signs of Life," Spring 2008) gives progressivism a bad name. The piece is simplistic and ideological.

Having just returned from Bolivia where I talked politics with every taxi driver and grocery store clerk I met, I can report that it is not just "conservative elites" who have misgivings about the new constitution and

Evo Morales. I encountered opinions that were varied and nuanced.

JABE BLUMENTHAL
Seattle, WA

Author Juliette Beck responds:

Politics in Bolivia are indeed complex, and frustration has grown with the Morales administration's inability to deliver on popular demand for change. Yet few deny that large land-owners (latifundistas) and agribusiness elites in eastern Bolivia are leading the opposition to the constitutional process and are aggressively fighting any progressive reforms.

Misgivings about the Morales government and opposition from powerful economic groups should not obscure historic advances in the new constitution.

ISSUE 45 CORRECTION

On page 21, Svante Arrhenius published his findings on carbon dioxide in 1896, not 1892.



Hey, look! This is no ordinary dull white paper with occasional imperfections. The paper you are holding is New Leaf 100% recycled, 100% post-consumer waste, process chlorine-free paper. Wow.

YES! ONLINE

CLIMATE CHANGE ART: Chris Jordan's portraits of mass consumption ... Xavier Cortada's Longitudinal Installation

PHOTO ESSAYS: Life in Iran :: Peace Corps in Paraguay

LISTEN: Jim Hightower, Maude Barlow, Jehane Noujaim

VIDEO: Brower Youth Awards, Van Jones on eco-equity

ALSO: Reader cartoon captions ... Music that inspires us ... Film picks ... Yes! But How advice on sustainable living

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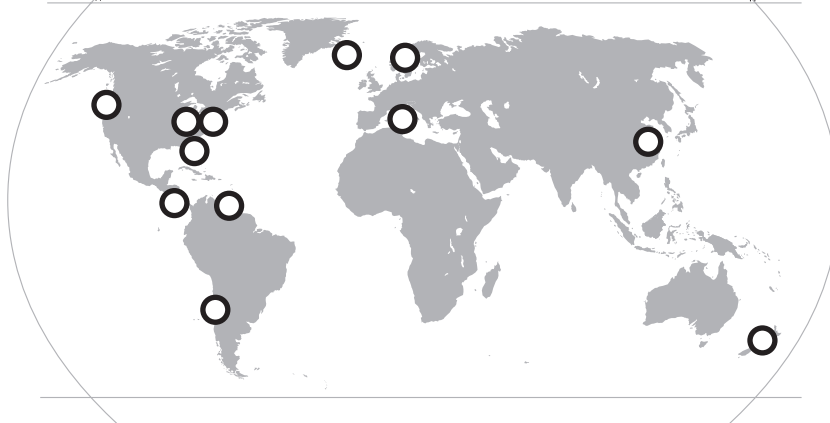


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Signs of Life

SMALL STORIES ABOUT BIG CHANGE



GREEN ECONOMY

Green Jobs Kindle Economic Hopes

Although news about the U.S. economy has been sobering of late, there is one bright sector—an emerging “green jobs” market is on the horizon. Gatherings in Memphis and Pittsburgh, along with new green-labor alliances, show that the grassroots green jobs movement is rapidly gaining momentum.

The organization Green for All, which unites green jobs advocates from disadvantaged communities around the country, drew 1,000 people to a conference in Memphis on the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination. Under the name “The Dream Reborn,” the conference called for \$1 billion by 2012 to create “green pathways out of poverty” for 250,000 Americans by greatly expanding federal government and private sector commitments to green jobs.

United Steelworkers and the Sierra Club have created a Blue-Green Alliance whose recent “Green Jobs, Good Jobs” conference in Pittsburgh also drew nearly 1,000 participants to demand public policies in support of green jobs.

The new climate protection campaign 15ky is also calling

for 5 million new jobs as part of a national mobilization for climate solutions.

Such grassroots energy has sparked state and federal action on green jobs. Washington state recently adopted the “Climate Action and Green Jobs” act, which funds colleges and technical programs that train workers

for the jobs that will be required to reduce greenhouse gases. The act sets a goal of adding 25,000 green-collar jobs by 2050, and it makes Washington the fourth state—along with California, New Jersey, and Hawaii—to pass comprehensive binding limits on greenhouse gases.

At the federal level, tax incen-



CAESANDRA SEAWELL

Jobs like the ones created by New York’s Buffalo Reuse, which specializes in building deconstruction and salvage as an alternative to demolition, can mean a pathway out of poverty and an answer to the Buffalo school system’s high dropout rate. The enterprise uses its projects for apprenticeships and training for both adults and at-risk youth. www.buffaloreuse.org

tives for clean energy and green jobs, which failed to make it beyond the early versions of the federal economic stimulus bill, are being considered for a second stimulus package.

And although the Bush administration has fought other attempts to address global warming, President Bush has gotten behind green jobs. At the end of 2007, Bush signed the Green Jobs Act, which provides \$125 million for workforce training programs that target veterans, displaced workers, at-risk youth, and individual families

“When millions of people are going hungry, it’s a crime against humanity that food should be diverted to biofuels.”

PALANIAPPAN CHIDAMBARAM

INDIAN FINANCE MINISTER, COMMENTING ON FOOD PRICES, WHICH HAVE JUMPED 83 PERCENT IN THE PAST THREE YEARS



Gloria Walker, below, is one of the worker-owners of the ReBuilders Source cooperative, which opened its doors in April. The South Bronx co-op salvages and sells building materials otherwise destined for the dump. Green Workers Cooperative, which helped launch ReBuilders Source, aims to take the green-collar jobs movement to the next step by promoting worker ownership.



SARAH VAN GELDER

who fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

Meanwhile, candidates on all sides of the presidential race are calling for green economic investments. Senator McCain, for example, has pledged to create “profit-making [green] business” and “stimulate green technologies.”

Proponents believe green jobs will be a win-win on a big scale. A recent study by the Blue-Green Alliance shows that renewable energy investments could generate more than 820,000 new jobs across the U.S.

“The ... green economy can generate a lot of good jobs at a far greater scale than a pollution-based economy,” says Jason Walsh of Green for All.

Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith are co-authors of the book *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*.

ALSO ...

Four countries have pledged to go carbon neutral. Norway, Iceland, New Zealand and Costa Rica recently signed on to the UN Environment Programme’s

Carbon Neutral Network.

Iceland has made the greatest actual strides toward this goal, with 99 percent of its residential homes heated by geothermal and hydropower. Four cities—Arendal, Norway; Rizhao, China; Vancouver, Canada; and Vaxjo, Sweden—also joined the UN pledge.

More Americans are leaving their cars at home. The U.S. Federal Highway Administration reports that in 2007, Americans cut back on driving for the first time in two decades. Faced with soaring gasoline prices, many have chosen more fuel-efficient transportation options, like the bus. Americans rode public transit 10.3 billion times in 2007, the highest transit use in 50 years, according to American Public Transit Association.

IRAQ WAR

Virtual Memorials for War Casualties

Photos of coffins returning from Iraq were prohibited in the early years of the war. But survivors still mourn and need to know that their loved ones are remembered.

Enter the virtual monument. Two websites with near-identical addresses—*iraqimemorial.org* and *iraqmemorial.org*—pay tribute to lives lost in the Iraq war.

The first, launched by the artist Joseph DeLappe, accepts proposals for paintings, scul-

tures, monuments, gardens, and conceptual art to honor Iraqi civilian deaths. The proposals range from the beautiful—a garden in the shape of Iraq—to provocative—backpack bombs that explode with confetti.

The second website, spearheaded by documentary filmmaker Robert Greenwald, marks the deaths of U.S. soldiers in Iraq through video memories collected from friends and family of those who died.

—Madeline Ostrander

ELECTIONS

States Back the Popular Vote

👍 Illinois on April 7th became the third state to pass a National Popular Vote bill fueled by dissatisfaction with the Electoral College.

The bill grows out of a state-level movement to make the popular vote decisive, rather than the Electoral College vote. The National Popular Vote campaign urges states to pass laws that turn all of their electoral college delegates in the presidential election over to the popular vote winner. But it will only take effect when states that together have a majority of Electoral College votes have signed it into law.

Similar bills have passed in New Jersey and Maryland. One or both legislative chamber has adopted the bill in eight other states.

—Noah Grant



JUAN PEDRO CATEPILLÁN

Each year in the Fall, thousands of Chile's indigenous citizens march through the streets of Santiago in a spirit of historical resistance and celebration. Pictured here are Mapuche, who make up 87 percent of Chile's indigenous population.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Chile Recognizes Indigenous Rights

👍 Chile's senate voted to ratify the International Labor Organization Convention 169, the foremost international policy on indigenous peoples. Introduced in 1989, the binding treaty has so far been ratified by 17 countries.

Revising a 1957 document that stressed assimilation of what were considered transitional cultures, ILO 169 affirms the rights of indigenous peoples to self-identification, self-determi-

nation, and self-management. The treaty also recognizes land and resource rights, customary laws and institutions, and traditional economies.

More than 1 million Chileans identify as members of the nation's indigenous groups.

In April, President Michelle Bachelet responded to pressure from indigenous rights groups with promises to restore some traditional lands, promote direct participation of indigenous people in government, and make consultation and compensation mandatory for public projects on indigenous lands.

—Brooke Jarvis

CORPORATIONS

Exxon Faces Court Challenges

The ExxonMobil Corporation is facing challenges on all sides over environmental violations and rights to oil reserves.

The Venezuelan government recently won a dispute over a contested oil exploration project, after President Hugo Chavez removed the project from Exxon's control and placed it in the hands of state oil firm Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. Exxon sought \$5 billion in compensation, and successfully petitioned courts in the U.K., the Netherlands, and the Dutch Antilles to freeze Venezuelan assets. A British judge lifted the freeze in March.

Venezuelan energy minister Rafael Ramirez lauded the decision, "Our people won, our country won, our homeland won."

The giant oil conglomerate also lost a recent appeal over a \$112 million fine awarded to a Louisiana man who claimed an Exxon contractor had dumped radioactive waste on his land. The Supreme Court refused to consider Exxon's appeal.

Meanwhile, the company is pursuing another Supreme Court appeal to avoid paying \$2.5 billion to Alaskan natives and fishermen whose lives and businesses were destroyed by the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill. Alaska Governor Sarah Palin called the court's decision to hear Exxon's plea, "a kick in Alaska's collective gut." Thousands of victims of the spill, who would have been eligible to receive damages, have died while Exxon stalled payments through court appeals.

—Madeline Ostrander

Towns Rein in Corporate Power

👍 At a town meeting held March 15, the citizens of Nottingham, New Hampshire, banned corporations from privatizing the town's water resources. The Nottingham Water Rights and Local Self-Government Ordinance also denies constitutional protection for corporations infringing on the rights of human and ecological communities in Nottingham.

"People in communities across the country are so used to having to go to the back of the

“With age comes happiness.”

YANG YANG, A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO SOCIOLOGIST,
WHO CONDUCTED A 30-YEAR SURVEY OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS.

Among the study's findings:

- The older people got, the likelier they were to report being happy
- Baby boomers are not as content as other generations
- African Americans are less happy than whites
- Men are less happy than women



democracy bus and give up their seats when the corporations walk in,” said Ben Price, project director for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF).

“The hurdle is to get over the consciousness that says that the people don’t have the right or the authority to have a say in what their community will look like,” he said. “To change that will require a very large grass-roots action, which we’re seeing the very beginnings of here.”

CELDF provides legal services for groups and individuals challenging corporate personhood. Nottingham’s ordinance makes it the 11th municipality in the United States to reject corporate constitutional protection.

In February, Mahanoy Township, Pennsylvania, passed a law prohibiting the spreading of sewage sludge as fertilizer, a practice that many claim endangers human health by dumping pathogens and heavy metals onto the soil. The Mahanoy ordinance denies corporations the same constitutional rights and protections as people, and recognizes the rights of nature and natural communities.

In 2006, Barnstead, New Hampshire, a neighboring town of Nottingham, amended its water rights ordinance to include the rights of nature.

—Margit Christenson

Interested? See YES! Fall 2007 issue: Stand Up to Corporate Power www.yesmagazine.org/corporations

HEALTH CARE

Support Grows for National Plan

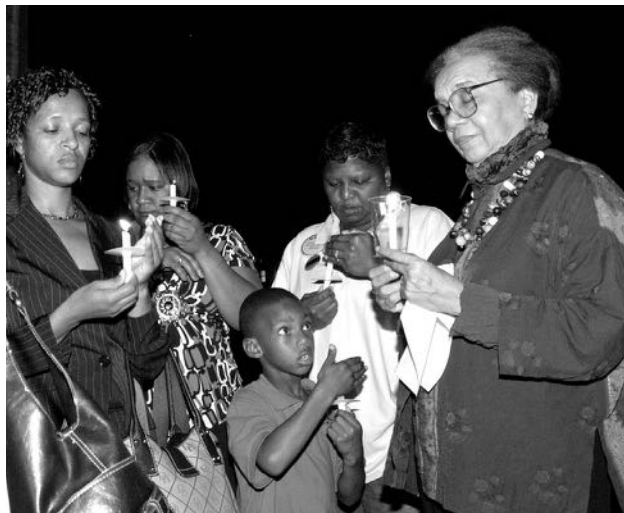
👍 A plan promoted by health advocates, doctors, and federal policymakers aims to bring relief to the nearly 50 million Americans without health insurance.

Representative John Conyers (D-MI) has reintroduced H.R. 676, a bill to create a single-payer health care system, similar to what is offered now by

Medicare but available to all Americans. The bill has been around for five years, but has gained traction and support from groups like the National Nurses Organizing Committee, the American Public Health Association, United Steelworkers, and more than 200 labor groups.

The presidential campaign has also put a spotlight on the American health care crisis, with Democratic presidential hopefuls advancing plans for universal or near-universal health coverage.

—Noah Grant



CHILDRENSDEFENSE.ORG

Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children’s Defense Fund, attends a candlelight vigil at the Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summit at Howard University in September. The summit addressed the largest driving force of the pipeline: poverty, exacerbated by race. One in three African-American boys born in 2001 will spend time in prison.

PRISON REFORM

A Chance for a New Life After Prison

👍 In an effort to address rising prison populations, Congress in March passed the Second Chance Act, a measure authorizing \$362 million for programs that serve prisoners, former prisoners, and their families.

Two of three ex-convicts will reoffend within three years, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The bill aims to lower this figure through education and job training, transitional mentoring programs, and drug treatment both during and after incarceration. It also offers alternatives to prison for parents convicted of non-violent drug offenses and allows prisoners access to family-based drug treatment.

“There is an urgent need for criminal justice reform,” said Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL), the bill’s sponsor. “Prisoner re-entry is one aspect of this very serious issue.”

—Brooke Jarvis

ALSO ...

One in every 99.1 adult Americans is behind bars, a new Pew study finds, the highest in U.S. history and by far the highest in the world. The report cites tougher sentencing laws as the cause. The U.S. prison population has tripled in the last 20 years, even as violent crime rates have dropped.



Don Cheadle

Hotel Rwanda Actor
Speaks Out on Darfur

Don Cheadle, 43, is perhaps best known for his leading role as Paul Rusesabagina in the 2004 movie *Hotel Rwanda*. Although he chose the project for its artistic merit, he came to realize the importance of telling the story of the Rwandan genocide. More recently, this acclaimed actor has taken on a new role as an activist fighting to raise awareness of another genocide—the one happening in Darfur.

Cheadle was stunned by the gravity of the situation during a 2005 visit to the beleaguered region of Sudan. Upon returning from his trip, he jumped headfirst into the campaign to push for meaningful action on the crisis in Darfur. Along with George Clooney, he traveled in 2006 to China—a major trading partner of Sudan—to plead for government action. He co-produced the 2007 movie *Darfur Now*, and co-authored, with John Prendergast, the book *Not on Our Watch: The Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond*.

Cheadle continues to balance his acting career with his advocacy for the people of Darfur.



Ava Lowery

Peace Takes
Courage.com

Ava Lowery feels that, as a “Southern values” Christian, she has a duty to do something for peace. She has had two uncles serve in Iraq, and gets exasperated when people accuse her of not supporting the troops. She is also frustrated with the way right-wingers have coopted religion to justify the Iraq war.

Following the 2004 election, the Alabama teenager decided to express her opinion online. She launched *peacetakescourage.com*, a website showcasing her homemade antiwar videos.

Over the past several years, Lowery’s flash animations have garnered widespread attention. She has been interviewed on major TV networks and appeared at the YearlyKos blogging convention in 2006.

Now 17, Lowery continues to make videos and is excited to make her voice heard in another way—by voting for the first time in the 2008 elections.



www.YesMagazine.org/lowery
Homemade anti-war videos



Tom Szaky

One Man’s Garbage,
Another’s Revolution

A worm bin in a friend’s kitchen helped Princeton student Tom Szaky recognize an opportunity to keep garbage out of landfills and create a successful business.

In 2001, he co-founded Terracycle, the first company to make all of its products and packaging out of waste. The business sells plant food made from worm poop and packaged in reused plastic bottles. It ships its products in misprinted boxes that other companies discard.

Terracycle has achieved success over the last seven years and expanded beyond plant food.

Recently, the company started a program called “sponsored waste,” in which schools and community groups collect and send in discarded food containers. The business plans to make the containers into new products, and compensate the groups with donations to the nonprofit of their choice.

In 2006, Szaky was named “No. 1 CEO under 30” by *Inc. Magazine*, beating out Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook.



Carol Bebel

New Orleans Artists
“Come Home!”

For more than a decade, Carol Bebel has worked for the economic, social, and artistic revitalization of Oretha Castle-Haley Boulevard, a historic black neighborhood of New Orleans. Her nonprofit community arts center is called, appropriately, “Ashé,” the Yoruban word for “Amen” or “let it be done.”

After Hurricane Katrina flooded the city, Ashé offered a wide range of services to those who remained, including job training and health counseling. But the center remains primarily a place for artists to collaborate, create, and present their works.

“We’re opening our arms and saying, ‘Artists, come home,’” says Bebel. “Artists take nothing and make something out of it all the time. Getting them up and doing things is a sign of hope for everybody.”

Interested? Ashé’s cultural arts blog is regularly updated with information about the galleries it hosts, along with announcements of positive activism in the area. www.ashecac.org

COMMENTARY :: Akaya Windwood

DON'T BE NICE— BE KIND

I recently facilitated a community meeting organized to address a spate of violence in a neighborhood here in Oakland, California. Roughly 200 people showed up—young people from the streets, grandmothers, school teachers, community activists, neighbors, and politicians. The gathering crossed lines of class, ethnicity, religion, gender, and race. There were many emotions in the room: grief, fear, hope, hopelessness, skepticism, sadness, and even some optimism.

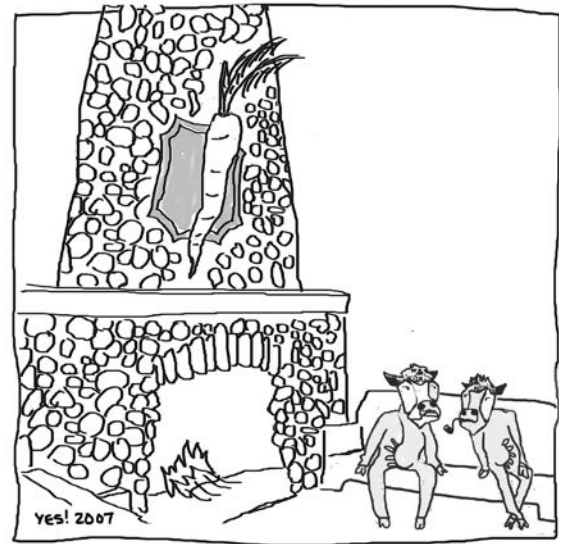
As we began the meeting, I asked people to agree to be kind rather than nice. Truthfully, I was a bit hesitant to ask for this agreement, thinking that people would interpret it to mean that they couldn't say what they needed to say or express "negative" feelings such as anger, outrage, or distress. I took the risk of asking for the agreement anyway, and was met with a big "yes" from the group. Everyone was tired of the old pattern of blaming and shaming, of finding fault with one another, and we needed a way to say difficult things without feeling hobbled by politeness.

Niceness is often filled with falseness—it is a way to not tell the truth, or to obscure it. "Be nice!" is something many of us heard as children as a way of avoiding upsetting someone. While niceness might be a strategy that gets us through an immediate situation, it is not effective in the long run as a way to come together to solve the myriad difficulties facing our communities, both local and global.

It is crucial that we hold ourselves and each other accountable, and we can do this with hearts of kindness. This often takes a lot of courage. Kindness allows us to say the hardest of things while preserving the dignity of those around us. It allows us to take the big risk of letting people know what is on our minds in a way that is unclouded and respectful. It is an action of the heart.

The folks at the meeting were engaged, vibrant, upset, and had a lot to say, but kindness ran through it all, like a river of balm and steadiness. I was particularly touched by the father who, having recently lost a son to police violence, spoke of the need to come together as one community, to acknowledge each other, remembering our commonness, our collective humanity. He was angry and so very kind, even as he held each of us accountable for the overt and subtle ways in which we all participate in violence.

Grandmothers spoke of feeling afraid in their homes and of needing to reach out to the young folks. Young people,



Paul Cezanne said "There will come a day when a single carrot, freshly observed, will spark a revolution." I'm still observing.

DAN BROOK

Ah yes... brought it down with Roundup...

VERONICA BOONE

I must say I find your husband's taste in décor quite tasteless.

AMANDA SUTHERLAND



www.YesMagazine.org/cartoon for more reader captions

even those stereotyped as dangerous, spoke about being afraid to walk the streets. This was a kind meeting, but it was not nice.

At the end of the evening, a woman drummed and sang as we walked out to the park where a young man had been shot the week before. We carried candles, and most folks swayed and hummed along. I was very proud of the way everyone cared for the whole.

Kindness is one of our strongest tools as we collectively lead ourselves, our families, and communities through a time of great violence, both here at home and across the seas. We need to work toward deeper kindness. Let's take that risk. And stop being nice. **V**



Akaya Windwood is president of the Rockwood Leadership Program in Oakland, California. Akaya is known nationally for her commitment to social and economic justice, and to building a new and compelling vision for effectiveness and collaboration in the non-profit sector. A long-time resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, she loves the richness of living and working with diversity, and is committed to joy, laughter, and healthy communities.

WINONA LADUKE

On WILD RICE,
WIND POWER,
THUNDER BEINGS,
SELF-RELIANCE,
and OUR COVENANT
WITH THE CREATOR

An interview by Sarah van Gelder

Sarah van Gelder: Could you tell me about your background?

Winona LaDuke: My father was Anishinaabe and my mother was a first-generation Russian/Polish Jew from New York. Both were involved with social movements—the Native American movement, farmworkers' movement, poor people's campaign, and the environmental movement.

I'm Bear Clan from the White Earth reservation, which is located between Bemidji and Fargo. My parents met because my dad was selling wild rice. I am part of a wild ricing culture. We are not rich in money, but we are wealthy in rice and other traditional foods. Sun Bear was my father's name, and he used to have a saying: "I don't want to hear your philosophy if it doesn't grow corn."

Sarah: You have focused much of your work on food and energy. What is your

approach to these two basics?

Winona: Well first, we have to relocate our economies. That doesn't mean no imports and exports. But whether it's food or energy, we've got to cut consumption; we've got to be responsible and efficient about what we use; and we've got to produce energy and food locally as much as you can.

There's a phrase in Ojibwe, *ji-mis-awaanvaming*, which means something like positive window shopping for your future. We need to ask what our community is going to look like 50 or 100 years from now.

I've worked in my own community since 1981. We tried waiting for the federal and state government to take care of things, and if we had not taken action, we would still be waiting and I'd probably have a big ulcer from complaining, or *kvetching* as we say in Yiddish. We decided instead to put our hearts and minds

together. We may not be the smartest, or the best looking, or the richest, but we are the people who live here. We decided we wanted to make decisions about the future of our community.

Sarah: What do your teachings tell you about creating that future?

Winona: We have a lot of teachings and language about how a people can live a thousand years in the same place and not destroy things. The phrase *anishinaabe akiing*, for example, means the





HARLEY SOLTES FOR YES! MAGAZINE

Winona LaDuke and her son, Gwekaanimad, during a visit to the Suquamish Tribe's Clearwater Resort in Washington state. Winona LaDuke is an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) and the executive director of Honor the Earth, www.honorearth.org, and founding director of White Earth Land Recovery Project, nativeharvest.com.

land to which the people belong. It's not the same thing as private property or even common property. It has to do with a relationship that a people has to a place—a relationship that reaffirms the sacredness of that place.

All our places are named. Near Thunder Bay, Ontario, is "The Place Where the Thunder Beings Rested on their Way from West to East." We go there to do vision quests, to reaffirm our relationship with that power, and to offer our gifts to the thunder beings and the part they played in our creation. That

place, and the places where our people stopped on their migration—all these places are named—and they have a resonance with us.

In all our teachings we understand that all the creatures are our relatives, whether they are muskrats or cranes—whether they have fins or wings or paws or feet. And in our covenant with the Creator, we understand that it is not about managing their behavior—it's about managing ours, because we're the ones who cause extinction of species. We're the youngest species, and we >>

» don't necessarily have the most smarts. We've bungled up along the way, and we acknowledge these mistakes in our stories and in our history as Indian people. The question is whether you have the humility and the commitment to get some learning out of these experiences.

Sarah: What happens when this land ethic and this humility bump up against the dominant culture?

Winona: Ninety percent of the land on our reservation is held by non-Indian interests. We had the misfortune of having a neighbor who lived just to the south of us named Frederick Weyerhaeuser. We had fine white pine on our reservation, and he built his empire off of the land of the Ojibwe people in northern Minnesota.

And that is how some get rich and some get poor. It's important to remember that most of these guys did not get rich by spinning flax into gold. They took someone else's land, and they took someone else's wealth.

That place known as The Place Where the Thunder Beings Rest isn't called that now. It's now called Mt. McKay. I don't have a problem with Mr. McKay, but I do have a problem with this practice of naming large mountains after small men. How could we name something as immortal as a mountain after something as mortal as a human?

This could be fixed. Just look at Ayers Rock in Australia. It's called Uluru now, because that's its traditional name. Mt. McKinley in Alaska is now called Denali. The country of Rhodesia is now called Zimbabwe. It's not disastrous to rename.

Sarah: Can you tell me about how wild rice is harvested?

Winona: We go up on the lake and we put our *asemaa*, our tobacco, on it. My son is my ricing partner, and we canoe through our rice beds. I used to push him, but he got too big, so now he pushes me out there, and I knock rice into the canoe with two sticks.

The rice grows on our lakes and riv-

ers—some is fat and some skinny, some short, some tall. Some grows in muddy waters, some looks like a bottle brush, and some looks all punked out. That's called biodiversity. It means not all the rice ripens at once. Some gets knocked off by wind. Some gets a blight, some doesn't get a blight. The Irish potato famine should have taught us that agricultural monoculture is dangerous—but so is a social monoculture (or you could say, mall-culture).

The anthropologists used to come out and watch us *manoominike*—harvest the rice. After we rice in the morning, we bring our rice in and let it dry. We parch it over a fire, and we dance on it to get the hulls off, and then winnow it in a basket. We pretty much do the same thing today using wood fires as we've always done—we're an intermediate technology people.

Ojibwe is a language of 8,000 verbs. The word for "work" is a strange construct for us. It doesn't mean we aren't a hard-working people, but in our language, the word is *anokii*, which means that whether you are fishing or weaving a basket, what you are doing is living—which is not the same thing as being paid a wage to do something.

After the harvest, we have a big feast, and we dance and tell stories. The anthropologists watched us, and they didn't like that. They said we would never become civilized because we enjoyed our harvest too much. We did too much dancing, too much singing.

When you no longer enjoy your relationship to your food, to your plant relatives, to the harvest, to the dancing and singing—when you end up with a harvest that has no relationships or joy, I think that must be the mark of civilization and industrialized agriculture.

Sarah: What is the foundation for your economy? Do you sell your rice?

Winona: We sell our rice through Native Harvest. But for us, eating the rice is more valuable than selling it. Ensuring that our people have enough rice is what we're after.

In our community, we don't have a

lot of wealthy people, but we have a lot of drums. We have a lot of songs. We have great maple syrup, harvested by hand and by horse, and boiled by wood. We are able to access the medicine chest of the Ojibwes. We have knowledge that is 10,000 years old. And we have the wealth of our relations to each other and to the natural world.

In our community, the stature of a human being is not associated with how stingy you are and how much you have in your bank account. It's how much you give away, how generous you are.

It took the University of Minnesota about 40 years to figure out how to domesticate wild rice and cultivate it in rice paddies using chemicals and fertilizers, regulated so it could be harvested with a combine. They called it progress, declared it the state grain of Minnesota, and it took just a couple of years before Uncle Ben's and the others took it over. Today, three quarters of all wild rice on the grocery shelf comes from giant rice paddies in California. No Ojibwe in sight.

Two Indians in a canoe can't compete with a guy on a combine. One of my elders, Margaret Smith, and I went out to lake side because rice buyers were there trying to force the price they'd pay Indian people for rice down to 50 cents a pound. We said we're going to pay a buck a pound. Margaret's a good bluffer. They didn't know how much money we had.

In 1986 we started fighting their right to call it "wild rice" because we think wild should mean something. In Minnesota you have to label rice as cultivated or wild, but in California or Oregon you can still sell cultivated rice as "wild" rice.

Our worst fears came true when the University of Minnesota cracked the DNA sequence of wild rice in the year 2000. They have not genetically engineered wild rice, but they want to reserve the right to do so. Our people do not believe that our sacred food should be genetically engineered, so we have been battling them for seven years.

Our foods are very much threatened, and this is an international issue for indigenous people.

Sarah: Besides protecting wild rice, what are you doing to bring back traditional foods?

Winona: We are growing more of our own food. About seven years ago, we got a handful of Bear Island flint corn from a seed bank and now we have about five acres of it. The corn is higher in amino acids, antioxidants, and fiber than any-

for a thousand families in five years. And these foods we are growing in *anishinaabe akiing* are not addicted to petroleum, and they don't require irrigation or all those inputs. These strong plant relatives just require songs and care for the soil. And in a time of climate destabilization, that is what you want to be growing. You don't want to be guessing with some hybrid.

on my reservation, members of the tribal council looked at me like I was nuts. But now one of my guys made me laugh, he said, "You know Winona, we used to think that you were crazy, but now we see that you were right. Someone had to stick their neck out!"

My tribe is putting up a 750 kilowatt wind turbine to power our tribal office building. Our organization put up a 250

After the harvest, we have a big feast, and we dance and tell stories. The anthropologists watched us, and they didn't like that. They said we would never become civilized because we enjoyed our harvest too much.

thing we can buy in the store.

The traditional varieties of food that we grew as indigenous peoples—before they industrialized them and bred out much of the nutritional value—are the best answer to our diabetes. A third of our population is diabetic. We give elders and diabetic families traditional foods every month: buffalo meat, wild rice, hominy.

My 8-year-old, Gwekaanimad, and I started a pilot project with the school lunch program after I saw that they were eating pre-packaged food from Sodexo, Sysco, and Food Services of America. We try to give our school kids a buffalo a month and also some deer meat, some local pork, and local turkeys. We started growing and raising our own. It's just a start. We had to decolonize our kids, too, because they got used to thinking that their food was that other stuff.

We plowed 150 gardens last year on our reservation. I'm a big proponent of gardens, not lawns. It turns out in most reservation housing projects you can't grow food. That spot in front of your house is where you park your car, or your dogs will trample it, or your cousin will drive over it. So we're putting two-foot-tall grow boxes up there, and you can grow a lot of vegetables in them.

Our goal is to produce enough food

Sarah: What about relocating energy?

Winona: I've worked on energy issues pretty much my whole life. I've worked in Indian communities that are facing the biggest corporations in the world, and I've seen the effect of those corporations on land, people, and dignity.

Now, after 30 years fighting coal mines and uranium mines, to see the Bush Administration and Stewart Brand saying "nuclear power is the answer to climate change" I just feel that it's time to move out of the box and into the next energy economy.

So now wind developers are coming into Indian country, which, it turns out, is rich with renewable potential.

Bob Gough from the Intertribal Council on Utility Policy says you're either going to be "at the table" or you're going to be "on the menu." I want to see our Indian communities produce wind power on our own terms and own it. I want to see our young people benefit from it and train to be part of the next energy economy. We are a rural part of the Jobs not Jails movement that Van Jones and Majors Carter are leading in urban areas.

They say Native people in this country have the potential to produce one third of the present installed U.S. electrical capacity. When I first proposed a windmill

kilowatt turbine. A tribe four lakes away has a lot of money, but not much wind; they asked us to site a two megawatt turbine for them on our reservation.

We are putting solar heating panels on the south side of our elders' housing. It's very simple technology; when the sun heats the panel up to about 90 degrees, the thermostat cranks on the blower fan, and blows hot air into your house. It works for us because even when it's 20 below zero, the sun shines.

But we start with energy efficiency. I don't support creating energy to feed an addict unless you deal with the addiction.

Sarah: What gives you hope to keep on with this work?

Winona: Life is good. We've been blessed with food that grows on water (wild rice) and sugar that comes from trees.

We're technically one of the poorest counties in the state of Minnesota. My theory is, if we can do it, anybody can do it. It's up to us—we're making the future. If we're waiting for somebody else to grow those gardens for us, well, we're not high on their priority list. We have a shot at doing the right thing. So *mino bimaadiziwin* (the good life), that's the future we're trying to create in our community. **y**

Percentage of plastic bags that end up in the trash: **99**

Percent reduction of plastic bag use in Ireland after the government began taxing bags in 2002: **95**¹

Number of days of workers' paid vacation or other leave mandated by the U.S. government: **0**

Number of other developed countries that have no paid leave requirement: **0**

Number of days of paid annual leave granted to Japanese workers, the second lowest among developed nations: **10**

Proportion of U.S. workers who receive no paid leave or paid public holidays: **1** in **4**²

Number of years scientists believed the Jurassic shrimp neoglyphea neocaledonica had been extinct, before finding a living specimen in the Coral Sea in 2006: **50 million**

Percentage of coral reefs protected by law from poaching, extraction, and human-caused habitat destruction: less than **2**³

Number of dollars the U.S. government spends annually on renewable energy research: **1.5 billion**

Number of dollars of revenue ExxonMobil generates in one day: **1 billion**⁴

Number of dollars the federal government spent on contracted paper shredding in 2000: **452,807**

Number of dollars spent on shredding in 2006: **2.9 million**

Number of dollars spent on shredding in the first half of 2007: **2.7 million**⁵

Number of New Yorkers who "saw something and said something," following the advice of public transportation anti-terrorism posters: **1,944**

Number of terrorists arrested due to these reports: **0**

Percentage increase in risk of cardiovascular disease between someone who does not worry about terrorism versus someone who does: **300-500**⁶

Lies told by top Bush administration officials leading up to the Iraq war: **935**⁷

Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons: **4.5-5 million**⁸

Percentage of women and girls working as prostitutes in Damascus, Syria, who are Iraqi refugees: **70-80**⁹

Miles per gallon a car got in a 1973 contest sponsored by Shell: **376.59**¹⁰

Potential dollar amount of sales of green products in 2008: **104 billion**

Percentage of adults who have difficulty finding the green products and services they'd like to buy: **42**¹¹

Complete citations at www.yesmagazine.org/ptc

1. "Plastic-Bag Planet," 2004. **2.** "No-Vacation Nation," 2007. **3.** Census of Marine Life 2006 Highlights. **4.** "Global Warming by the Numbers," 2008. **5.** "Bush Secret Shredding Soars," 2007. **6.** "Living in Fear and Paying a High Cost in Heart Risk," 2008. **7.** "False Pretenses," 2008. **8.** "The Iraqi Displacement Crisis," 2008. **9.** "Desperate Iraqi Refugees Turn to Sex Trade in Syria," 2007. **10.** "Hybrids, Meet Your Rival—It Gets 376.59 mpg," 2008. **11.** 2007 National Technology Readiness Survey.

A Just Foreign Policy

Five years into the occupation of Iraq, the American public has had it. Add in an overstretched economy, spreading nuclear arms, climate disruption, and scrambles for scarce resources, and many are ready to ditch the superpower role and join a world of equals to confront our common challenges.



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Beyond Superpowers. The U.S. public gets it: we can no longer shoulder the many costs of empire.



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Do It Yourself. Think foreign policy is just for politicians? These people can change your mind.



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8 Places to Start. Cuba, Israel, Iran, China, and other places where opportunities abound for improved relations.



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M.A.D. No More. George Shultz, and others who helped build our nuclear arsenal, say it's time to ban the bomb.



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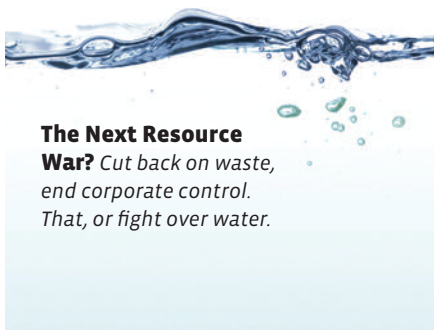
Just the Facts. The U.S. spends piles of money on foreign aid, right? See how the spending actually stacks up.



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Reclaiming the Corn. NAFTA was sold as a win-win. After 14 years of losing, Mexican farmers are making their own trade rules—fair ones.

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The Next Resource War? Cut back on waste, end corporate control. That, or fight over water.



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Our Warriors, Ourselves. Our country will not find peace until we take responsibility for our wars.



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Peace, One City at a Time. Tired of being ignored by the feds, citizens pass city laws declaring peace.

It's time to leave behind old ideas of superpowers. A changing world brings new opportunities for peace and **the chance to join a community of nations.**

The Way to a Just Foreign Policy



From DUST MEMORIES, by Iraq veteran Aaron Hughes.
Hughes' art can be seen at aarhughes.org

John Feffer

AARON HUGHES SPENT THE SPRING OF 2003 transporting supplies from Kuwait to Iraq as a soldier in the Army National Guard. Today, he is an outspoken anti-war activist.

"I didn't have an epiphany," Hughes says of his turnabout. "I just continually hoped that I could help the Iraqi people, that my fellow soldiers would be respected as human beings by the military. And after one year and three months over there, that hope was shattered." He thought his gun could be used to defend democracy only to "awake to my weapon pointed at the hungry, and I am the oppressor."

Hughes is now an artist who makes videos, performance art, and drawings that capture his experience in the Iraq War. In one particularly moving perfor-

mance, he stopped traffic by drawing on the pavement of a busy intersection in Champaign, Illinois, with a sign reading "I am an Iraq War veteran. I am guilty. I am alone. I am drawing for peace." He likens his artwork to a spark of light. "In a desert you can see a match lit from miles away," Hughes says. "Although it's just a little match, it's still being seen and it can empower a lot of people."

Aaron Hughes's journey from war to peace mirrors the larger shift in the United States since 2003. What had once been the opinion of a vocal minority—that the invasion of Iraq was wrong—has become the position of a no-longer-silent majority. There are now many points of light, many matches in the desert. The U.S. public rejects the

centerpiece of the Bush foreign policy, namely its doctrine of attacking any country that poses even a hypothetical threat. Americans support across-the-board change in our relationships with other countries on issues from climate and trade to arms control to cooperation on ending wars in the Middle East and Africa. After years of standing out in the cold, U.S. citizens want to rejoin the family of nations.

True, Americans are fearful of terrorism. And both the Democratic and Republican parties share a blinkered consensus on national security. But the counter-narratives at the heart of Aaron Hughes's art and in the programs of social movements throughout the country are becoming more prominent. The polls suggest an overwhelming desire



MICHAEL WALDRON
FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/JUXTAPOSEESOPATXUJ

Young people played a major part in protests, like this one in Tampa, Florida, marking the 5th anniversary of the Iraq War.

for change, even if the pols are behind the times. Meanwhile, the world has undergone a profound transformation in the last few years. All of this means that a dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy, not seen since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, may be just around the corner.

A Changing World

The administration of George W. Bush may well go down in history as the straw that broke the U.S. empire's back. The Bush administration replaced the Cold War with a "global war on terror" that dragged the country into an unlimited conflict with a dispersed adversary. The Bush team increased Pentagon spending by 70 percent and, along with generous tax giveaways to the wealthy, managed to erase all the deficit reductions of the Clinton era. In 2000, the United States recorded the largest budget surplus in its history: \$230 billion. By 2002, even before the Iraq invasion, the Bush administration had taken the

country \$159 billion into the red. Goldman Sachs economists predict that the 2008 deficit will be \$425 billion, which would be a new record.

All this money has not built the United States a strong economic foundation, nor has it bought Washington any new friends. The goodwill that flowed toward the United States from other nations after September 11—even from such unexpected quarters as North Korea, Iran, and Libya—quickly evaporated when their populations witnessed U.S. behavior in the "War on Terror." It didn't help that the United States rejected key international treaties such as the Kyoto protocol on global warming, withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty in order to pursue a costly and technically questionable missile defense system, and unsigned the accession agreement to the International Criminal Court.

By shifting the tax structure in favor of corporations and the wealthy and by tilting the international playing field in favor of the rich, the United States

has further widened the global divide between haves and have-nots. Add the metastasized military budget to the ballooning federal debt, the mortgage crisis, and the eroding manufacturing base and the United States begins to resemble an empire stretched thin to the breaking point, like 4th-century Rome or Britain of the 1930s. If recent U.S. history were a Greek tragedy, the triumphalist rhetoric coming out of Washington would qualify as the hubris that audiences expect just before the tragic fall.

By no means does all the responsibility fall on the shoulders of the Bush administration. In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States had a unique opportunity to help move the world from the Cold War system into a new, equitable global arrangement. Instead of strengthening the United Nations and taking the lead in shifting resources from the military into a much-anticipated "peace dividend," the Clinton administration tried to preserve the unipolar moment and »

Americans want their country to stop being the neighborhood bully and instead to be a good neighbor. The nation's economy is flagging, our military is over-stretched, and our global legitimacy is exhausted. The public no longer wants to shoulder these costs of empire.

the U.S. status as the largest military and economic power in the world.

In the 1990s, the United States maintained a sanctions regime against Iraq that killed hundreds of thousands of civilians, and conducted unilateral military actions against Serbia, Afghanistan, and Sudan. The Clinton administration failed to support a land mines treaty, pushed for a North American Free Trade Agreement that largely benefited big U.S. corporations, weakened the ABM treaty, and greatly expanded U.S. military exports. In the 1990s, Washington viewed international cooperation as a way to bolster the geo-economic power of the United States. By scorning international cooperation and relying instead on the unrestrained use of U.S. military power, the Bush administration went one step further in its attempt to remap the globe.

The next administration, Democratic or Republican, will face a world very different from that which confronted George W. Bush in 2000 or Bill Clinton in 1992. New centers of power are emerging in the form of China's new global economic and diplomatic reach, Russia's energy politics, India's economic leverage, and a new generation of Latin American leadership. The euro has a good chance of replacing the dollar as the world's currency, which would substantially undercut U.S. global power. Beyond governments, civil society has gained a new prominence as "the other superpower." Civil movements have forced military base closures, succeeded in securing an international convention on land mines, pushed the international financial community into granting substantial debt relief to impoverished countries, and helped to block further rounds of multilateral trade negotiations.

In deciding how to negotiate these demands for change and these changed realities, the United States faces a stark choice. In the next decade, we could try to maintain our grip on global power only to watch it slip through our fingers. Burdened by debt, armed to the teeth, and isolated from the world, the United States would become the "sick man" of North America, as the Ottomans were once labeled in Europe. Like many failing empires, we would be all the more dangerous the weaker we got.

Or the United States could try something unprecedented. We could turn our back on empire, much as Spain and Portugal did in the 1970s and the Soviet Union did in the late 1980s. But rather than waiting until the bitter end as these countries did, the United States could use its still considerable power to help create a more equitable world order that operates on a truly level playing field. Rome failed to pursue this option, and the Dark Ages ensued. The Ottomans, Romanovs,

and Habsburgs likewise attempted to extend their imperial leases, and a barbarous world war was the result. By turning its back on global dominance, the United States can learn from the past and stop the Greek tragedy before its fatal denouement.

A Post-Superpower U.S.A.

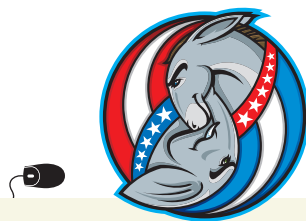
How much difference will it make if a Republican or Democrat is elected president?

On some foreign policy issues, the Republican and Democratic candidates sound like they live on different planets. Both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama want to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq eventually, while John McCain is more supportive of Bush's surge than Bush himself. The Democrats are more sensible than the Republicans on climate change, trade, and overall global cooperation.

But in other respects, the two parties are indistinguishable. For instance, no major presidential candidate has called for freezing the military budget much less reducing it. And terrorism remains a central preoccupation of both parties even though other threats—rising temperatures, nuclear apocalypse—challenge the very existence of humanity.

Although both Clinton and Obama have called for closing the detention facility at Guantanamo, neither has challenged the "global war on terror" framework. Nor have they called for closing the Guantanamo base or any of the other 700-plus U.S. military bases around the world. By failing to challenge the half-trillion dollar military budget, the Democratic candidates will be hard-pressed to find the funds to pay for their comprehensive health care and education plans.

The polling data suggest that Ameri-



Comparing Presidential Candidates on Foreign Policy

What will U.S. foreign affairs look like if John McCain prevails? What if President Obama sets the agenda? Erik Leaver looks behind the hype to the records, advisors, and promises of the presidential candidates ...

www.YesMagazine.org/candidates

#1

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Valentines for Liberian Debt

cans are eager to embrace a considerably more positive, more cooperative, and more optimistic approach to international relations. A majority of Americans believe their country should play an active part in world affairs and that the United States “should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.” Most Americans prefer economic and diplomatic approaches to military action and believe that all countries should eliminate their nuclear weapons given a well-established international verification system. And Americans strongly believe that trade should help raise labor standards globally rather than precipitate a race to the bottom.

In other words, Americans want their country to stop being the neighborhood bully and instead act like a good neighbor. In this, Americans are not giving voice to utopian aspirations. The polls in fact reflect a new realism. The nation’s economy is flagging, our military is over-stretched, and our global legitimacy is exhausted. The public no longer wants to shoulder these various costs of empire.

Until now, Americans have not translated this realism into political expression. When this happens, regardless of who is president, the days of the American empire will truly be numbered.

From the One to the Many

Rejecting militarism and empire would not be entirely unprecedented for the United States. There have been moments in the past when the country turned decisively toward global cooperation. During the 1930s, the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt adopted a “good neighbor policy” toward Latin America that replaced militarism with cooperation in allowing countries in the region to pursue their own models of political and economic development. Other important, if imperfect, programs have included the distribution of Marshall Plan aid to Europe after World War II, the creation of the Peace Corps during the Kennedy administration, and the adoption of a >>



MONÉT COOPER, JUBILEE USA NETWORK

On Valentine’s Day 2007, 10,000 cards flooded the U.S. Treasury Department offices, each bearing the phrase, “Have a heart—drop Liberia’s debt.” The cards were part of a months-long campaign to free the struggling African nation of debt repayment obligations to the World Bank. “As Liberia repays its debt to the international financial institutions, there are no functioning hospitals,” said Liberian-born scholar and author Emira Woods (pictured above), testifying before the House Financial Services Committee later that year. In November 2007, citing pressure from activists, the IMF canceled Liberia’s debt.



www.YesMagazine.org/liberia

Photo essay of Liberia by Chris Herwig

#2

A New Palestinian Citizen



GAIL FRIEDMAN

World-renowned Israeli pianist Daniel Barenboim recently became the first person known to hold both Palestinian and Israeli passports. Barenboim has long been outspoken about the rights of the Palestinian people. “I accepted [Palestinian citizenship] ... because I believe that the destinies of ... the Israeli people and the Palestinian people are inextricably linked,” Barenboim said.

» new human rights policy in the early years of Jimmy Carter's presidency.

To chart a new way in the world, we can look at these models from our own past. But we should also take a look around us.

The European Union is an example of what can happen when countries that once pursued global dominance and colonial empire decide instead to work together to solve common problems. The EU has been comparatively inclusive—expanding to embrace some countries from the former Soviet sphere and considering Turkey as well for membership. It has transferred income from the richer to the poorer parts of Europe, which has enabled countries like Ireland and Portugal to become prosperous. And with the principle of subsidiarity—the notion that authority should rest at the lowest possible level—the EU has attempted to preserve participatory democracy in what otherwise would be an all-encompassing bureaucracy. Through it all, the EU has generally favored cooperative diplomacy over military action. Although the EU is far from perfect, these initiatives still represent a distinct alternative to the U.S. go-it-alone ethos.

The United States should apply these approaches to the international system to make it similarly inclusive, economically equitable, and democratically rich. For this to happen, though, the United States must stop placing itself above the law. Only when we recognize the international rule of law will the specter of unilateralism fade away. The United States must acknowledge the higher power of international law in the same way that Germany and France accepted the sovereign power of European institutions.

European countries did not, of course, simply decide to create the European Union because their interests magically converged. Rather, the United States helped to push them together by amplifying the threat of the Soviet Union. This external threat helped to overwhelm the inevitable internal bickering among countries

What Americans Say ...

84% are worried about the way things are going for the U.S. in world affairs

74% say the world is getting more dangerous for Americans

69% say the U.S. is not doing a good job as a leader in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world

64% believe the rest of the world sees the U.S. negatively

65% say U.S. relations with the rest of the world are on the wrong track

—From the *Confidence in Foreign Policy Index*, Spring 2008, by Public Agenda & Foreign Affairs

that imperiled European integration at several points after World War II.

The world today faces a similar cohesive threat. In place of the “red scare” there is the life-threatening “green scare” of climate change. All the countries of the world are affected by climate change, and this threat should convince them to redefine sovereignty in order to save the planet. The United States must show it can be part of the solution by once again taking the rule of law and international institutions seriously.

Through binding international mechanisms, the United States can help radically cut back on carbon emissions. It can achieve global security through agreements that shrink the arms trade and reduce nuclear arsenals eventually to zero. Other treaties could establish corporate codes of conduct and set a floor for labor and environmental standards in trade negotiations. The United Nations would need to be restructured to reflect post-Cold War realities and be given a financial shot in the arm to mount peacekeeping operations that can end simmering conflicts and prevent new ones.

The United States must lead by example, not by force. Our country is number one in several dubious categories—most powerful nuclear arsenal, largest greenhouse gas emitter, leading arms exporter, biggest military

spender, greatest number of overseas military bases. So, if we want to change the world we have to start by changing ourselves.

Where Will Change Come From?

Politics is too important to be left to politicians. Hemmed in by powerful special interests, forced to devote an increasing amount of time to fundraising, and ever more beholden to focus groups and demographic calculations, politicians are less and less likely to come up with visionary plans or muster the courage to implement them.

Unless they are pushed to do so.

Social movements have in the past mobilized the American public behind dramatic shifts in U.S. policy. The civil rights movement and the women's movement have both remade U.S. society. The successes of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama would have been inconceivable a mere generation ago. They are remarkable people, but they also stand on the shoulders of powerful social movements.

Today, we need a different kind of social movement—one that focuses on U.S. foreign policy. Such a movement, drawing heavily on the peace and global justice efforts, would aim for nothing less than a transformation of the U.S. role in the world. This would be no mere change of politicians or adjustments to a few policies. It would be a change of truly global proportions. After all, the pursuit of empire is neither feasible nor desirable. At this pivotal moment, it's time to strengthen the structures of international cooperation and consign empire once and for all to the dustbin of history. 



John Feffer is the co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies and the author of numerous articles and books.

We are grateful to the **Institute for Policy Studies** for their advice and editorial contributions to this issue of YES! Their paper, “Just Security: An Alternative Foreign Policy Framework,” is at www.YesMagazine.org/justpolicy

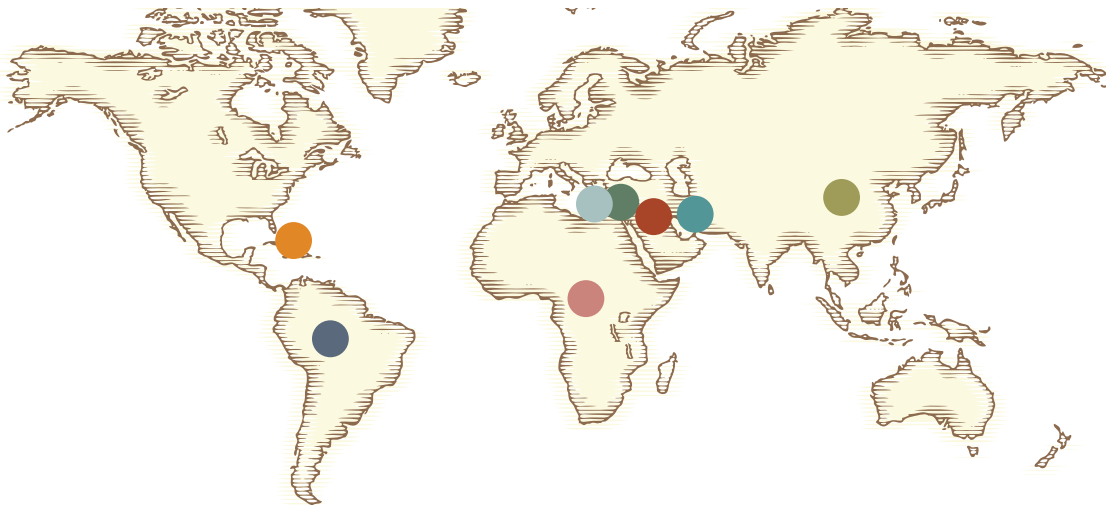


MICHAEL LOADENTHAL, OCCUPIEDLOVE.BLOGSPOT.COM
FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/MICHAELIMAGE

International Solidarity Movement volunteers form a human shield between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians.

Right Here, Right Now

How can we transform our most difficult global relationships?
8 experts give their best advice on a new role for the U.S.





*The Israel–Palestine conflict isn’t inevitable.
Here’s how both sides could gain by building on
their common interest for peace and fairness.
The United States still holds the key.*

A Real Pro-Israel Policy Helps Palestine, Too

Stephen Zunes

Peace between Israelis and Palestinians is possible—Israeli security and Palestinian rights are not mutually exclusive, but rather each is impossible without the other.

The Palestinian Authority and virtually all the Arab states are now on record expressing their willingness to recognize Israel and to provide security guarantees in return for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands conquered in the June 1967 war. This would leave the Palestinians with just 22 percent of historic Palestine. Nonetheless, the U.S.-backed Israeli position is that the Palestinians should be allowed an independent “state” on even less territory and only in a series of non-contiguous cantons surrounded by Israel and with the Israeli government controlling the air space, water resources, and the movement of people and goods.

Unlike some earlier periods in Israel’s past, the country’s survival is no longer at stake. The Israeli military is far more powerful than any combination of Arab armies. Despite the threat of periodic shelling and suicide bombings from Islamic extremists, most Israelis are relatively secure within their country’s internationally recognized borders. Where Israeli soldiers and civilians are most vulnerable is in the occupied Palestinian territories. In these areas, illegal Israeli settlements and roads—reserved for Jews only—create an apartheid-like situation, and make it extremely difficult for Israeli forces to defend against a population angry at the occupiers who have confiscated what is often their best land. Israel would be far more secure defending a clearly defined and internationally recognized border than an archipelago of illegal outposts within Palestinian territory.

It is the ongoing Israeli occupation and colonization of the West Bank, along with the siege of the Gaza Strip, which creates the hopelessness and desperation that breed extremist violence. Only when the occupation ends will the threat from Palestinian terrorism finally

have a realistic chance of being controlled.

U.S. policy in this troubled region has become increasingly controversial, but it should not be criticized as being too “pro-Israel.” U.S.-backed Israeli policies are not only jeopardizing the human rights of their Arab victims, they are hurting Israel’s legitimate interests as well.

“Peace” proposals that allow Israel to annex large swathes of occupied Palestinian territory—like those the Clinton administration pushed at Camp David in 2000 and the Bush administration has been supporting subsequently—cannot provide rights or security to either side. A truly pro-Israel policy would maintain the U.S. commitment to the security and well-being of the Jewish state, but would insist that Israel end its occupation, withdraw from its illegal settlements, and allow for the emergence of a viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian state.

This may require that the United States apply pressure—such as withholding military and economic aid—if the Israeli government continues to violate its obligations under international humanitarian law. Such aid does not help Israel much anyway. Indeed, most of the more than \$2 billion in annual “military assistance” to Israel amounts to a credit line to American arms manufacturers and actually ends up costing Israelis two to three times that amount for personnel, training, and spare parts. The additional \$2 billion in U.S. economic aid is little more than the interest Israel is required to pay American banks from loans for previous arms purchases.

Many of those in Washington who call themselves supporters of Israel are supporting Israel’s hawks who are making the country more dependent upon the United States. This increases Israel’s vulnerability by preventing it from recognizing its natural alliance with the world’s Afro-Asian majority. Within Israel, there is a solid progressive minority that supports the necessary compromises for peace and a similar-sized militaristic minority that does not. Most Israelis are in the middle and, as Israeli scholar and peace activist Galia Golan describes it, “They will lean left when Israel is feeling pressure from the United States but lean right in situations like today when there is no U.S. pressure.”

The combination of Israeli technology, Palestinian entrepreneurship and industriousness, and Arabian oil wealth could result in an economic, political, and social transformation of the Middle East. This would be highly beneficial to the region’s inhabitants, but not necessarily to powerful U.S. interests who benefit from the current policy of divide-and-rule. An Israel at peace with its neighbors would be far less likely to be willing to serve as a reliable ally in support of U.S. hegemonic designs in this critical region.

If the United States really wants to be a friend of Israel, the U.S. government must apply some “tough love.” This would entail unconditional support for Israel’s right to exist in peace and security, but with an insistence that Israel uphold its international obligations and withdraw its settlers and troops from the occupied territories. Only then can the violence end and peace become a reality. And only then will the United States be a true friend of Israel.

Stephen Zunes is a professor of politics at the University of San Francisco, where he chairs the Middle East Studies program. He is the author of *Tinderbox: U.S. Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism* (Common Courage, 2003) and a member of the advisory board of the Tikkun Community. www.stephenzunes.org



Rising prices make African oil a tempting prize. But African leaders are resisting U.S. plans to militarize the continent, saying their resources should be used to alleviate poverty.

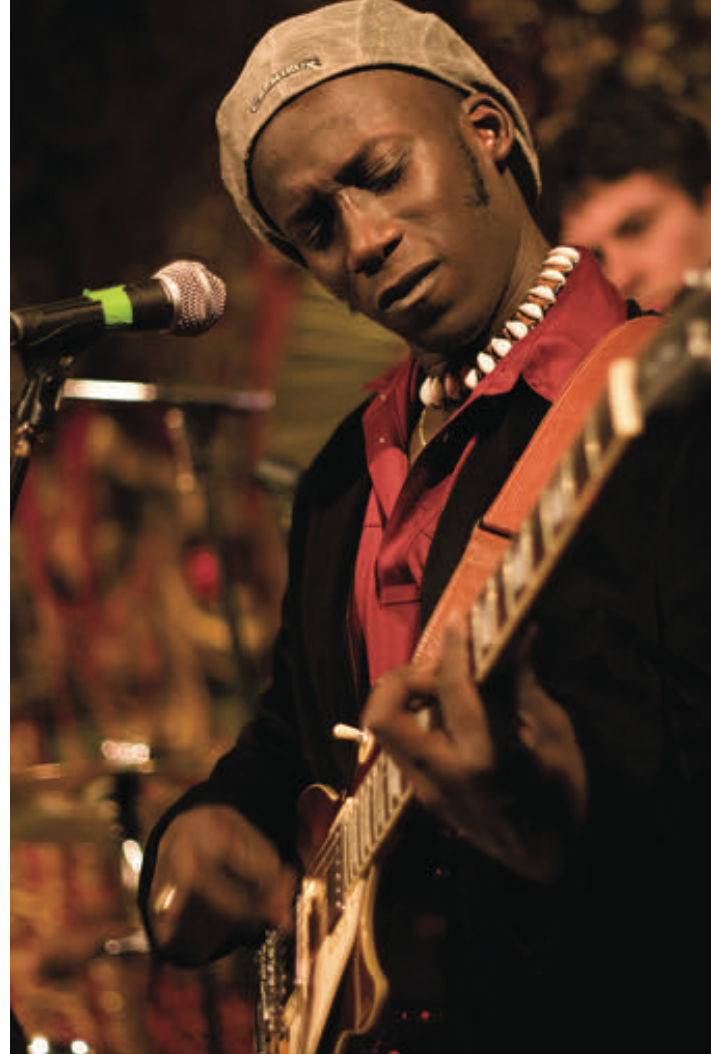
Africa’s Own Needs Should Come First

Emira Woods

In his 2006 State of the Union Address, President Bush declared, “Here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil.” The United States increasingly looks to Africa to feed that addiction. In fact, the Department of Energy says that Africa—especially Algeria, Nigeria, and Angola—supply 24 percent of U.S. imports, and has now surpassed the Middle East as a source.

As global supplies shrink and the Middle East remains in turmoil, the United States is not without competition in Africa. China and other emerging economies are also looking to the continent and only seeing the oil needed to feed their rapid growth. This is especially true as new discoveries of oil on the African continent seem to pop up every year. Ghana discovered oil off its shores in 2007, Mauritania in 2006, and many other countries are ramping up exploration.

In an effort to control oil and contain China’s role in Africa, the Bush Administration has designed a scheme to militarize U.S.-Africa policy. “One of Donald Rums- >>



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#3

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Sweet Mother Tour

Ghanaian-American Derrick Ashong didn’t like what he was seeing when he watched images of Africa on TV: “When I see stories of my homeland, it’s like death, destruction, warfare, violence, the worst things on the planet.” Ashong decided to do something about Africa’s image problem. The 32-year-old Hip Hop musician, along with fellow members of the band Soulfège, founded the pop music and multimedia phenomenon Sweet Mother Tour, which has brought positive music, videos, and stories about Africa to 146 million viewers through television and radio broadcasts in more than 45 countries. The goal: to bring to Africa a sense of empowerment and cultural self-worth as a foundation for cultural progress.

In April 2006, the group convened a gathering of 250 people from several countries to discuss issues facing the pan-African community. The Tour has also expanded its focus beyond Africa to support youth leadership in art, business, and politics.



www.YesMagazine.org/sweetmother
Listen to music by Soulfège



www.YesMagazine.org/theshift
Trailer for the film *The Shift*

» feld's final acts as secretary of defense [was] to put the finishing touches on an Africa Command for the U.S. military," William Arkin reports in *The Washington Post*. This unified military command, AFRICOM, would coordinate U.S.-Africa engagement including humanitarian assistance, development programs, and even diplomacy. Military officers would be responsible for overseeing school construction, drilling wells, and other traditional State Department functions.

None of this planning, ostensibly for the defense of the continent, involved consulting the nations that would bear the burden of this military expansion. African leaders are expressing concerns about the U.S. militarization of the continent. South Africa, among the first to speak out, organized the 14-nation Southern African Development Community to say "no" to expanding the U.S. military footprint in their region. Nigeria followed, raising its voice in opposition to AFRICOM and urging the oil-rich West African Gulf of Guinea states to reject the plan. Algeria and Libya are also leading voices of resistance, organizing the North African states.

These coalitions are the work of national leaders who are responding to public pressure. African human rights advocates, civil society leaders, editorial writers, and cartoonists increasingly are raising alarms about AFRICOM. Throughout the continent, Africans are realizing that in a world of finite resources, funds spent on militarism come at the expense of education, healthcare, and housing, the building blocks of stable societies.

A just U.S. foreign policy would first end the addiction to oil. This addiction is causing upheaval around the world and is also leading to dangerous climate change. A just U.S.-Africa policy would put the needs and priorities of Africa first.

Instead of militarizing the continent, we should end the flow of arms to the region. Instead of selling arms or food on credit, we should remove the existing illegitimate debt burden. Instead of pushing deals that privilege U.S. companies at the expense of small farmers, we should promote fair trade that prioritizes local and regional markets. The African Union should be the first responders to conflict, with the United Nations in its tried-and-true role of peacekeeper, leading negotiations that tackle root causes of protracted crises.

These are the building blocks for security and development in Africa. There is no need for the U.S. military to take command and control in Africa or to dictate U.S.-Africa policy.

Emira Woods is co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies. She is an expert on U.S. foreign policy with a special emphasis on Africa and the developing world.



If there's one thing Cubans in Miami share with compatriots in Cuba, it's a desire to travel freely—especially to visit family. Lifting the U.S. travel ban could open all kinds of doors.

Family Reunions Build Bridges to Cuba

Elizabeth Cerejido

Since Fidel Castro stepped down earlier this year, both the exile community in Miami and the Bush administration have repeatedly used phrases like "transition toward democracy" when discussing the future of Cuba. In my opinion, these references are vacuous.

How can we speak about a future relationship with Cuba when we haven't prepared the way for that transition to take place? Before transition, there must be reconciliation. How else can we begin to imagine a future Cuba that incorporates both *los de aquí y los de allá* (those living here and those living there)? How else will each side gain enough understanding of the other to transcend the stereotypes promoted by the Cuban and American governments and the media?

I belong to a second-generation of Cuban-Americans whose lives have been shaped by the politics of intolerance that have long defined the relationship between two opposing realities. We have been robbed of the opportunity to be part of the process that shapes the US-Cuba political discourse.

The United States should lift the embargo on travel to and trade with Cuba, and abandon attempts at isolation. Instead, the United States should adopt a policy of engagement.

Creating opportunities for meaningful exchanges among generations of Cuban Americans and their Cuban counterparts will prove an effective and powerful engine for change. I have experienced time and time again the profoundly positive effects of this exchange—during my travels to Cuba since 2002.

Elizabeth Cerejido was born in Havana, Cuba in 1969 and raised in Miami. She is an artist and art historian, who specializes in contemporary Latin American art and photography, with a special focus in Cuban art.



#4

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

If you think that only a small miracle would get a U.S. federal worker to sit in a meeting with Cuban scientists, you may be partly right. In 2004 and 2005, a series of miraculous (though contested) sightings of ivory-billed woodpeckers, long thought extinct, made headlines nationwide, fueling a search for the bird in the swamps of Arkansas. Largely unreported was the long-running saga of the birds' southern relatives in Cuba. In the 1980s, scientists recorded fleeting evidence of the ivory-bill in Cuban forests, and some believe an elusive Cuban population persists.

In recent years, biologists from both countries have been swapping information on the ivory-bill at collaborative meetings—some attended informally by U.S. officials. The scientists hope intergovernmental partnerships will arise—perhaps through an inspiring group called Partners in Flight.

Formed in 1990, Partners is a loose collaboration stitched together by the habits of birds, which can travel from as far north as Canada to wintering grounds in places like Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela. Extraordinary connections have formed among biologists, NGOs, and governments in these countries. They are encouraging shade-grown coffee plantations designed to support bird habitat, and exchanges among students and scientists. Above all, they share a powerful collective purpose—to protect birds.



The 2006 mid-term election sent a clear signal: Americans want out of Iraq. As the occupation drags on, 10 candidates for the U.S. Congress announce a plan to bring all the troops home.

Candidates for Congress Show the Way Out

Erik Leaver

How-to-leave-Iraq plans have proliferated over the past five years. Most of the plans proposed by Democrats have brimmed with rhetoric aimed at scoring points against President George W. Bush rather than working out the messy details of how to end the occupation and what to do in its aftermath.

Ten Democratic candidates for Congress have just changed that with the announcement of a plan that sets forth a strategic vision both to bring the Iraq War to an end and to prevent future "Iraqs."

Led by Darcy Burner, a candidate for the U.S. Congress from Washington state, and nine other candidates, "A Responsible Plan to End the War in Iraq" has many elements in common with other initiatives seeking to end the war. It would draw down troops, create a "diplomatic surge," and provide relief for refugees.

But it sharply differs on the question of the scope of withdrawal. For example, the plans of presidential candidates Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton call for "combat" troops to withdraw, but would leave 30,000-60,000 troops behind for counterinsurgency operations and military training. A Responsible Plan rejects such a strategy saying, "The continued presence in Iraq of so-called 'residual forces' ... would be a mistake."

The 10 candidates argue that residual forces would be in the same position U.S. forces are in today: they would be targeted by insurgents, they would inevitably get involved in Iraq's domestic political disputes, and U.S. troops would continue fighting alongside Iraqis outside of U.S. control.

The plan stands out in its understanding of the role >>



» the United States needs to play following the withdrawal. It calls for fundamental changes in the State Department to improve its capacity for nation-building and diplomatic engagement. Most importantly, it calls for strong, international efforts to restart reconstruction. As many lawmakers in Washington, such as Senators Carl Levin (D-MI) and John Warner (R-VA), are calling for Iraqis to pay for their own reconstruction, authors of A Responsible Plan note the need for a massive jobs program supported by the U.S. and international community to rebuild the country.

To reduce the chances for future Iraq-style wars, the plan argues for a reining in of the executive branch and a realignment of power between the three branches of government. The plans says presidential signing statements should be eliminated, war funding should be incorporated into the normal budget process, and warrantless spying on U.S. citizens should end.

Like all of the withdrawal proposals, the plan isn't perfect. Its most notable shortfall is that it fails to set a timetable for withdrawal, and does not propose spending levels for Iraq reconstruction. It also does not address the long-term challenges that al Qaeda presents in the region.

Despite these deficiencies, the effort is noteworthy as it seeks to put Iraq back into the public debate during the election. As coverage of the nation's economic woes overshadowed the war, many Democratic pollsters urged candidates to shift their messages. But the plan's 10 authors and the 40 other candidates for the House and Senate that have endorsed it are acutely aware that Democratic challenger Ned Lamont's 2006 campaign shifted the public's opinion on Iraq during his primary race against Senator Joe Lieberman. By releasing this plan, these candidates are seeking to keep the pressure on for a withdrawal, even as many in the Democratic Party are resigned to waiting for a new president. Indeed, A Responsible Plan, contains references to no less than 15 existing bills in the House and Senate that would move Iraq policy forward if they were passed today.

If elected, these 50 new members would come into office with a clear, executable plan needed to set our country back on the right path and a chance to offer the Iraqi people a new beginning. We owe our country, the world, and Iraq no less.

Interested? Read the plan at www.responsibleplan.com.

Erik Leaver is the policy outreach director for Foreign Policy In Focus and a research fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies.

Fighting terrorism through massive military attacks is like pouring gasoline on a fire—it plays right into the hands of militants. Here's a proven strategy for taking down terrorism.

Fighting Terror with Law and Dignity

Tom Andrews

The Bush administration policies of militarism, unilateralism, and the violation of international law have imperiled our nation and the planet. The number of terrorist attacks throughout the world has increased steadily since 2003. There were over 14,000 terrorist attacks resulting in nearly 20,000 deaths in 2006, according to the State Department. That's 25 percent more attacks and 40 percent more deaths than the previous year.

How did this come to be? In 2005, Porter Goss, then director of the CIA, testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. The front page of *The Washington Post* told the story of his testimony: "War Helps Recruit Terrorists, Hill Told."

The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concluded that the war in Iraq has become "a cause célèbre" for jihadists steadily filling the ranks with fresh recruits. Al Qaeda is fully reconstituted with its command structure restored, the NIE said, and it is raising considerable funds as it trains a new generation of terrorists and plans more attacks.

At the heart of the so-called "war on terror" is the failure to understand the root of terror. Terrorism is not an enemy, it is a tactic—a deadly and severely misguided tactic of radicals who view it as the only means to take on a great superpower. The "war on terror" has played directly into their hands by transforming these criminals into warriors.

Counterterrorism experts Steve Simon and Dan Benjamin advise us to approach the challenge of al Qaeda and radical militants in terms of two concentric circles: a large outer ring of potential sympathizers and a small inner core of hardcore militants.

Success in dealing with the inner core of radicals depends directly on what the Bush administration has undermined—international cooperation and coordination. Success in tracking down and capturing al Qaeda

operatives has come from international law enforcement, tapping intelligence from cooperating local sources, and world-wide coordination to shut down the financial support that flows to terrorists.

For the outer circle of potential supporters, the focus should be on peeling away support from bin Laden's agenda. This will require a commitment to diplomacy for resolving conflicts and an investment in economic development that creates opportunities for marginalized populations. It will also mean ending the military occupation of Iraq, closing down Guantanamo Bay, and ending the odious practice of torture.

A go-it-alone, international-law-be-damned approach both alienates those from the outer circle whom bin Laden is trying to recruit and it undermines the international cooperation that is so vital to apprehending and stopping the hardcore militants in the inner circle.

The way to stop the growth of international terrorism is to end the "war on terror," bury the "Bush Doctrine," and restore our nation's moral standing in the world.

Tom Andrews is a former member of Congress and the House Armed Services Committee (D-ME) and currently serves as national director of the Win Without War coalition. www.standupcongress.org

#5

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Fellowship of Reconciliation

"Our experience of Iranian society, the warm welcome of the people, and the hope for real dialogue, breaks down all the stereotypes that have been promulgated over the last 27 years," says David Robinson, a U.S. "citizen ambassador" to Iran through a series of dialogues organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The ambassadors have met with religious leaders, the media, and ordinary citizens—and, in 2006, Iran's vice-president—to promote dialogue and peace. Pictured below is the December 2007 delegation.



Iran helped the United States overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan, and it could help bring peace to Iraq and the region. Or, as some advocate, we could just bomb them.

How Iran Could Help the United States

Robert Naiman

You wouldn't know it from the aggressive language coming out of Washington, DC, and Tehran, but most Americans and Iranians would be better off if tensions between our countries were dramatically reduced.

The urgent interest of most Americans is getting U.S. troops out of Iraq. Iran has tremendous influence with Iraq's Maliki government—some analysts say even more than the U.S.—and could press the Iraqi government to more seriously pursue political compromises that would help stabilize the country and facilitate a U.S. withdrawal. But Iran is unlikely to fully use its influence in this way while the U.S. continues to threaten it with military force, wide-ranging sanctions, and regime change.

Likewise, most Iranians want their government to focus on economic development, improving job opportunities, and relaxing restrictions on civil liberties. But these domestic reforms are unlikely to progress much in the current atmosphere of confrontation, in which Iranians are pressed to unite against foreign threats, and domestic critics of the government are marginalized, or worse, as the witting or unwitting agents of a hostile foreign power. >>



DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Jehane Noujaim



In 2003, Egyptian-American filmmaker Jehane Noujaim went to Iraq with no funding and little more than a conviction that the American public wasn't hearing the whole story about the Iraq war. Traveling between U.S. media headquarters and Al Jazeera, Noujaim captured in the film *Control Room* the divergent ways that Arab and Western media covered the war. The film aired

before American and Arab audiences, shaking false stereotypes on both sides.

After receiving the prestigious TED prize in 2006, Noujaim founded Pangea Day, a global independent film festival that is more about peace-making and cultural understanding than movies. "I think everybody's had ... watching a very powerful film, that feeling of transformation. How can we use that ... to create a movement?"



www.YesMagazine.org/jehane

See Noujaim's TED prize speech and her launch of Pangea Day

Reality Tours



SARAH VAN GELDER

The U.S. government routinely labels other countries as sources of evil and their leaders as enemies. How do we know if the claims are true? Global Exchange believes there is nothing like seeing for yourself. Each year, they take hundreds of "delegates" to more than 30 countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Instead of the usual tourist stops, these "reality tours" visit worker-owned cooperatives, health clinics, political rallies, and community television stations. Venezuela is a popular destination. During a tour that coincided with President Hugo Chavez's December 2006 re-election bid, tour leader Leonardo Lameda (left) admired a figure of *El Presidente*. Pull the string, and you get a very long speech. globalexchange.org/tours

Iran could do more than help stabilize Iraq and facilitate the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Iran also has significant influence with the Hamas movement in Palestine and the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon, which are at loggerheads with the U.S.-backed Palestinian Authority and the U.S.-backed Lebanese government, respectively. Regardless of what we think of these movements, they have significant popular support and are unlikely to simply disappear. The conflicts they are part of are a significant source of violence and instability in the region. Iran could use its influence with these movements to press them to abandon the use of violence and focus on nonviolent political activity.

Do these claims about how Iran could work with the U.S. seem far-fetched? Iran offered in a 2003 diplomatic initiative to do all these things. But the Bush administration rejected the initiative out of hand. Iran cooperated with the U.S. to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan; its reward for this cooperation was being named part of the "axis of evil."

Americans also want greater emphasis on diplomacy. A recent USA Today/Gallup Poll found that, by a margin of 73 percent to 18 percent, Americans favor economic and diplomatic efforts over military action.

By setting preconditions for diplomacy that Iran will almost certainly not meet, the Bush administration is making real diplomacy impossible.

It is risky to wait for the next administration to take office to resolve this issue. The Bush administration still has nine months left. During that time, if a climate of confrontation between the U.S. and Iran continues, small incidents could spiral out of control and we could find ourselves involved in yet another war. Or, as some predict, the administration could order air strikes against Iran, unleashing a cycle of retaliation whose end is hard to see.

The Bush administration has shown that it can be responsive to sustained congressional pressure, which in turn results from public pressure. The congressionally appointed, bipartisan Iraq Study Group unanimously recommended talks with Iran. In response, the Bush administration began limited talks with Iran concerning Iraq, which the Iraqi government says have been useful. These talks should be expanded to include all issues in dispute between the two countries. If members of Congress hear consistently from their constituents that a "surge" of U.S. diplomacy is needed, not a bombing campaign, U.S. policy could change, even before the next election.

Robert Naiman is national coordinator at Just Foreign Policy, which supports a multilateral approach to foreign affairs. www.justforeignpolicy.org



www.YesMagazine.org/iranpics

Photo essay of daily life in Iran by Arash Shiva

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Peace Corps Seed Bankers



For years, the U.S. imposed authoritarian leaders and corporate-friendly policies on Latin American countries. Now they are setting their own path.

Respecting Our Neighbors to the South

Nadia Martinez

Having only recently become a U.S. citizen, I now join the millions of immigrants eligible to vote in this year's presidential election. For my native Latin America, none of the candidates is offering a real alternative to the failed policies that have made the U.S. government wildly unpopular among people from Mexico to Argentina.

The United States became notorious during the 20th century for backing brutal dictators under the guise of preventing a communist takeover of Latin America. Past military interventions in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, and elsewhere, and support of repressive regimes like that of Augusto Pinochet in Chile have made Latin Americans skeptical of U.S. motives. More recently, U.S. policy toward the region has focused on two issues: drugs and free trade. Both policies have harmed the economic and political lives of the region.

Today, Latin America is undergoing a transformation as indigenous and social movements are rising up and demanding a say about the future. Elected leaders in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and to varying degrees Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay are asserting themselves as symbols of an independent and even defiant Latin America. And voters in those countries are overwhelmingly backing them.

So how should the United States respond? A successful policy begins with respect. The U.S. should give the elected governments the space to succeed rather than flooding discredited opposition movements with aid in an attempt to influence elections and undermine governments as they are doing in Bolivia and Venezuela.

Respect can be shown also through abandoning our insistence on so-called "free" trade policies, which favor transnational corporations over the environment and the rights of workers. Instead, we can join the region's move toward fair trade policies that support sustainable development in poor countries and protect small farm-

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In 2005, Peace Corps volunteers Justin Mog and Amanda Fuller were dispatched to an impoverished community in rural Paraguay, where they hoped to help curb farmers' overreliance on cotton, a pesticide-heavy, soil-degrading cash crop. The volunteers listened to the locals: With prices plummeting, farmers were willing to try something new. "But their first question was, 'Where can I get affordable seed?'" says Mog. The two launched a seed bank, which loans tree, vegetable, and alternative crop seeds to Paraguayans. After harvest, farmers return 110 percent of the amount of seed borrowed.

Worldwide, some 8,000 Americans are now volunteering in the tiny independent agency John F. Kennedy set up in 1961 to promote "world peace and human progress." While some criticize the Peace Corps as just another institutionalized means for exporting American culture, many Peace Corps projects, like the Paraguayan seed bank, are uniquely participatory.



www.YesMagazine.org/seedbank

Photo essay of life as a volunteer in
Peace Corps Paraguay

» ers from unfettered competition with heavily subsidized agribusiness. Our trade policies should be based on the idea that our hemisphere is more secure when all peoples can develop diversified economies that meet local needs first, and raise people out of poverty and hopelessness. Strong local economies would also reduce pressure on poor people to migrate, easing much of the illegal immigration in the United States.

Respect can be extended by ending the senseless war on coca farmers, which has fueled conflict and human rights abuses. Instead, we could help countries deal with drug trafficking, money laundering, and other organized crime through good policing—if they request the help.

It would be respectful to cancel the illegitimate debt acquired by past authoritarian regimes so that governments can address endemic poverty and improve people's lives.

The next president could create a real "good neighbor" relationship with Latin America. A promise to do that would go a long way toward earning my vote. In Latin America, nothing else will be welcomed.

Nadia Martinez, a native of Panama, is an associate fellow with the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.



The U.S. doesn't export much to China, but it has managed one deadly export: a consumer-based lifestyle. That's something we need to change, beginning at home.

A Potential Ally in Fighting Consumerism

Dale Jiajun Wen

China and America are becoming alarmingly alike. The first President Bush proclaimed, "The American lifestyle is non-negotiable." China's growing consumer class responds to criticism with, "The Americans have it. Now it is our turn." Meanwhile, majorities in both countries face a growing gap between rich and poor, declining public services, and environmental degradation.

"The most toxic export of the U.S. is our wasteful way

of production and consumption," says Annie Leonard, maker of "The Story of Stuff," a sharp yet funny video critique of the overstuffed life. Unfortunately, this U.S. export is spectacularly successful in China.

If both countries continue on the overconsumption track, a collision is inevitable. China alone would need the resources of 1.12 Earths to achieve a U.S. lifestyle. Future conflicts may be disguised as geopolitics, but they will be essentially about the control of resources. The recent "Free Tibet" campaign is already perceived by most overseas Chinese as such an attempt, as it bears alarming similarity to the "Free Iraq" campaign.

Yet there are other possibilities. I have lived in the United States for more than a decade, and am fortunate to know another America: pioneers of organic and permaculture food production, followers of voluntary simplicity, activists challenging corporate domination, and many others working to rebuild a community-based economy. Millions of Americans seek a more fulfilling, just, and sustainable way of life. This America is out of the limelight, yet it is where I see hope for both America and the world.

Similar things are happening in China. Though the mainstream media still touts economic growth as the panacea for all problems, more and more Chinese are questioning corporate globalization and working toward alternative models. One result is the booming new rural reconstruction movement, which incorporates aspects of traditional Chinese culture, including harmony with nature, community values, and a sense of sufficiency instead of endless pursuit of wealth and consumption. The movement organizes farmers to work with each other to be a healthy people on a healthy land. This vision can foster collaboration across the globe, instead of "free trade" which often pitches farmers against each other. After visiting some family farms in Minnesota to observe permaculture practices and community supported agriculture, a leading Chinese agricultural expert said, "If you Americans were spreading all these around the world, you would be much more welcomed."

Are Americans ready to press for policies that address the destruction the materialistic American dream has caused? Might they, for example, support higher fuel taxes as the German public has done? We only get one planet to live on—this is more non-negotiable than anything else.

Americans and Chinese can work together as allies in a fight for more justice and less greed, in a search for better dreams for humankind; or we can start a last-one-standing fight for the final drop of oil.

Dale Jiajun Wen is an activist scholar from China, working to build bridges between emerging alternative voices in China and the global social justice movement. She works for the International Forum on Globalization where she maintains a bimonthly China newsletter on www.ifg.org.

Sarah van Gelder interviews
George Shultz,
former Secretary of State

George Shultz was there when
nuclear disarmament slipped
through our fingers. Today, he
says, action is even more urgent.

“NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS”

Twenty years ago, U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev came within a hair's breadth of agreeing to phase out their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The encounter took place at Reykjavik, Iceland, and one of the people who was there was Secretary of State George Shultz. When the proposal came up, he is reported to have said, "Let's do it!"

Today, from his office at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, he's back on the case. In collaboration with former Senator Sam Nunn, William Perry, who was secretary of defense under Bill Clinton, and Henry Kissinger, this veteran of the Cold War is taking on what may be the biggest threat to human security.

YES! executive editor Sarah van Gelder spoke to Secretary Shultz in March 2008, shortly after he returned from Oslo, where he led the third in a series of conferences on eliminating nuclear weapons—this one involving representatives of all the countries of the world that have nuclear weapons.



1986, REYKJAVIK
Shultz (standing) confers
with President Reagan before
the meeting with Gorbachev.

AP / WHITE HOUSE

Sarah: Can the United States be secure without its nuclear stockpile?

Shultz: You're going to be more secure if there are no nuclear weapons in the world, because if you achieve this goal, you won't be risking having nuclear weapons blow up in one of our cities.

At the conferences abroad I've been attending, it was certainly borne in on me that the notion of a two-tiered world—where some countries can have nuclear weapons and others can't—is getting less and less acceptable.

The Nonproliferation Treaty in Article 6 says that those who don't have nuclear weapons will have access to nuclear power technology and they won't try to get nuclear weapons, and those who *do* have nuclear weapons will phase down their importance eventually to zero. People are looking for governments to live up to that treaty. »

» **Sarah:** Is it possible to verify that nuclear weapons have been eliminated?

Shultz: That's one of the main subjects to be worked on. The British government has volunteered to take on verification—to try to think through how you work it out.

We have the START Treaty between the United States and Russia that includes the best verification procedures of anything that's been developed. It expires in December of 2009, so we're suggesting that the treaty be extended so as not to lose those verification provisions.

Sarah: How would it affect our relative power in the world if nuclear weapons were eliminated?

Shultz: At a meeting in Washington, DC, about a year ago, Henry Kissinger said, "The thing that I lost sleep over, and that I agonized about more than anything else when I was in office, was what would I say if the president ever asked my advice on whether to use a nuclear weapon, knowing that a hundred thousand or maybe more would be killed, and if there were a nuclear exchange, it would be in the billions."

Now that we know so much about these weapons and their power, they're almost weapons that we wouldn't use. So I think we're better off without them.

Of course the United States has such awesome conventional power, I think probably that on the relative balance we would be well off.

Sarah: Do you think there can be nuclear energy without proliferation?

Shultz: If you get the nuclear fuel cycle under control, yes. But I listen to people talk about nuclear power plants, and they hardly ever mention the issue. I don't think people are alert to this problem.

In terms of the nuclear fuel cycle, there is just as strong a feeling that you don't want to have another two-tiered system, in which some countries are allowed to enrich uranium and others aren't. I think there's going to have to be an international regime on that.

Sarah: Why is the reaction today so different from the reaction to President Reagan's proposal at Reykjavik to eliminate nuclear weapons?

Shultz: After Reykjavik, you may remember, the reaction was very negative. Margaret Thatcher came over, practically summoned me to the British ambassador's residence, and she read me out: How could I possibly take part in such a discussion?

I think it has dawned on people that we've gone to sleep on this subject. The proliferation problems are growing, and the amount of nuclear fissile material around is large, and some of it isn't well safeguarded. We have a terrorist phenomenon, and the non-proliferation treaty is fraying at the edges. So maybe we should do something a little different.

Sarah: You just returned from a conference in Norway on the abolition of nuclear weapons. What happened there?

Shultz: Sam Nunn and I went. Henry Kissinger and Bill Perry were not able to go. Twenty nine countries were represented—all the countries with nuclear weapons, including Israel. The people there had their doubts, but they were intrigued; they can see there is a danger—a tipping point problem.

We're getting to the point where proliferation could get out of control. If a terrorist group gets a nuclear weapon or the fissile material from which they can make one, they aren't getting it for deterrence. They are getting it to use it.

The Doctrine of Deterrence justified nuclear weapons during the Cold War. The deterrent impact of Mutual Assured Destruction kept an uneasy peace, although if you were involved, you knew that there were more close calls than you were comfortable with.

At the end of the Cold War, more countries were acquiring nuclear weapons, and others were aspiring to have them.

The Gulf states all want nuclear power plants, and if you enrich your own uranium—as the Iranians aspire to do—you can enrich it for a weapon. When the fuel is spent, it can be reprocessed into plutonium. If nuclear power spreads—as the people who are worried about global warming are pushing for—then the problem of the nuclear fuel cycle emerges. All of these things together give you that uneasy feeling.

Sarah: Have you had a response from the leading presidential contenders?

Shultz: I haven't seen anything from Senator McCain. Senator Obama has made a statement supporting what we're doing. Senator Clinton has been a little less forthcoming than Senator Obama, but has indicated interest.

I hope that I, or Henry, or someone can get a chance to talk to Senator McCain before long.

Sarah: Is there active opposition to your initiative to eliminate nuclear weapons?

Shultz: There are people who think that the idea is not a good idea and that it will never happen. Mostly, however, they say that they are in favor of the steps that we've identified. So we say, OK, let's get going on the steps that we can do today that will make the world safer.

Sarah: What response have you had from the Russians to this proposal?

Shultz: No formal response. But, at our meeting in London, two former Russian foreign ministers were there, one of whom, I understand, is close to the current regime. When he finished speaking, I said, "Igor, will you let me translate what you said? It is that as far as Russia is concerned, the door is open." He said, "That's a fair translation. We're ready to think about it."

That's as good as you can get.

Sarah: What is the first thing you would like the next president to do to move this process forward?

Shultz: I'm not trying to prescribe for the next president. We're trying to get the building blocks ready. We've talked to people from some other countries, and they're interested enough so that if the United States, working with Russia, were to take this initiative and get other people to join, it might be pretty exciting. And it might once again put us in the role of doing something that people feel good about.

There is quite a list of people—large numbers of former secretaries of state, defense, and national security advisors—who have publicly stated their support. So we'd be in a position to say to a new president, "If you decide to go this way, here are a bunch of people from both sides of the aisle who are willing to stand up behind you and applaud." 7

A POWERFUL PEACE

IF THE NUCLEAR POWERS WISH TO BE SAFE FROM NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THEY MUST SURRENDER THEIR OWN

Jonathan Schell

With each year that passes, nuclear weapons provide their possessors with less safety while provoking more danger. Possession of nuclear arms provokes proliferation. Both nourish the global nuclear infrastructure, which in turn enlarges the possibility of acquisition by terrorist groups.

The step that is needed to break this cycle can be as little doubted as the source of the problem. The double standard of nuclear haves and have-nots must be replaced by a single standard, which can only be the goal of a world

free of all nuclear weapons.

What is it that prevents sensible steps toward nuclear abolition from being taken? The answer cannot be in doubt, either. It is the resolve of the world's nuclear powers to hold on to their nuclear arsenals. Countries that already have nuclear arms cite proliferation as their reason for keeping them, and those lacking nuclear arms seek them in large measure because they feel menaced by those with them.

A double-standard regime is a study in futility—a divided house that cannot

stand. Its advocates preach what they have no intention of practicing. It is up to the nuclear powers to take the first step.

Their nuclear arsenals would be the largest pile of bargaining chips ever brought to any negotiating table. More powerful as instruments of peace than they ever can be for war, they would likely be more than adequate for winning agreements from the non-nuclear powers that would choke off proliferation forever.

The art of the negotiation would be to pay for strict, inspectable, enforceable >>

#8

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes Base Closure Movements

The United States has more than 700 bases on foreign soil. There's a growing movement to make that number smaller. From Okinawans, who have protested the U.S. presence since the 1970s, to the Chagos people of Diego Garcia, fighting in court to return to their home on Diego Garcia, to Italians protesting the expansion of the Aviano airbase, to Czechs and Poles rising up against U.S. plans to site anti-missile facilities in those countries, people are organizing to send the U.S. military home. No-bases.net is an information clearinghouse, started to help protestors around the world connect and share information. Below, messages of protest are pinned to the barbed wire that separates Okinawa's Camp Schwab from the rest of Henoko Bay beach.

SORCHA CLIFFORD, BEEJAPAN.ORG



» nonproliferation and nuclear-materials-control agreements in the coin of existing nuclear bombs. What would be the price to the nuclear powers, for example, of a surrender by the nuclear-weapons-free states of their rights to the troublesome nuclear fuel cycle, which stands at the heart of the proliferation dilemma? Perhaps reductions by Russia and the United States from two thousand to a few hundred weapons each plus ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty?

Further reductions, now involving the other nuclear powers, might pay for establishment and practice of inspections of ever-greater severity, and still further reductions might buy agreements on enforcement of the final ban on nuclear arms. When nuclear weapons holdings reached zero, former nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states, abolitionists all, would exercise a unanimous will to manage, control, roll back, and extirpate all nuclear weapon technology.

A world from which nuclear weapons had been banned would, of course, not be without its dangers, including nuclear ones. But we must ask how they would compare with those now approaching.

Let us suppose that the nuclear powers had agreed to move step by step toward eliminating their own arsenals. The iron chains of fear that link all the nuclear arsenals in the world would then be replaced by bonds of reassurance. Knowing that Russia and the United States were disarming, China could agree to disarm. Knowing that China was disarming, India could agree to disarm. Knowing that India was ready to disarm, Pakistan could agree to disarm as well. Any country that decided otherwise would find itself up against the sort of united global will so conspicuous by its absence today.

During the Cold War, the principal objection in the United States to a nuclear-weapon-free world was that you could not get there. That objection melted away with the Soviet Union, and today the principal objection is that



How We Can Do It

The United States, as the owner of the biggest nuclear arsenal, must take the initiative and lead the world to take these steps:

De-alert. Take nuclear weapons off high alert; separate warheads from missiles.

No First Use. Agree to binding bans on first use of nuclear weapons.

No New Weapons. Ban research and development of all new nuclear weapons.

Ban Nuclear Testing

Forever. Bring into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Control Nuclear Material.

Create a verifiable treaty to bring all weapons-grade nuclear material and the technology to create it under strict international control.

Nuclear Weapons

Convention. Start negotiations, as required by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, for the phased, verifiable and irreversible elimination of weapons.

Resources for

Peace. Spend the tens of billions now spent for nuclear arms on national and global humanitarian projects.

Source: The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, wagingpeace.org

even if you could get there, you would not want to be there. The arguments usually begin with the observation that nuclear weapons can never be disinvited, and that a world free of nuclear weapons is therefore at worst a mirage, at best a highly dangerous place to be. It is supposedly a mirage because, even if the hardware is removed, the know-how remains. It is said to be highly dangerous because the miscreant re-armed, now in possession of a nuclear monopoly, would be able to dictate terms to a helpless, terrorized world or, alternately, precipitate a helter-skelter, many-sided nuclear arms race.

This conclusion seems reasonable until you notice that history has taught an opposite lesson. Repeatedly, even the greatest nuclear powers have actually lost wars against tiny, backward non-nuclear adversaries without being able to extract the slightest utility from their colossal arsenals. Think of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, or the U.S. in Vietnam, or Britain in Suez.

If, in the 60 years of the nuclear age, no great power has won a war by making nuclear threats against even tiny, weak adversaries, then how could a nuclear monopoly by a small country enable it to coerce and bully the whole world? The danger cannot be wholly discounted, but it is surely greatly exaggerated.

If the nuclear powers wish to be safe from nuclear weapons, they must surrender their own. They should collectively offer the world's non-nuclear powers a deal of stunning simplicity, inarguable fairness, and patent common sense: we will get out of the nuclear weapon business if you stay out of it. Then we will all work together to assure that everyone abides by the commitment.

The united will of the human species to save itself from destruction would be a force to be reckoned with. ⑦



Jonathan Schell is the Harold Willens Peace Fellow at the Nation Institute and a senior visiting lecturer at Yale. He has written many books. This article is adapted from his latest, *The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger*.

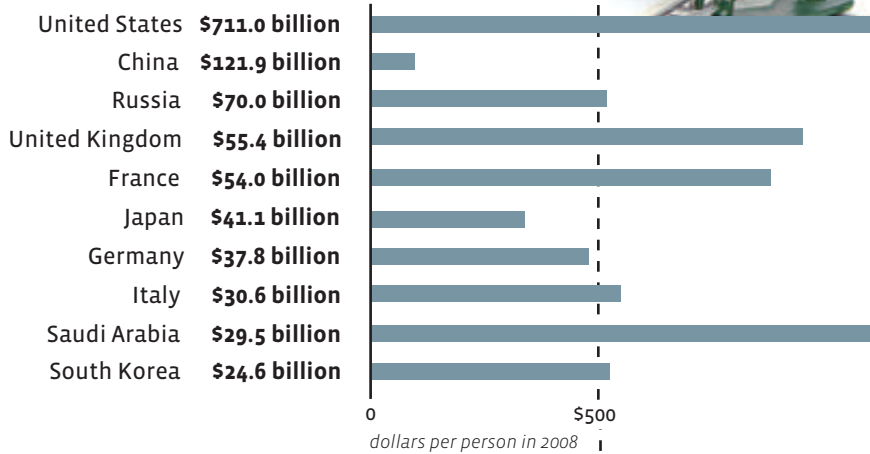
Just the Facts

Research and graphics by Noah Grant

We've Got Deep Pockets for Military Spending

Military spending worldwide is \$1.47 trillion. The U.S. spends 48% of that. We're tops per capita, too.

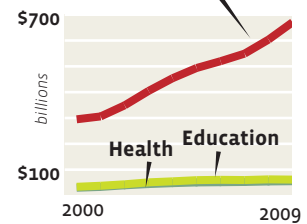
Top 10 in military spending



How we stack up in *per capita* military spending

\$2,361

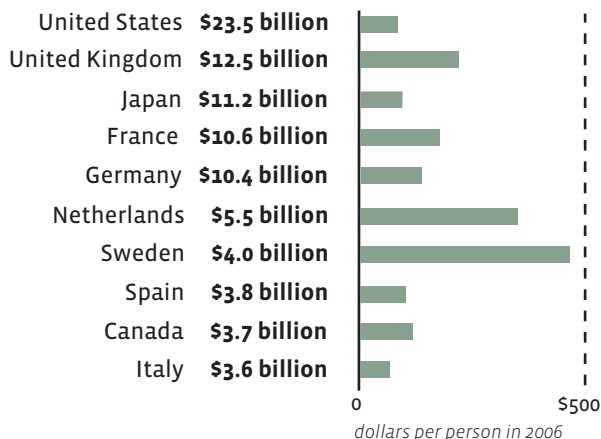
And the military budget keeps getting bigger



But We're Generous with Foreign Aid, Aren't We? No

The U.S., with 300 million people, gives away \$23.5 billion in non-military aid to developing countries. But the 333 million people in the next four countries spend almost double: \$44.7 billion.

Top 10 in non-military foreign aid



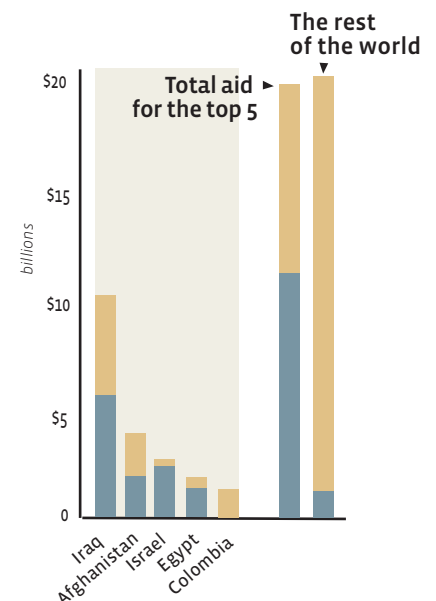
How we stack up in *per capita* development aid spending

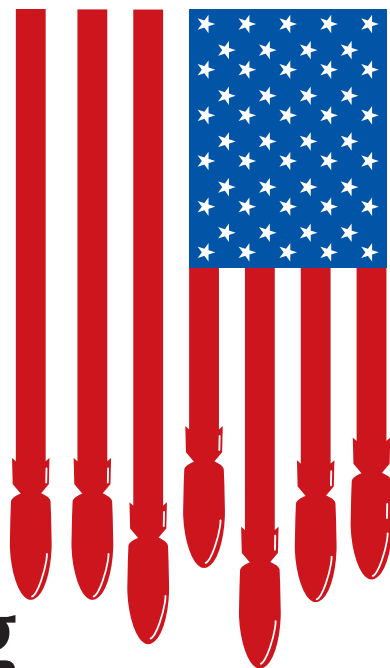
\$78

Who Gets Our Aid?

Military aid Economic aid

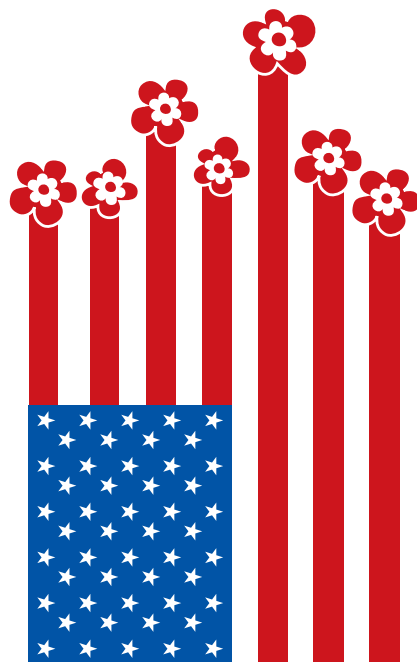
We give the same amount of money to our top 5 aid recipients (194 million people) as we give to the rest of the world (6 billion people).





Raiding the War Chest

It's called "defense" spending, but how much of it is actually about defense? Here's how we could save billions, and still have billions left to make the U.S. and the world more secure.



Miriam Pemberton

An economy slouching toward recession, or—depending on who you talk to—already there, has produced two seemingly contradictory effects. It has pushed the worst foreign policy disaster in U.S. history off the top of the list of citizen concerns. And it has simultaneously gotten those citizens, and even their members of Congress, talking much more about that disaster's economic costs.

Leading the charge to connect these dots has been Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz and his colleague Linda Bilmes. Their book *The Three Trillion Dollar War* walks us through not only all the war costs the Pentagon isn't talking about, but the opportunities foregone to make the kinds of investments in, for example, infrastructure, education, and health care that would help heal a sick economy.

Their testimony on Capitol Hill has begun to sprout up in congressional speeches. Congress is exercising its power of speech on this subject, but not its power of the purse.

In addition to being unable or unwilling to cut off the funds that perpetuate the war, Congress is on track to rubber stamp the Administration's latest, and largest, regular military budget virtually intact. At more than \$515 billion, this request is 5.4 percent higher, in inflation-adjusted terms, than it was last year. Since 2001 the Administration's military budgets have more than doubled. Congress has approved every one, sometimes even expanding them a bit.

With the license given them by the Budget Resolution, the appropriations committees will now spend the rest of the year tinkering around the edges of a spending package for the Defense Department that will include, with little or no debate:

I More than \$130 billion to maintain the 800-plus U.S. military installations on every continent of the world and afloat in the liquid spaces between these continents.

While we're repairing the damage to our relations with the rest of the world, we will need to put some of the money into repairing the social contract with our own citizens.

2 An estimated \$15 billion in congressional pork projects whose purposes are often obscure and whose contributions to security are tenuous. While earmarks can be found throughout the budget, most of them are parked where they can be most easily hidden: in the budget category (the Pentagon's) that makes up about half of the total that Congress actually votes on every year, and is "monitored" by a plethora of overlapping accounting systems.

3 More than \$44 billion in weapons systems whose presence in the budget has more to do with the interests of the weapons contractors and their amply-rewarded congressional champions than they do with defeating terrorists. A half-dozen items that top this list are:

The F/A 22 Raptor: *An obsolete, ever-more-costly aircraft designed to counter a Soviet model that was never built.*

Ballistic Missile Defense: *A system that doesn't work for a threat that doesn't exist.*

Virginia-Class Submarine: *Any conceivable mission for this new sub can be handled by the existing fleet.*

DD(G-1000) Destroyer: *Another cost-escalating program whose missions are well-covered by existing ships.*

V-22 Osprey: *This hybrid plane-helicopter is being rushed into service in Iraq despite safety, technical, and cost problems, both old and new.*

C-130J transport plane: *Has 168 documented deficiencies that render it unsafe.*

In addition to the \$515 billion defense budget, some big military tickets are in other agency budgets. Among them:

4 The Energy Department's budget contains more than \$15 billion for building and maintaining our nuclear weapons arsenal.

5 More than \$11 billion in military aid is in the State Department budget,

where it is considered an instrument of diplomacy. This aid all too often fuels conflicts, rather than suppressing them, and strengthens military control at the expense of civil society. Pakistan has diverted much of its allotment, intended for pursuing al Qaeda, to buying weapons for its tense, nuclear weapons-laden conflict with India.

6 Then there's the additional \$170 billion Defense Secretary Gates estimates we will spend next year on the wars we are actually fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. The total bill to date (about \$700 billion) now exceeds, in real terms, what we spent during 12 years in Vietnam (about \$670 billion). It exceeds our spending on every previous war, in fact, save World War II.

7 The largest built-in long-term cost of all will be caring for the mental and physical needs of soldiers who will be struggling with the effects of combat for the rest of their lives.

When extra-DoD military spending accounts like these get added in, the total amount of U.S. spending on war in 2008 is closer to \$711 billion. That is just shy of the total military spending of the entire rest of the world combined. It's six times more than China, ten times more than Russia, and 97 times more than Iran.

The Future of Military Red Ink

We will be electing new leaders soon, but will they do more than tinker with these numbers? There are huge opportunities to improve our real security, repair international relationships damaged by our heavy-handed foreign policy, and take on the real threats to our future that desperately need attention.

Our country has a massive international-relations repair job ahead in the post-Bush years. This job comes down to acknowledging that our military-

led response to 9-11 has made us less safe by creating more terrorists than it has defeated. Furthermore, we must convince the rest of the world's peoples that we are ready to engage with them in a different way.

Whatever is said along these lines won't be credible unless, as the saying goes, we put our money where our mouth is. We can start by getting rid of the bulk of the \$255 billion represented by items 2-6, above. Then we can shift some of the savings to such non-military forms of international engagement as diplomacy, curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, international peacekeeping missions, and the depleted accounts of our contributions to international organizations.

Much of the rest of the savings needs to be redirected to averting global climate chaos, a looming problem that the military itself acknowledges will create massive security problems that its arsenal of weapons will be unable to solve. We are spending \$88 on our military forces for every dollar we are spending on climate change.

As we increase our spending on foreign aid, we will need to redirect some of this money to where it is actually likely to do some good—like helping to train 4 million new public health workers to address the burgeoning health crises in the developing world.

And while we're repairing the damage to our relations with the rest of the world, we will need to put some of the money into repairing the social contract with our own citizens, by investing in our battered economy. **7**



Miriam Pemberton is a research fellow with the Peace and Security Project at the Institute for Policy Studies (www.ips-dc.org). She leads the group that produces the annual "Unified Security Budget for the United States" and has just released "The Budgets Compared: Military vs. Climate Security." With William Hartung she edited the just-published *Lessons From Iraq: Avoiding the Next War* (Paradigm Publishers, 2008).

New Light in the Sky

For 14 years, NAFTA has displaced farmers and spurred migration. The answer from Mexico's grassroots: co-ops and fair trade.



Wendy Call

"The fatal date has arrived," announced one of Mexico's largest newspapers, *El Universal*, on New Year's Day 2008. The last trade barriers between Canada, Mexico, and the United States fell on January 1, completing the North American Free Trade Agreement's 14-year phase-in process. While this milestone passed with little comment in the United States, more than 100,000 teachers, college students, activists, farmers, and ranchers marched in Mexico City.

The New Year's Day protesters demanded their government reopen negotiations on NAFTA. When that didn't happen, about twice as many took to the streets again on January 31,

2008. Another newspaper summed up the situation: "Head-on struggle against NAFTA explodes."

For nearly two decades, Mexican farmers have spoken out against NAFTA—a trade agreement they suspected from the beginning would wreak havoc on their country's agricultural sector. They have sounded their voices loudly in Mexico's capital, while quietly developing their own answers to NAFTA in farming communities throughout the country—working models of "fair trade" that consider people and the environment, not just profit margins.

By 2003, 1.3 million Mexican peasants had lost their livelihoods because

of NAFTA. Many of the displaced farmers came north in search of work. Mexican migration to the U.S. increased an estimated 75 percent in the five years after the trade agreement took effect.

Even outside Mexico's agricultural sector, NAFTA has been no boon. Mexico's World Bank representative recently admitted, "[We] haven't seen any progress [in Mexico's economy] in the last 15 years."

North of the border, there has been only slight progress. In 2003, the U.S. Congressional Budget Office estimated that NAFTA had increased the U.S. gross domestic product only "a very small amount ... probably a few hundredths of a percent." Meanwhile,



BARBARA SOLDI, GLOCALTRAVEL.NET

Coffee beans are stacked in front of a mural in the Café Museo Café in San Cristóbal de las Casas. The café is run by Co-op Café Chiapas, which represents 36 small farming cooperatives that work in fair trade.

Wal-Mart has become Mexico's largest retailer.

With the last tariffs lifted on beans, chicken, powdered milk, and—most important—corn, Mexican farmers fear the deepening of an already extreme crisis. Mexican organizations challenging NAFTA have gathered under the banner *Sin maíz, no hay país*—without corn, there is no country.

Seeds of a Fair Economy

New Year's Day 2008 also marked 14 years since the Zapatista uprising began in Chiapas, Mexico. The communiqué they issued in January 1994 said their struggle was for "work, land,

housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice, and peace." The Zapatista communities set about building their own schools, health clinics, and fair trade initiatives—giving the Zapatistas political autonomy and a more prosperous local and regional economy.

In 2001, a group of 383 Zapatista coffee farmers founded the Yachil Xojobal Chulchan coffee cooperative. The name means "new light in the sky" or "new dawn" in the indigenous Tzeltal language.

Today, 1,500 co-op members have successfully navigated the complicated process of organic certification and created a farmer-controlled processing and export system, so that more income flows to coffee growers. Chris Treter, co-founder of the Higher Grounds Trading Company, a U.S. vendor of Yachil's coffee, notes that the cooperative's goals extend from getting a better price for coffee farmers in the near term to building an autonomous society in the long term.

West of Chiapas, in Oaxaca state, the Association of Indigenous Communities in the Northern Zone of the Isthmus (UCIZONI) shares many goals and strategies with the Zapatistas. The group's 20,000 members run agricultural cooperatives, train local health care workers, pressure the government to build schools, fight for secure land tenure, promote organic agriculture, challenge human rights abuses, and defend members' legal rights.

The group operates in a region that is feeling the pressure from economic globalization. Local vendors in open-air markets must now compete with a superstore owned by Wal-Mart called Bodega Aurrera, which opened in 2005.

Last year, UCIZONI's peasant members grew 12,000 tons of corn. With the entry of heavily subsidized U.S. corn to the Mexican market, it's increasingly difficult for the association to find buyers for their higher quality, more expensive harvest.

Oaxaca may be home to the widest diversity of corn varieties in the world. More than 5,000 years ago, corn was domesticated from an inedible progenitor, teosinte, not far from where UCIZONI members grow their crops today. The Florentine Codex, one of the oldest surviving Mexican texts, says, "Corn is our sustenance, our life, our being." According to Mayan cosmology, people are descended from corn.

Corn provides nearly 60 percent of the calories in the Mexican diet—eaten as tortillas, tamales, and in UCIZONI's region, baked *totopos*. A large, round cracker that stays fresh for months, the totopo represents local culture as much as maize represents Mexican culture. Baking totopos is a special skill, passed from mother to daughter to granddaughter.

A few years ago, UCIZONI began connecting its corn farmers to totopo bakers in villages that don't produce their own corn. Carlos Beas Torres, the group's coordinator, explains, "UCIZONI buys directly from our producers at a fair price, and that pressures the local market to offer a higher price."

In the process, UCIZONI is also creating fledgling local economies. A product is produced, processed, sold, and consumed locally, employing farmers and bakers, and keeping all the money in the local area.

So far, the program is tiny—last year the bakers bought just 350 tons of UCIZONI corn. Nonetheless, the group can replicate this pilot program, and give local farmers some control in an out-of-control economy.

People's Trade Agreements

Latin America's fair trade initiatives extend far beyond coffee and corn to new models of international trade policy. The two most important examples are the People's Trade Agreement, proposed by Bolivian President Evo Morales, and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's "Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbe- >>



CAHUITL / GIOVANNI P. FLORES

#10

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Kumeyaay Nation

For more than a millennium, the Kumeyaay tribe lived throughout the deserts between San Diego and Baja California in Mexico. In recent decades, Kumeyaay would jump cattle fences and skirt checkpoints to visit kin on either side of the U.S.-Mexico border. But heightened border security, steel barriers, and proposals for a border fence to curb illegal immigration threatened to split the Kumeyaay. The tribal communities have leveraged the problem as an opportunity to strengthen cross-border ties. "We thought, let's ... rebuild our nation as a whole nation, instead of having pieces on both sides of the border," says Kumeyaay member Louie Guassac. They negotiated special visas with the U.S., allowing community members on the Mexican side to cross the border freely and stay up to six months. Above, Kumeyaay ceremonial grounds in Baja.

» an," or ALBA. Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Nicaragua, and Venezuela have all joined ALBA. Both the People's Trade Agreement and ALBA operate on the premise that trade should not be an end in itself, but rather a means to support human and community development.

These government-led initiatives are essential, says Miguel Pickard, co-founder of the Center for Economic and Political Research for Community Action in Chiapas (CIEPAC). But "building power from below is the only

guarantee that there will be sustainable solutions. What if Chávez or Morales is toppled tomorrow?" he says. "Grassroots processes are very long term. A two-pronged approach is needed: strong, independent grassroots movements at the base, and radical leaders in positions of state power."

Pickard has been a vocal critic of a new trade initiative under the Bush Administration that broadens NAFTA with increased emphasis on border security and corporate access to natural resources. The initiative, called the "Se-

curity and Prosperity Partnership," or SPP, was launched two years ago in a series of negotiations with the Mexican and Canadian governments. Because the SPP is not a treaty, there is no congressional oversight, nor any process for citizen comment. The only input comes from a council of 30 advisors, ten selected by each government. The list reads like a Who's Who of corporate North America, including the CEOs of Bell Canada, Chevron, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, Home Depot/Canada, Kimberly-Clark/Mexico, Lockheed Martin, Scotiabank, and Wal-Mart.

Pickard believes the secretive, anti-democratic nature of the SPP is a response to growing grassroots power. "Fourteen years after NAFTA, civil society is better organized, informed, networked, and mobilized," he says. Not only have fair trade networks sprung up, but public opinion throughout North America has turned against NAFTA, spilling into the U.S. presidential campaign.

With U.S. elections on the horizon, might U.S. trade policy take a new turn? What if our next president listened to the New Year's Day marchers in Mexico City? What if Carlos Beas Torres, of UCIZONI, rather than the CEO of Wal-Mart, was an SPP advisor?

The question surprised Beas Torres. "It's so hard to imagine myself part of the SPP Council; better that I just list a few elements of a fair trade policy." His priorities include subsidies to rural producers, protections for native crops, rural investment programs, and most important, a total rejection of "the Wal-Mart business model, which destroys small and local businesses." ▼



Wendy Call is co-editor of *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide*. She is currently at work on a book about the intersection of economic globalization and village life in southern Mexico. www.WendyCall.com

Interested? Read Manuel Pérez Rocha and Sarah Anderson on the real deals behind new NAFTA negotiations: www.fpif.org/fpifxtxt/5152



Life, Liberty, Water

As climate change and worldwide shortages loom, will people fight over water or join together to protect it?

Maude Barlow

It's a colossal failure of political foresight that water has not emerged as an important issue in the U.S. Presidential campaign. The links between oil, war, and U.S. foreign policy are well known. But water—whether we treat it as a public good or as a commodity that can be bought and sold—will in large part determine whether our future is peaceful or perilous.

Americans use water even more wastefully than oil. The U.S. relies on non-renewable groundwater for 50 percent of its daily use, and 36 states now face serious water shortages, some verging on crisis.

Meanwhile, dwindling freshwater supplies around the world, inequitable access to water, and corporate control of water, together with impending climate change from fossil fuel emissions, have created a life-or-death situation across the planet.

Both Democrats and Republicans have emphasized loosening U.S. dependence on nonrenewable energy resources in their platforms, but neither party gives significant air time to the threats posed by water shortages.

This is not to say that no one is paying attention. In fact, water has become a key strategic security and foreign policy priority for the United States government.

Cut Deals, Carry Water

Corporate interests have pursued schemes to privatize, commodify, and export water for decades. We have seen how this plays out in Canada. For instance, in the late 1990s, Sun Belt Water, Inc., sued the Canadian government under NAFTA because British Columbia banned water exports, preventing a deal that would have sent B.C. water to California. Corporations have also made attempts to ship Canadian water as far as Asia and the Middle East, proposals that fizzled after fierce opposition from public citizens who were beginning to understand the dangers of permanently removing water from local ecosystems and placing it under corporate control.

Now the Pentagon, as well as various U.S. security think tanks, have decided that water supplies, like energy supplies, must be secured if the United

States is to maintain its current economic and military power in the world. And the United States is exerting pressure to access Canadian water, despite Canada's own shortages.

Under the name, "North American Future 2025 Project," the U.S. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) brought together high level government officials and business executives from Canada, the United States, and Mexico for a series of six meetings to discuss a wide range of issues related to the Security and Prosperity Partnership, a controversial and tightly guarded set of negotiations to expand NAFTA. [See related story on page 40.]

"As ... globalization continues and the balance of power potentially shifts, and risks to global security evolve, it is only prudent for Canadian, Mexican, and U.S. policymakers to contemplate a North American security architecture that could effectively deal with security threats that can be foreseen in 2025," said a leaked copy of a CSIS backgrounder.

On the agenda for one of two meetings in Calgary were, "water consump- >>



A global water justice movement is demanding a change in international law to settle once and for all the question of who controls water.

»tion, water transfers, and artificial diversions of bulk water” with the aim of achieving “joint optimum utilization of the available water.”

The water and security connection deepens with the fact that Sandia National Laboratories, a vital partner with CSIS in its Global Water Futures Project, also plays a major role in military security in the United States. While Sandia is technically owned by the U.S. government, and reports to the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration, its management is contracted out to Lockheed Martin, the world’s biggest weapons manufacturer.

Ralph Pentland, water consultant and primary author of the Canadian government’s Federal Water Policy in 1987, believes that the purpose of these cross-border discussions is to secure sufficient water for Alberta tar sands production in order to ensure uninterrupted oil supplies to the United States. Energy extraction would be far more attractive if a new source of water—potentially from northern Canada—could be brought to the tar sands through pipelines or other diversions. As long as the water doesn’t cross the international border, it is within Alberta’s power to do this.

These schemes to displace water from one ecosystem to another in the service of corporate profit are an environmental problem for the entire planet, which is another reason why water

must form a crucial part of any progressive discussion around U.S. dependence on foreign energy resources.

Corporate interests understand the connection and are using it to make their case for private solutions to the water crisis. In language that will be familiar to critics who argued that the United States invaded Iraq not for democracy but for access to oil and profits for corporations, a 2005 report from CSIS’s Global Water Futures project had this to say about water:

“Water issues are critical to U.S. national security and integral to upholding American values of humanitarianism and democratic development. Moreover, engagement with international water issues guarantees business opportunity for the U.S. private sector, which is well positioned to contribute to development and reap economic reward.”

Water for All

Clearly, the powers that be in the United States have decided that water is not a public good but a private resource that must be secured by whatever means.

But there are alternatives.

North Americans must learn to live within our means, by conserving water in agriculture and in the home. We could learn from the many examples here and beyond our borders—from the New Mexican “Acequia” system that uses an ancient natural ditch irri-

gation tradition to distribute water in arid lands to the International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance in Geneva, that works globally to promote sustainable rainwater harvesting programs.

Conservation strategies would undermine the massive investment now going into corporate technological and infrastructure solutions, such as desalination, wastewater reuse, and water transfer projects. And conservation would be many times cheaper, a boon to the public but not to the corporate interests that are currently driving international water agreements.

At the grassroots, a global water justice movement is demanding a change in international law to settle once and for all the question of who controls water, and whether responses to the water crisis will ensure water for the public or profits for corporations. Riccardo Petrella has led a movement in Italy to recognize access to water as a basic human right, which has support among politicians at every level. The Coalition in Defense of Public Water in Ecuador is demanding that the government amend the constitution to recognize the right to water. The Coalition Against Water Privatization in South Africa is challenging the practice of water metering before the Johannesburg High Court on the basis that it violates the human rights of Soweto’s citizens. Dozens of groups in Mexico have joined COMDA, the Coalition of Mexican Organizations for the Right to

#11

DIY Foreign Policy Heroes

Students Against Sweatshops



JOSH SONNENFELD

Water, a national campaign for a constitutional guarantee of water for the public.

The U.S. and Canada are the only two countries actively blocking international attempts to recognize water as a human right. But movements in both countries are working to change that. A large network of human rights, faith-based, labor, and environmental groups in Canada has formed Canadian Friends of the Right to Water to get the Canadian government to support a U.N. right-to-water covenant. And a network in the United States led by Food and Water Watch is calling for a national water trust to ensure safekeeping of the nation's water assets and a change of government policy on the right to water.

Such campaigns may have a fight ahead of them, but the vision is within reach: a United Nations covenant that recognizes the right of the Earth and other species to clean water, pledges to protect and conserve the world's water supplies, and forms an agreement between those countries who have water and those who don't to work toward local—not corporate—control of water. We must acknowledge water as a fundamental human right for all. **Y**



Maude Barlow is the national chairperson of the Council of Canadians and author of *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*



www.YesMagazine.org/bluecovenant
Video interview of Barlow on Democracy Now

#12

Scholar of Peace

Lisa Schirch is a propagator of peace, a scholar at Eastern Mennonite University who teaches students methods of preventing violent conflict. Now Schirch is working to instruct members of Congress in the methods for building peace.

It all began when Schirch worked with peace-builders in Ghana in 2002. During an outbreak of tribal violence in the country's north, the Ghanaians approached their national leaders and created a network for peace—national, regional, and local peace councils that could address and solve conflicts before they escalated into violence. Schirch's studies later led her to Iraq, where she trained a community development group called REACH in skills for bringing Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds together to build wells and water treatment projects. After the training, REACH countered, what was Schirch doing to change U.S. foreign policy in Iraq? "That was the last straw," says Schirch. She returned to the U.S. and began bringing peace-builders like REACH and the Ghanaians to meet with members of Congress. "REACH told me, 'Security doesn't land in a helicopter. It grows from the ground up.' That's our message to the U.S. government."



Heal the Warrior, Heal the Country

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF WAR MAKING



JOSEPH O. HOLMES



LINDSAY STARK

In Sierra Leone, traditional purification rituals using ash soap have been an integral aspect of psychosocial healing and reintegration for girls forced to serve as child soldiers. At left, a veteran with Iraq Veterans Against the War marches in New York on the 5th anniversary of the U.S. war in Iraq.

Edward Tick

Guilt, shame, slaughter without purpose, alienation from homeland and life itself—this was the legacy that Günter passed on to his son Walt from his World War II combat service in Hitler's Wehrmacht. Walt, "the only child born in freedom," was born in the United States shortly after his parents emigrated here from Germany. Growing up in the Cold War 1950s, Walt longed to be an all-American boy, but was always the

Indian to his friends' cowboys and the "Kraut" to their G.I. Joes.

When he turned 18, Walt enlisted and volunteered for Vietnam. "I wanted to finally be one of the good guys," Walt said. "Service in the American military in a righteous cause would expunge my family's past and earn our place in society." He could not know that, instead, he would return with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), feeling less

than ever like "one of the good guys."

The Warrior's Path

Our troops do not enlist because they want to destroy or kill. No matter the political climate, most troops seek to serve traditional warrior values: to protect the country they love, its ideals, and especially their families, communities, and each other. If they must kill or be killed, they need transcendent reasons

War poisons the spirit and warriors return tainted. This is why, among Native American, Zulu, Buddhist, ancient Israeli, and other traditional cultures, returning warriors were put through significant rituals of purification before re-entering their families and communities.

to do so. Throughout history, the only reason for fighting that has survived moral scrutiny is a direct attack with real, immediate threat to one's people. PTSD is, in part, the tortured conscience of good people who did their best under conditions that would dehumanize anyone.

Almost all cultures, past and present, have had warriors. They have also had complex stories and rituals to help them recover from combat and guide them through the life cycle. The occurrence of warriors is so universal that depth psychologists understand Warrior to be one of our foundational psycho-spiritual archetypes.

In traditional cultures, boys and men studied a "warrior's path." In these societies a warrior was not the same as a soldier; not merely a member of a huge, anonymous military institution used for the violent execution of political ends. Rather, warrior was one of the foundational roles that kept societies whole and strong. Warriors were fundamentally protectors, not destroyers.

People respond to the same call today. Michael, a Marine who served in Afghanistan, proudly declares that at age 18 he was the first in his state to enlist after 9/11. Nick, an army officer who served in Iraq, enlisted because of a lifelong desire "to be like Hector defending the gates of Troy."

Warriorhood, however, is not so valued or nurtured in modern society. "Warrior" is not even a recognized social class. A veteran, especially one with disabilities, appears to many, and sometimes to him or herself, as a failure in terms of normal civilian identity. Michael fears that, as an experienced combat veteran, the only place on the planet he now fits is in the French Foreign Legion.

The Echoes of War

War abroad fosters war at home. When we go to war, we inevitably bring its violence and horror back to our homes and streets. We cannot help it.

Rather than feeling that he had restored his family's honor, Walt spent years ravaged by nightmares, homeless, abusing drugs and alcohol, and sitting with a shotgun in his mouth trying to find the will to end it all. He married and had children, then divorced and neglected his kids. He could not keep a job. He could not come home.

War echoes down the generations. Known or hidden, we all carry the wounds of war. Walt was wounded by his father's history. His children were wounded by his.

When a veteran has PTSD, his or her entire family and community are inevitably affected. The individual symptoms of PTSD—sleep disturbances, substance abuse, depression, and problems with intimacy, employment and authority—are the same symptoms that are epidemic in our society. When we take a close and unprotected look, we see: We are a nation and a planet of wounded warriors, their offspring, and their neighbors.

Cleansing the Warrior

War poisons the spirit, and warriors return tainted. This is why, among Native American, Zulu, Buddhist, ancient Israeli, and other traditional cultures, returning warriors were put through significant rituals of purification before re-entering their families and communities. Traditional cultures recognized that unpurified warriors could, in fact,

be dangerous. The absence of these rituals in modern society helps explain why suicide, homicide, and other destructive acts are common among veterans.

In Viet Nam Walt had exhumed bodies of enemy dead from mass graves and reburied them. He felt like he had dirtied and damaged his soul. Nick declared that, though he had wished to be a great champion of his people, "all they gave me was this dirty stinking little Iraq War."

In traditional cultures, warrior cleansing was often guided by shamans, and particular shamans presided over "warrior medicine." Among his many offices and honors, for example, Sitting Bull served as Medicine Chief of the Hunkpapa Warrior Society, responsible for overseeing the spiritual lives and well-being of the society's warriors. Sitting Bull considered this to be the most important of all the offices he held.

Walt entered individual and group psychotherapy for combat veterans. It helped to tell his stories, have his feelings and losses confirmed by other vets, and receive honor as part of a brotherhood. But he was in search of more cleansing, blessing, and soul healing than traditional therapy could provide. He eventually partnered with a Native American woman. He studied her culture, and participated in sweat lodges and other traditional rituals. He attended a Pow Wow where he was honored as a returned warrior. He was accepted by the Native community far more than he had been by mainstream America.

I annually lead healing journeys back to Viet Nam, and there, too, vets report feeling more welcomed and honored by their former foes than they have ever felt at home.

A Double Wound

Sitting Bull and his warriors, and other bands from innumerable traditional cultures, were never plagued with self-doubt about the value of their mission, as many of our soldiers are today. In order to do battle with a whole heart, the danger and threat to one's home must >>

» be real, and the people must experience it as immediate and about to threaten their total existence; there must be no alternative. A people and their warriors must be in unity.

The effect of that unity shows in Nguyen Van Tam, known as Mr. Tiger, a robust, friendly, and serene man of 87 living in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta. He is a veteran of wars against the Japanese, French, and Americans. Though at war for a quarter century, he has no disturbing symptoms. "We Vietnamese," he says, "do not have PTSD because we never hated Americans. We only fought to protect our families and homes from invaders."

When, to the contrary, wars are based on false pretenses, a moral vacuum results. As Martin Luther King Jr. observed, troops then experience "not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war," but also "cynicism to the

process of death, for our troops must know after a short time that none of the things we are fighting for are really involved."

Walt explained, "I didn't realize until it was too late that I was just like my father—a good man fighting on the wrong side for the wrong cause." Moral trauma is at the core of PTSD. An idealistic and sincere young soldier discovering that he is in fact fighting for false or distorted political, economic, or historical agendas can experience deeper and more complicated psychic wounds than those traditional warriors experienced.

The severity and extent to which veterans suffer with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder is a direct response to our culture's blindness about war's true cost. PTSD is the expression of the anguish, dislocation, and rage of the self as it attempts to cope with its loss of innocence, reformulate a new personal

Most conventional therapies teach healers to avoid talk of morality. But war is inherently a moral enterprise and veterans in search of healing are on a profound moral journey. Healers and communities must walk with them.

identity and cultural role, and awaken from massive denial. Veterans with PTSD are people whose belief systems have been shattered. We can better understand PTSD as an identity disorder and soul wound rather than a stress



Aidan Delgado, Conscientious Objector

Aidan Delgado volunteered for the Army Reserve. His company was one of the first across the border of Iraq in 2003. His experience of the brutality and dehumanization of modern warfare convinced him that he could not participate and retain his Buddhist beliefs. He became a noncombatant, and received conscientious objector status at the end of his tour of duty. The Sutras of Abu Ghraib is the story of his journey. This excerpt is a meditation on how easy it is to distance ourselves from the devastation of war-making.

"I had once told Sergeant Toro that I enjoyed working on the trucks of soldiers I liked and respected, knowing that it was making their lives easier. With the knowledge that I've gained working in the headquarters, I begin to fit the 320th Company and our narrow purpose into a larger scheme. We are one of many companies, not really responsible for anything on our own, but taken together we form a mechanism that keeps the entire prison running: from the guards who stand along the wire to the cooks who feed them to the mechanics who service their equipment. I begin to see my tiny fragment of war service as part of an enormous glittering structure, comprising thousands of individual soldiers, each secure in the knowledge that what they are *personally* doing isn't wrong. I look at the truth of the prisoners' experience and then I look at my stated life, and it feels false, right to the core. The truth that I believe is that prisoners are being terribly abused inside Abu Ghraib, degraded, falsely imprisoned, even killed, as happened in the November riot. But it's not *my* fault, I'm just a mechanic fixing the vehicles of the guys who run the prison. It's not really *their* fault either, they're just standing around guarding the prisoners as they were ordered to do by those higher up the chain of command. Well, who the hell *is* responsible for all this, then? All of us ... the generals ... I don't know, me personally? That's what it feels like. Lying on the ground underneath a Humvee with the mud caked in its tires, I finally look up and perceive my place in the web: I can call myself a conscientious objector and denounce war all I like, but I'm still here, still playing my part like a good soldier."

—from *The Sutras of Abu Ghraib*, Beacon Press, 2007. 228 pages, \$24.95

and anxiety disorder, as it is presently classified. War dehumanizes anyone it touches, but especially a veteran who questions the cause he served.

Most conventional therapies teach healers to avoid talk of morality. But war is inherently a moral enterprise and veterans in search of healing are on a profound moral journey. Healers and communities must walk with them. As a society, we must honor those wounds in ways that recognize their depth and degree of psychic suffering.

Lifting the Burden

Warriors in traditional societies served the need for protection, and all that was done was done in the tribe's name. They had rituals transferring responsibility for actions during warfare from veterans to the entire culture. Ultimately leaders, not ordinary troops, were held responsible for the results of battle and for the deaths that occurred.

Our veterans cannot heal unless society accepts responsibility for its war making. To the veteran, our leaders and people must say, "You did this in our name, because you were subject to our orders, and because we put you in untenable and even atrocity-producing situations. We lift the burden of your actions from you and take it onto our shoulders. We are responsible for you, for what you did, and for the consequences."

Walt received this acceptance from Native American communities. In my seven trips to Viet Nam, and with every veteran and civilian I have met who has visited Viet Nam since the war, the Vietnamese people have offered such acceptance and forgiveness to any American returning to the country to reconcile. In contrast, since Afghanistan, Michael says, "I still love America, but America does not love me."

Without this transfer of responsibility, the veteran carries war's secret grief and guilt for us all. Too many veterans collapse into a silent suffering disability and thus serve as our broken scapegoats while the rest of us proceed with "business as usual." In contrast, during my healing retreats, veterans tell their stories, civilians speak of their lost loved

ones, and everyone shares their damaged values and broken dreams. Finally, our vets enter the center of our circle and civilians pledge to accept responsibility for any harm done in their name and to help carry the veterans' stories for the rest of their lives. By sharing this burden we become a community united in service to war-healing.

Healing for All

We wish, as the gospel song says, "to study war no more." But scholars count over 14,600 wars in the last 5,600 years of recorded history. War is so epidemic in its occurrence, devastating in its impact, and lasting in its aftermath, that we must study it and tend to it and treat it. If we are to return war to its proper place as a last defense when absolutely necessary, we must heal the wounds of our soldiers and communities. We cannot achieve peace-making without first achieving true and comprehensive war-healing.

Walt finally put away his shotgun and quit drinking. He enjoyed a successful relationship with his new partner and was adopted by her tribe and its warrior society. He took up a spiritual path that restored his belief in the goodness of life and order of the universe. He volunteered with more disabled veterans, visiting the infirm at his regional V.A. hospital and helping create annual veteran reunions. Both in therapy and beyond, we created rituals that allowed this soldier to find healing. The Native American and veteran communities helped support and bring this warrior's wandering spirit home. In turn, Walt became a devoted advocate for other veterans more wounded than he. The disabled veteran became an elder warrior.

But war completed its damage. Only in his 50s, Walt died of Agent Orange-related cancer last year.

We cannot heal from war without involving the entire community and society, and without invoking transpersonal help. We must develop modern rituals that acknowledge the additional wounds caused by war fought for non-defense reasons. Much as we might disagree with a war, our rituals must include purification, public storytelling, and com-

If we are to return war to its proper place as a last defense when absolutely necessary, we must heal the wounds of our soldiers and communities. We cannot achieve peace-making without first achieving true and comprehensive war-healing.

munity acceptance of responsibility for what the soldier has done.

These war-healing rituals and practices serve us all. They bring home to us the need to break the cycles of war-making and violence both within the individual soldier and within the society. When we return to our veterans their silenced voices, when we accept our true responsibility as individuals and communities, we will no longer see war as an adventure or a legitimate tool of power politics. Then, perhaps, we may see that all over our country and world, we share the same legacy of war-wounding. When we join together to address those wounds wherever they appear, we will finally "study war no more." ❶

I ASKED WALT'S PERMISSION to tell his story during our farewell visit in the hospital where he was dying of Agent Orange cancers. He was surprised at first, but finally said, "I was afraid my life was worthless. But please tell my story. Please make it mean something. Maybe it can help some other poor souls avoid my fate."



Edward Tick, Ph.D., is author of *War and the Soul* and three other books. He has worked with veterans for three decades and is director and senior psychotherapist of Soldier's Heart: Veteran's Safe Return Initiatives. www.soldiersheart.net



Residents of Bethel, Vermont—along with 52 other Vermont communities—cast votes at their 2005 Town Hall meeting urging President Bush to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq.

JESSAMYN C. WEST

CITIZENS VOTE FOR A VOICE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Has Your Town Declared Peace Yet?

Ben Manski and Karen Dolan

The heartland spoke; the world listened. On April 5, 2006, hundreds of newspapers across the globe, from Italy's *Il Manifesto* to the *Los Angeles Times*, shared a similar headline: "Wisconsin votes for troop pullout."

One day earlier, citizens in 32 Wisconsin cities, towns, and villages had cast ballots for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. Voters in tiny villages in the North Woods and the Door Peninsula, in the regional urban centers of Madison and La Crosse, and in the small cities that are the heart of the Badger State, sent a clear message.

As Green Party activist Steve Burns told newspapers, the vote meant that "opposition to the war [has] become the majority sentiment," winning over communities that had voted for George Bush only months earlier.

While peace advocates rejoiced over the events, the Bush administration was unresponsive to Wisconsin's extraordinary display of democracy. White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan attempted to downplay the Wisconsin vote, concluding that while "all Americans" wanted the troops home, they also understood the impor-

tance of the "mission in Iraq."

The Wisconsin troop withdrawal votes were a best case example of "municipal foreign policy"—the practice of local communities and state governments taking on matters of national and global import. Wisconsinites revived their Progressive-era municipal direct legislation law—allowing citizens to initiate popular referenda on ordinances, resolutions, and other legislative matters—to put the war on the ballot.

Wisconsin has hardly been alone. In the prelude to invasion, over 200

city, town, and village councils voted against war with Iraq. In 2005, 40 Vermont communities voted in town meetings for Iraq withdrawal. In November of 2006, voters in 139 Massachusetts communities and a half dozen Midwestern cities followed Vermont and Wisconsin in casting ballots for withdrawal. Today more than half of all Americans live under local or state proclamations of opposition to the U.S. military presence in Iraq.

As the federal government has increased troop deployments to Iraq, local and state officials are also upping their anti-war efforts. Lawmakers in Vermont have introduced legislation declaring that the original mission in Iraq is over and congressional authorization for deploying the National Guard has expired. If enacted, this legislation would be more than symbolic: it would end future Vermont Guard deployments to Iraq. Other states are following Vermont's lead. Meanwhile, citizens around the country have launched new campaigns to enact municipal laws barring military recruitment of minors.

City and state opposition to the Iraq war is only one expression of a larger set of movements. People are turning to local governments for a voice in international affairs because they perceive the current federal government to be at best absent, at worst an obstacle. The Cities for Peace movement, which helped unite local action against the Iraq war, is now coordinating a growing number of cities that oppose a possible future attack on Iran. The climate change movement has found a voice in the more than 800 cities that have signed on to the principles of the Kyoto Protocol. Mayors for Peace, more than 2,100 members strong, works for the abolition of nuclear weapons. New "Sister City" relationships are forming all the time, often rekindling diplomatic ties with cities in nations spurned by the Bush administration—like Venezuela, Palestine, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

Into the Breach

What powers these municipal foreign policy efforts is not fuel, but a vacuum. Polling shows that public faith in each of the three branches of federal government is at an all-time low. This crisis in confidence extends beyond federal failures to heed the will of the people on matters of foreign policy, environment, and peace. When New Orleans' levees were breached, Katrina exposed the depth of the divide between federal policies and local needs.

Now local governments are taking matters into their own hands. They are willing to do more than pass resolutions to pressure federal officials—they are enacting their own minimum wage ordinances, public universal health coverage, and sick leave laws; and establishing community wireless, community cable, public power, and municipal food utilities. A ballot measure in Humboldt County nullifies the doctrine of corporate constitutional rights. The sanctuary cities movement gives local protection to undocumented immigrants. And local governments have passed ordinances that direct local officials to respect the Bill of Rights before the Patriot Act.

Local governments have stepped into the breach—giving voice, services, and human rights protections to people, cities, towns, and counties, and becoming key agents of democratic change in America.

A Future for Municipal Foreign Policy

Challenges remain. Federal officials increasingly preempt local initiatives

in international affairs, drug policy, health care, labor law, and telecommunications. But local people can and do push back. The new Local Democracy Network unites community organizers, local elected officials, and others to spread the good news about local innovation and develop strategies for strengthening local home rule.

Where is all this leading?

In the short term, expect to see the municipal foreign policy trend grow. While the November elections will produce some change in Congress and in the White House, a rapid U.S. withdrawal from Iraq seems unlikely. So citizens will continue to use the levers of local government to impact U.S. foreign policy. In the mid-term, expect to see the federal government begin to respond to the bubbling up of local innovation and pressure. In the long-term, hope to see the triumph of greater local democracy and a more accountable federal government.

If, in the words of that most global of progressive happenings, the World Social Forum, "another world is possible," it is mostly because the people in our cities, towns, and villages are making it so. ♾

Interested? www.CitiesforProgress.org and www.LibertyTreeFDR.org

Ben Manski is executive director of the Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution and served as legal counsel for the Wisconsin troop withdrawal campaign.

Karen Dolan is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and directs the Institute's Cities for Progress project.



A Just Foreign Policy Resource Guide

The information and links you need to find out more.
www.YesMagazine.org/resourceguide46

A Just Foreign Policy Discussion Guide

Get a group together and have a conversation.
www.YesMagazine.org/discuss46



Your Money Still Has Power

How will you get through the difficult economic times ahead? Here's how to shop, where to bank, and how to save and invest to help you weather the storm while contributing to a more just and sustainable economy.

Michael Kramer

Millions of Americans are feeling the pinch of the troubled economy. You may have lost your job or worry about losing it. You may struggle to make your monthly mortgage payment or have already been forced into foreclosure. Perhaps you've incurred so much debt that you wonder if filing for bankruptcy is the only option.

Or, perhaps you've been saving for retirement, or have recently retired, and you worry about whether your money will stretch, considering the underperformance of your investments, and the devaluation of the dollar.

These are valid concerns, magnified by other current circumstances: "peak oil" and the resulting spike in fuel prices;

the threat of global warming; and the impact of our national debt on this and future generations.

The first rule for weathering this financial storm: don't panic. These times remind us of the importance of financial planning, particularly putting aside six months of salary and living within our means. In 2007, consumer debt rose 5.5 percent—twice as fast as wages. If you're like most Americans, you now spend 20 percent of your budget on consumer debt. With home equity lines of credit disappearing, people are using their credit cards more, resulting in increased bankruptcy filings. What else can you do?

1

REDUCE DEBT

"It's not what you make, it's what you don't spend" may sound clichéd, but it's true. Not spending is the greatest habit to embrace. Consider cutting up your credit cards and paying them down entirely. Debt consolidators can help, as can 0 percent-interest cards for balance transfers, but read the fine print regarding fees and terms. Use community-based credit cards from your own local credit union, or socially responsible lenders like Shorebank or Self-Help Credit Union, as these tend to have fewer and lower fees and clearer terms. Visit responsiblelending.org for more information. And by all means, avoid payday loans with their obscenely high rates.

2

BUILD SAVINGS

Pay yourself first and always. The first item in your monthly budget should be your own savings. Determine an income percentage that makes sense for you. To assure you

stick with it, have this amount automatically deposited into an investment account on payday. Years from now, you'll be glad you did.

3

CUT SPENDING

Live within your means. It's hard to resist material temptations, but it's important to accept your circumstances. There are no shortcuts, as recent events clearly indicate. Purchase budgeting software or take a class on personal finance to learn simple strategies that empower you for life.

4

BE PATIENT

History tells us that real estate and financial markets are cyclical, and there have always been recoveries. If you have investments that have dwindled, remember what they originally cost, for you still might be ahead despite this recent downturn. If there is a more serious economic downturn, don't buy gold or stuff cash into the basement; put your money in insured credit unions and banks.

5

GREEN YOUR MONEY

The quickest way to push for a more just and sustainable economy is using our purchasing power to encourage social and environmental change. How we shop, where we bank, and the manner in which we invest can help establish new patterns of local and national economic development that could emerge out of this crisis stronger than ever. Here are some ways to weather this crisis while using our buying/investing/borrowing power to create a more regenerative infrastructure:

BUY LOCAL: Local food may require simplifying your diet, but it cuts down

on carbon-spewing long-distance transportation. Urge your local government to look at owning electric, telephone, and internet utilities to assure that they operate in the interests of the community and support a sustainable environment. Local Exchange Trading Systems, community currencies, barter directories, farmers' markets, shares in community-supported agriculture, child care and other service co-ops, regional building materials production and reuse, and agricultural and community land trusts are all ways to build a thriving economy in local goods and services. Business Alliance for Local Living Economies is a great resource. livingeconomies.org

BANK WITH CARE: Your checking and savings accounts, and your debt, can make a difference if you place them in Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), which direct resources toward poverty alleviation and ecological restoration. These mission-based institutions use your deposits to help urban and rural people who can't otherwise access capital to start businesses, own homes, and rebuild depressed communities or those devastated by natural disasters. The money can circulate locally or globally to suit your social priorities. communityinvest.org

BUY GREEN: Many cities have directories of green businesses. Co-op America publishes the National Green Pages, a great resource that emphasizes local and non-corporate economic self-sufficiency. coopamerica.org

BUY FROM "FOR-BENEFIT"

COMPANIES: When buying products made outside your community, make informed choices. *The Better World Shopping Guide*, by Ellis Jones, is a user-friendly guide to name-brand ethical shopping, featuring leaders in social and environmental responsibility like Seventh Generation, Patagonia, American Apparel, and Eden Foods. B Corporation, bcorporation.net, is a na-

tional network whose members revise their charters to make the interests of employees, community, and the environment equal to the interests of owners and shareholders.

INVEST WITH ETHICAL INTENT:

The Social Investment Forum's recently released 2007 Trends Report shows that \$2.7 trillion of U.S. investments use environmental, social, and/or governance factors as part of the selection process. You can invest as little as \$250 in socially responsible investments (SRI) that avoid ethically objectionable industries or corporate practices. You can also invest in transformational businesses in renewable energy, recyclables, biodegradables, natural fibers, organic agriculture, and regenerative forestry.

For people concerned about competitive returns, the Finance Initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme recently released "Demystifying Responsible Investment Performance," a report analyzing 30 academic and broker studies of returns on SRI. The report, available at www.unepfi.org, showed that in 27 of the studies, there was either a neutral or positive correlation between socially responsible investments and financial return, proving that it is possible to make money while making a difference.

While no one knows what lies in our economic future, it is critical to have a combination of patience and persistence along with a commitment to values-based spending and investment. By seeing this downturn as an opportunity to transform capitalism into something more compassionate and ethical, we can create the change we wish to see in the world. ⑦

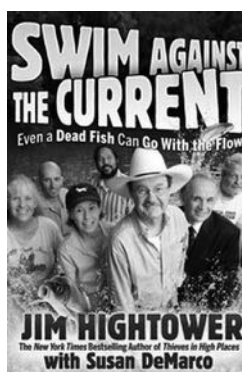


Michael Kramer is managing partner and director of Social Research for Natural Investments LLC (NI), a socially responsible investment adviser since 1985 whose principals authored *Investing With Your Values: Making Money and Making a Difference* and "Investing From the Heart." Michael can be reached at michael@naturalinvesting.com or www.naturalinvesting.com.



WILLY RITCH

From Raising Hell to Raising Barns



Swim Against the Current: Even a Dead Fish Can Go With the Flow

JIM HIGHTOWER
Wiley, 2008, 224 pages, \$25.95

REVIEWED BY JONATHAN ROWE

There is something to be said for writing in a hostile political environment. You can't coast on prevailing opinion. You have to use your wits.

This is one reason Texas has produced some of the most arresting progressive voices of the last generation. Working against the state's Rightward flow, they have harkened to its populist tradition. They are funny and a little outrageous. They have swagger, and tell stories.

The late Molly Ivins was an exemplar. So too is Jim Hightower, who followed Ivins at the Texas Observer (what a run) and like her is a high-spirited practitioner of the art of givin' em hell.

Hightower grew up in Texas. He served two terms as the elected state

commissioner of agriculture. (He was unseated in a campaign run by Karl Rove.) Now he's a radio commentator and syndicated columnist, with a knack for the backcountry zingers that cut the big shots down to size. "If ignorance ever goes over forty dollars a barrel," he has said, "I want drilling rights to George Bush's head."

Most of Hightower's work has aimed at corporate miscreants and their enablers in high places. Now, in *Swim Against the Current*, he's writing (with his partner Susan DeMarco) about Americans who are bucking the system and making a difference.

Reader's Digest is the nation's number two publication (after the AARP magazine) for a reason. We like stories about people who overcome adversity, and who don't wait for government

help. Ronald Reagan understood this. Hightower does too, though from a different standpoint.

In *Swim*, he and DeMarco show that self-help can be about “we” as well as “me.” They tell the story of Chris Johnson, for example, a young pharmacist in Johnson, Texas, who left a lucrative job at a chain pharmacy to start his own that sells low cost meds to people without insurance. “I knew how much the drugs really cost us and that the profit margins were obscene,” he says. “Now I’m back doing what I went into pharmacy to do—helping people.”

There’s not much policy talk here, and no lists of what the next president should do. Instead, we meet ordinary (in a sense) people like Johnson who are trying to live their values and make a difference. Another example is Organic Valley, a farmers’ co-op in Wisconsin that refused to bow to Wal-Mart’s price demands and lived to tell about it. Another is the Union Cab Company in Madison, Wisconsin, created by former drivers for the anti-union Checker Cab.

Hightower understands the difference between authentic enterprise and corporate elephantiasis. He also understands the kinship between the entrepreneur—especially the socially motivated one—and raucous, Alinsky-style community action. ACORN members in Gary, Indiana, for example, brought a greedy utility company to heel by lining up to pay their bills in pennies. They are bucking the system, much as Chris Johnson is.

Most of the stories in *Swim* suggest clip files rather than on-the-ground reporting. Still, I was glad to learn about these people. The inspirational mode does pose a problem for Hightower, though: how to get off the zingers at the bad guys when he’s talking about the good ones.

His solution is frequent resort to straw men, in the form of unnamed pundits, experts, and corporadoes who

serve as polemical foils. The device becomes formulaic; he’d do better to tell his stories straight. More significant is the tendency to gloss over difficulties. We need inspiration, yes. But we also need to learn how people deal with setbacks. The Organic Valley co-op almost fell apart, for example. Hightower mentions this but doesn’t dig into it. Yet it’s the part we most need to understand if we are going to try to follow their example.

Then there’s Whole Foods. It’s an easy target. I’d prefer a world of independent local merchants, too. But the chain really has brought critical mass to organics, and not just on behalf of factory farms. In his discussion of Organic Valley, Hightower lets drop that one of the co-op’s major customers is ... yes, Whole Foods. What are we to make of that?

Finally, I wish that Hightower had been more willing to ask his readers to look into the mirror. He has a long section, for example, on evangelical environmentalists, in particular Reverend Rich Cizik of the Evangelical Environmental Network. Hightower is right to challenge those on the Left who dismiss Christian activists out of hand. The tone is admiring and respectful.

But there is a self-satisfaction too, that someone such as Cizik has seen the environmental light. Does Cizik have a light that we need to see as well? Do the fellowship of the churches, the spiritual depth of the gospel text, the call to service rather than convenience, offer something that secular environmentalists could learn from? Discomfort is the nerve ending of growth. While we give the corporadoes hell, maybe we need to cultivate a little for ourselves.

Jonathan Rowe is a YES! contributing editor, a fellow at the Tomales Bay Institute, and co-director of West Marin Commons.



www.YesMagazine.org/ch14

Listen to Jim Hightower read from *Swim Against the Current*.

YES! PICKS ::

Musical inspiration while putting out this issue



Sleep Through the Static

Jack Johnson recorded his fourth album in analog at his solar powered studio. It’s fitting, as this CD turns its attention in a big way to the state of the world. Jack’s getting serious, and he’s asking us to also—between surf sets.



Afriki

Habib Koite uses lyrics in the Malian Bambara language to touch upon themes vital to Africa today: “People here in Africa are willing to risk death trying to leave for Europe or the USA, but they are not willing to take the risk of staying to develop something here in Africa.” The powerful, uplifting messages are carried along by his distinctive guitar work.



An Ancient Muse

Inspired by her travels through Mongolia, China, Turkey, and the Greek Islands, **Loreena McKennitt’s** haunting compositions will take you to an entrancing place.



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LAWRENCE WOLF, BUSPROJECT.ORG

Oregon's Progressive Ideas Get on the Bus

Jim Hightower

IT BEGAN AS A MUNDANE DISCUSSION on how to transport young volunteers to Oregon swing districts to help progressive candidates. “We’ll just rent a bus,” said Jefferson Smith. “You know,” chimed in Charles Lewis, “you can buy one a lot cheaper than you can rent one.” Okay, our own bus! That’s cool.

For a decade, the state had been beset by a double-barreled Republican legislature. The public education system, a point of tremendous pride in Oregon, was being taken apart by the legislature’s religious extremists and privatization ideologues. Also, lawmakers had been taking a chain saw to the conservation laws that had carefully protected the state’s invaluable natural beauty, turning these public resources over to the whims of profiteers, even though polls showed that this was not at all what the people wanted.

Smith and Jefferson were among a loose group of politically frustrated young Oregonians that gathered in 2001 to talk about fomenting a little rebellion in the politics of their state. The bus gave them more than wheels—it gave them a name: the Oregon Bus Project. Just quirky enough to cause

people to ask, “The what?” It also gave them a symbol connected to the inspiring history of Rosa Parks and the Freedom Riders. Plus, it provided a big, visible, mobile presence, physically representing democracy in motion, while offering volunteers the bonding experience of what the Bus Project calls “community in a vehicle.”

It was welcoming, fun, idealistic, and important—four elements that appeal to young people ... and to people of all ages, for that matter.

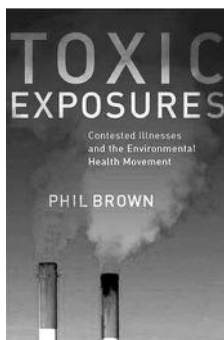
But would they really come?

The kickoff trip was scheduled for June 15, 2002. The Bus Project had contacted a couple of Senate candidates who said, “Yeah, if you can bring us a few kids to go door-to-door with us on Saturday, that’d be swell.” The organizers flung out a net to activist groups, circles of friends, and colleges, asking for volunteers. They also made use of something that, at the time, was new to politics, e-mail, creating the first political e-mail list in the state. They got to the staging area at seven in the morning, hung the big “Get on the Bus” banner, put out the coffee and doughnuts—and hoped. A car arrived, then another ... and finally more than 150 people rolled in. The only ones more pleasantly surprised than the organizers were the candidates.

The Bus Project has brought thousands of new people into politics, knocked on hundreds of thousands of doors, and had an impact that its first young organizers would not dared to have imagined. In the 2002 and 2004 elections, the Bus Project focused on the Oregon Senate, targeting a total of ten races. Their candidates won nine, taking control of the Senate out of right-wing hands! In 2006, the Bus Project turned to the House, targeting races in ten swing districts. Again, their candidates won nine, moving the House out of right-wing control!

The impact goes beyond legislative realignment to the personal. The Bus Project bought no ads, hired no consultants, and did no mass mailings or auto-dial phone calling. It was all volunteer power—face-to-face, honest, doorstep politicking. The Oregon Bus Project’s approach empowered ordinary people to be the difference makers.

From Swim Against the Current: Even a Dead Fish Can Go with the Flow, by Jim Hightower with Susan DeMarco. Copyright © 2008 by Jim Hightower and Susan DeMarco. Reprinted by permission of the author.



**Toxic Exposures:
Contested Illnesses
and the Environmental
Movement**

PHIL BROWN

Columbia University, 2007, 356 pages, \$28.95



**Shopping Our Way to Safety:
How We Changed from
Protecting the Environment
to Protecting Ourselves**

ANDREW SZASZ

University of Minnesota, 2007, 323 pages, \$24.95

REVIEWED BY STEVE HEILIG

In the past decade, the public has been besieged with ever-growing (and often frightening) evidence that some of the 80,000 industrial-age chemicals in wide use can have negative impacts on our health. As research on environmental health has ramped up, so has economically motivated backlash aimed at discrediting environmental risks. As the environmental health movement comes of age, these two books present analyses helpful to anyone interested in understanding the broader context of the struggle for a healthier world.

Focusing on breast cancer, asthma, and Gulf War-related diseases as case studies, Phil Brown examines how scientists, patients, and environmentalists are learning to work, live, and do battle with uncertainty and denial. Although true progress has been slow and fraught with obstacles, scientists and health activists are winning gradual acknowledgement of chemical contributions to disease. But the controversy manufactured by industry propaganda continues to confound understanding of the chemical role in these diseases and add uncertainty

about what actions to take.

New research and heightened public advocacy are challenging established ways of doing business, both scientific and industrial. Brown has also been directly involved in community health work and ends on an uplifting note about the power of collective advocacy: stories about scientists, environmentalists, and health activists who have successfully advocated for precautionary policies in professional associations, municipalities, and entire nations. But any such progress is an uphill fight.

In the midst of uncertainty, we are faced with choices—often between the political and the personal. In *Shopping Our Way to Safety*, Andrew Szasz raises some uncomfortable issues. He demonstrates how much of the public's energy has been diverted into "quarantining" ourselves from the health threats we fear lurk in our food and homes—buying air filters, drinking bottled water, and otherwise attempting to avoid personal exposure.

Not that this is necessarily bad—other than the wasteful scam of selling water in plastic bottles—but as Szasz

illustrates, many of us come to feel that protecting ourselves is enough. Like the fallout shelters of the 1960s, our self-quarantine gives us a false sense of security, Szasz argues. We distance ourselves from the source of the problem without addressing its roots. Under a spell of greenwashing and what Szasz calls "political anesthesia," we often fail to hold industry and government accountable.

Protecting ourselves and working for broader change are not exclusive, but the latter is a messier proposition. The problem is ultimately profit. Eco-product companies may benefit from marketing to and playing off of our fears. Corporations stand to lose large profits if their products are seen as tainted by risky chemicals, and they overwhelm politicians and the public with vast lobbying and media relations campaigns.

Sorting out the truth can be difficult, but it is getting easier as scientific evidence builds, advocates partner with scientists to make good information available, corporate and chemical lobbying is exposed, and policy is built on this body of evidence. Szasz points out that back in the 1960s, anti-war advocates "won their struggle to convince Americans that building fallout shelters was folly and suicidal." For a more current example in environmental health, Brown looks to Europe, which has developed health and safety policies based on precautionary protections with some success to date. In this arena, the New World might well take some lessons from the Old—that the longstanding European concept of "solidarity" among people and communities can, and probably must, apply to environmental health if we are to truly have cleaner, healthier bodies.

Steve Heilig is the director of public health and education at the San Francisco Medical Society and co-editor of the *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*.

FILM ::



Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible

Documentary, 2006, World Trust Educational Service, 50 min. Directed by Shakti Butler.

REVIEWED BY CAROL ESTES

“I wake up every single morning of my life and think, ‘I am a black person,’” says a professor in the film *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible*.

It’s different for me. I’m white, but not once did I ever wake up and think, “I am a white person.” In my mirror, I don’t see a white person, just a person, and I might even congratulate myself on that.

But it’s nothing to be proud of, according to this film. It means I’m colorblind in a particularly problematic way: I can’t see whiteness. I can avoid acknowledging the racial privileges that have supported my successes and sustain the comfortable myth that I earned my perch near the top of the social ladder.

Mirrors of Privilege, a simply made but surprisingly compelling film, introduces white people to the part of our whiteness we’ve learned not to see, through a series of conversations with white people who have thought deeply about race. A professor of women’s studies from New York recalls feeling baffled after reading two essays from African American women arguing that white women

were oppressive to work for. “How can that be?” she wondered. “We’re so nice.” She decided to investigate. “If I have anything I didn’t earn,” she told herself, “show me.” She meditated over this challenge and within three months had identified 46 examples.

Throughout the film, some scenarios are powerfully illustrated in dance. One tableau shows three people, down on all fours, lined up shoulder to shoulder. Across their backs reclines a white woman, languorously reading a book, oblivious to the trembling arms of the black man who’s holding her up.

These are images and voices that have been largely missing from America’s discussion of race—articulate, principled, caring white people struggling to come to grips with their own fear, guilt, and ambivalence. They form, as anti-racism activist Van Jones puts it, “a cry from the heart of white people working to restore their own humanity.”

Carol Estes is a YES! contributing editor, and for eight years has sponsored the Black Prisoners Caucus at a men’s prison in Monroe, Washington, where she co-founded the program University Behind Bars.



www.YesMagazine.org/mirrors

Watch a video clip of *Mirrors of Privilege*

YES! PICKS ::

Maddening and motivating independent films

Pilgrimage (22 min)

Downtown Community Media Center, 2006.
Directed by Tadashi Nakamura.

In 1969, a group of Japanese-American youth traveled to a former internment camp in the California desert, staging the first event to publicly expose the World War II-era internment policy. This short but inspiring film by a young California filmmaker draws parallels between the camps and current persecution of Muslim Americans, and shows how the Japanese-American community has united to stand against racial discrimination.

Abel Raises Cain (82 min)

Crashcourse Documentaries, 2007.
Directed by Jenny Abel and Jeff Hockett.

A daughter’s fond, bemused study of the life work of her father, Alan Abel. The trailblazer for such modern hoaxers as the Yes Men, Abel worked to expose the herd mentality of mainstream media and to alert viewers to exercise a bit more skepticism than the reporters he repeatedly fooled.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



The fact that you are reading this column in YES! tells me that you share the fierce faith that with enough citizen understanding and action, America can change. It's a faith that underlies every issue of YES!

America Can Change

Were you one of the millions deeply moved by Barack Obama's March 18 speech from Philadelphia? He spoke of healing the wounds of racism, recognizing the legitimacy of anger on all sides, and forging new alliances to take on the roots of our problems. That's a tall order! He supported his optimism with a fierce faith in this country, saying "What we know, what we have seen, is that America can change—that is the true genius of this nation."

Perhaps you thought, as I did, "Yes, I share that fierce faith—America can indeed change if people like you and me act on our vision of the possibilities." Reflecting on his speech, I recalled a moment that shifted the course of my life. It was 1991 and my husband David and I were living in the Philippines. We had spent 21 years in Africa, Latin America, and Asia helping the poor gain a path to prosperity.

But we were painfully aware of larger global forces that swept away much of the good we were helping to achieve. Trade rules designed to benefit global corporations drove small farmers off their farms, replacing them with foreign-owned plantations, factories, and resorts that reduced once independent people to servitude. Ad-saturated television spread a consumer culture that sprouted vast shopping malls and

ever-higher mountains of garbage.

Especially troubling was the fact that the United States, the country we called our own, was promoting these damaging trends. Some of our closest Asian friends told us that the thing we could do to best help their people would be to return to the United States and bring about change there. Like Obama, they had a fierce faith that America could change.

So in 1992 David and I left Southeast Asia, first going to New York, where at the Ford Foundation I supported what has become a growing movement for sustainable, community-based forestry. David wrote *When Corporations Rule the World*, which helped ignite awareness of the dangers of the global economy. In 1998 we moved to Bainbridge Island, Washington, so I could head the Positive Futures Network, the publisher of YES! It was here that David wrote *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*.

Over these years America has indeed changed—in some ways for the worse. It has embarked on an endless war, mired its people in ever-greater levels of debt, jailed over 2 million of its citizens, and spewed out so much pollution that the fate of the Earth is threatened. But in other ways it has changed for the better. Just nine years after the World Trade

Organization protests in Seattle, the expansionist plans of the corporate free-traders have stalled and leading Democratic presidential candidates can't run away fast enough from NAFTA. Our country is waking up to the limits of the Earth to the point where even consumer culture is being questioned. And now Obama's speech opens the hope of a much-needed conversation about race and its impacts in this country.

The fact that you are reading this column in YES! tells me that you share the fierce faith that with enough citizen understanding and action, America can change. It's a faith that underlies every issue of YES!—that we really can take steps to reverse the threat of global warming; stand up to corporate power; transform our health care system; shape a cooperative role for America in the world; face the legacy of racism; and keep up the long march toward a more perfect union.

At this time when so much is at stake, we need all the strength we can muster to act on the challenges. It's a good time to get in touch with that fierce faith our Asian friends expressed in 1991 and Obama expressed in 2008.

Fran Korten, Publisher

WHO WE ARE ::

YES! Magazine is published by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization supporting people's active engagement in creating a just, sustainable, and compassionate world. The work of the Positive Futures Network is to give visibility and momentum to signs of an emerging society in which life, not money, is what counts; in which everyone matters; and in which vibrant, inclusive communities offer prosperity, security, and meaningful ways of life.

NEWS AND NOTES ::



New Development Coordinator

Jessica Lind-Diamond has joined the YES! staff as our development coordinator in charge of much of our fundraising efforts. Jessica came to YES! as an intern last June after graduating from Trinity College in Connecticut. She served as assistant to the executive director and we were impressed with her skills and commitment. Jess majored in Human Rights and Hispanic Studies in college and spent a year in Chile studying art as a tool for social change. She loves hiking, cooking, and good music. If you want to make a donation to YES!, just give Jess a call. 206/842-5009 ext. 213.

Climate Change Issue of YES! a Big Hit

The day after our "Stop Global Warming Cold" issue of YES! was published, Jenny Clad, who directs The Climate Project, one of Al Gore's nonprofits, called to tell us of her excitement about this issue. She is now getting copies of the magazine to every one of the over 2,000 grassroots leaders the Project is training to stimulate discussions of

global warming in their communities. A few days after Jenny's call, two other subscribers and supporters called with impassioned pleas to get this issue to every U.S. Congressperson, every state governor, the top CEOs in the country, and key media. Your financial support has helped us respond to those requests and to others from many climate change groups. Thanks! Hundreds of readers have since called to order extra copies to give to friends, local officials, and study groups. The issue also flew off the shelves at newsstands all over the country. We're thrilled with this enthusiastic response—for what it says about the value of this issue of YES! and about the desire in this country (at last!) for serious action on this crisis. Information about The Climate Project: www.theclimateproject.org.

Check out the YES! Web Store

Wondering if your YES! subscription has expired? Need to change your address? Want to renew? Give gift subscriptions? Order back issues? Donate? We've got a new web store designed to make all of these actions easier than ever. Our data systems programmer, Kevin Audleman, has done wonders in building a store to fit your needs. Check it out at www.yesmagazine.org/store.

Additions to 2007 Donors List

In the Spring 2008 issue of YES! we listed the names of the people who had given donations during 2007. But we missed a few. With apologies, we now thank Randy Compton, Barbara Lewis, Mel MacDonald, Josh Mailman, and Audrey Watson for their generous gifts.

YES! PICKS ::

Things To Do, Places To Go



www.YesMagazine.org/events

For an expanded listing of upcoming events

National Conference for Media Reform

June 6-8. Minneapolis, MN. Join over 3,500 fellow activists, media makers, educators, journalists, policymakers, and concerned citizens in calling for real and lasting changes to our nation's media system. 2008 provides an important opportunity to put the issue of media reform in the national spotlight. Speakers will include Bill Moyers, Amy Goodman, Van Jones, Naomi Klein, Arianna Huffington, and FCC Commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein. www.freepress.net

Community Strategic Training Initiative

August 1-3. Portland, OR. CSTI is three full days of intensive training and networking for those organizing for justice in the West. Topics include community organizing, organizational management, immigrant rights, racial justice, voter organizing, reproductive justice, and gender justice. www.westernstatescenter.org

Slow Food Nation

August 29-September 1. San Francisco, CA. Will bring individuals and grassroots organizations into a new, united activism to change the way Americans produce and eat their food. Through national and international speakers, a marketplace of the best sustainable foods, taste workshops, a film festival, and more, this event will illuminate the relationship of food to the environment, public health, social justice, and culture. www.slowfoodnation.org

Bioneers

October 17-19. San Rafael, CA. Connect with people and ideas on the forefront of positive change in this three-day networking extravaganza. Discover new opportunities and strategies for creating positive change in your work, life, and community. Also featuring organic community dinners, Moving Image Festival screenings, receptions, and a Saturday night dance hosted by the Bioneers Youth. www.bioneers.org

FROM THE PUBLISHER :: A Special Invitation

Become a Dedicated Friend of YES!

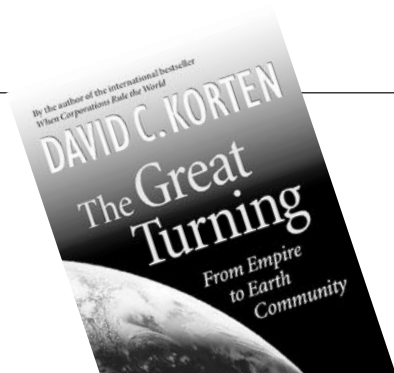
Sally Collier writes about why she and her husband Bob Caiola are Dedicated Friends of YES!

I was serving as the country director of the Peace Corps in Zimbabwe, when Bob and I received our first issue of YES! It was 1997 and I was feeling discouraged about the state of our world. But when I read the empowering stories in YES!, I immediately wrote to tell the editors how thrilled I was with the way the magazine counteracted negative news and spread hope. Bob and I became Dedicated Friends of YES! to express our commitment and enthusiasm.

Now back in the United States, Bob and I live in the mountains of West Virginia, where we have planted a tree for each of our 14 (!) grandchildren. Bob teaches at our local school for the deaf and blind, and we're both on the board of the Cacapon Institute, which works to protect the rivers feeding the Chesapeake Bay. When the "Stop Global Warming Cold" issue of YES! arrived in February, I knew our board would love it and immediately got on the YES! website to give a gift subscription to every board member. The thanks are still rolling in.



ROBIN CAIOLA SHEEKEY



As a Dedicated Friend, you'll receive:

- A complimentary copy of David Korten's book: *The Great Turning*
- Your subscription to YES! included (no more renewal notices)
- Quarterly updates from our publisher
- Future free gift offers of books, CDs, or calendars
- Invitations to YES! events

YES! I would like to become a Dedicated Friend of YES!

Your subscription to YES! is included when you sign up for a monthly or quarterly donation:

- ☐ \$10/month ☐ \$15/month ☐ \$25/month
☐ \$30/quarter ☐ \$50/quarter ☐ \$100/quarter

☐ I hereby authorize the Positive Futures Network to charge my credit card for a recurring donation in the amount indicated. I understand I can change or end this pledge at any time by notifying the Positive Futures Network in writing.

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Card #	Expiration

Mail to Positive Futures Network, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-0818, or fax 206/842-5208.
For more information, contact Jessica Lind-Diamond at 800/937-4451 or jlinddiamond@yesmagazine.org.



YES! BUT HOW?

IF YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR PRACTICAL WAYS
TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY, JUST ASK US.

{ Send questions to YES! But How?, 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116,
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 or to editors@yesmagazine.org }

NON-TOXIC ART

*I am an artist who would like to
use safer, earth-friendly paint.
Help!*

Exciting new non-toxic paints and solvents are emerging, including soy-based solvents, oil paint sticks, and earth paints updated from ancient formulas used by indigenous people. Some states are also updating their consumer product safety laws to offer more health safety information to the consumer.

Ancient painters mixed pigment and beeswax. Hand molded oil paint sticks of pigment and beeswax dry in 24 hours, are free of turpentine, processed oils, or toxic chemicals, and are great for the mobile artist.

Artists have often turned to water-based acrylic paints thinking of them as less toxic than oil paints. The Washington Toxics Coalition warns against children using acrylic paints because they can contain ammonia and formaldehyde.

The ochres—sienna and umber, along with red and yellow ochre—pigments used by artists since antiquity, have been considered among the safest of traditional pigments. Yet danger lurks with the manganese carbonate they contain, a serious health risk when inhaled. As with all powdered pigments, wear a

mask to avoid inhalation when mixing dry ochres.

Lead carbonate, chromium, cobalt arsenate, mercury, cadmium, all sometimes found in artists' paints, are especially dangerous. Artists are advised to wear vinyl or other gloves to protect against skin contact and absorption.

California's art materials labeling law, Proposition 65, is becoming a new standard for labeling artist's paints. Labels must carry a warning phrase when ingredients are "known to the state of California" to be carcinogens or carry other health dangers.

Type "MSDS" plus any paint ingredient into an online search engine to get safety information from a Material Safety Data Sheet.
—C.R.

CFL BULBS: BOON OR BANE?

*I heard a U.S. congresswoman
wants to stop the phase-out
of incandescent light bulbs.
What's up with that? Should I be
concerned about the safety of
fluorescent bulbs?*

Energy savings of 75 percent and a significantly longer lifespan make compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) an increasingly popular alternative to incandescents. However, concerns have surfaced over health risks related to mercury

in CFLs. They do contain mercury—about 5 milligrams, or 1 percent of the amount found in old thermometers. Intact CFLs pose no environmental or health risk. Even if a bulb gets broken, there is no cause for great alarm.

Forty percent of U.S. mercury emissions come from burning coal, much of it to generate electricity. The continued use of incandescents means significantly more mercury is released as a result of coal burning. A study by the Earth Policy Institute found that a nationwide switch to CFLs could make 80 coal-fired power plants unnecessary. More than 1 billion bulbs (3.85 per person) would have to be broken each year to equal the

emissions from those plants.

When a CFL burns out recycle it, don't put it in the trash—some local laws actually ban putting CFLs in the trash. You can go to epa.gov and search for "mercury-containing lightbulbs" "where you live" to find state-by-state information on keeping your CFL, and its mercury, out of the standard waste stream.

If a bulb breaks, the EPA recommends these simple precautions to avoid possible exposure to mercury: First, get all people and pets out of the room, open a window and let the room air out for 15 minutes. Then, collect the pieces of the bulb and put them in a plastic bag or glass jar, dispose of them in the same

Our Issue 46 researchers

Christiane Ranc was born in Lancaster County, PA, received a BS at Penn State University, and has worked as a freelance photojournalist in North Dakota and central New York. **Noah Grant** graduated from college in December and is in the process of figuring out what he wants to be when he grows up.



Christiane Ranc



Noah Grant



golden pothos

YES! PICKS ::

Grow Your Own Fresh Air

manner as an intact bulb, and wash your hands. The next few times you vacuum, leave a window open and turn the heating/AC off to avoid any potential exposure. Finally, go buy another CFL and use what you save on your energy bill to buy a subscription to YES! for a friend. —N.G.

BETTER THAN ZIP LOC

I read in your Spring issue about reusing plastic produce bags. What about Zip Loc bags? I can't find a recycling number on the box. We reuse these sandwich bags over and over! Thanks, Ruth

Zip Loc and similar bags are made of low-density polyethylene, recycling number 4. So they're in the "safer" classification, with the cautions mentioned in Issue 45.

As an alternative to using and reusing plastic of any kind, consider the increasingly popular cellulose option—a return to technology that made its debut in 1908. Cellulose bags and wrap are made of plant fiber, so they're at least potentially renewable. They're particularly good for storing fresh vegetables and fruits because they breathe. You won't be able to reuse them as many times as plastic, but that's not all bad. They biodegrade fairly quickly, as opposed to the plastic that will be in our landfills and oceans pretty much forever. —C.R.

So, you've made the "green" energy-efficiency improvements to your home. Windows and doors are tightly sealed, and extra insulation keeps you in a comfy cocoon. But less drafty airflow can mean stale air at best, and toxic air at worst.

Here's a "green" solution: houseplants.

Years ago, NASA scientists demonstrated that certain plants break apart the chemicals most commonly released by plastics, paints, synthetic carpets, and cleaning supplies.

Why are they such efficient air purifiers?

Most houseplants evolved in subtropical forests, where they received light filtered through the branches of taller trees. Because of this, their leaf composition allows them to photosynthesize under relatively low light conditions, which allows them to process gases efficiently. Soil and roots also play a role. Microorganisms in the soil become more adept at using these materials as a food source as they are exposed to them for longer periods of time. Their effectiveness is increased if lower leaves that cover the soil surface are removed so there is as much soil contact with the air as possible.

It takes about 16 houseplants in 6- to 8-inch diameter containers to improve air quality in a 1,800 square foot house. Some non-poisonous standouts from the NASA study: spider plant, golden pothos, peace lily, chinese evergreen, ficus, gerbera daisy, and rubber plant.

Various species were tested with **trichloroethylene**, used in dry cleaning, paints, lacquers, and adhesives; **benzene**, solvent in gasoline, paints, dyes, plastics, and foams; and **formaldehyde**, more common and more toxic, used in particle board, office furniture, household cleaners, fire retardants, and carpets.

This is how much of the contaminants were removed by plants from a sealed room in 24 hours:

	Formaldehyde	Benzene	Trichloroethylene
Dracaena massangeana	70%	21.4%	12.5%
Dracaena deremensis	50	70	20
Ficus Benjaminia	47.4	30	10.5
Peace lily	50	80	23
Golden pothos	67	67	9.2
Chrysanthemum	61	53	41

BRIGHT IDEA

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"Writing and researching the stories of positive change-makers is empowering."

— Lilja, 2006 intern

www.yesmagazine.org

HAS THE PROMISE OF THE STORIES WE'VE
PUBLISHED TURNED INTO REALITY?

Historic Accord Protects B.C. Forests



ECOTRUST CANADA

Iisaak's small patch harvesting on this mountainside of Clayoquot Sound's Warn Bay is not visible from the water and is barely visible from the air. A helicopter was used to remove timber; no roads were built.

11 years ago in YES! ... we reported on the shutdown of logging in British Columbia's Clayoquot Sound. Timber giant MacMillan Bloedel caved under the pressure of an international campaign to protect the forest. Elsewhere in B.C., an enormous expanse of land was attracting attention as the next battleground for conservation.

Today ...

MacMillan Bloedel's logging rights in Clayoquot were subsequently sold to a First Nations-controlled company, Iisaak. Nu-chah-nulth First Nations and the B.C. government negotiated "ecosystem-based management" agreements aimed at balancing conservation with the need for jobs. Tree cutting resumed, but at a much reduced rate.

Recently, Iisaak and Ma-Mook Coulson, the other native-controlled logging company in Clayoquot, have increased their logging to reach the "annual allowable cut" level. An environmental coalition is in negotiations with the First Nations to arrive at a new conservation agreement and avoid renewed conflict over cutting. Environmental groups also hope to work with the B.C. government to create a large-scale conservation plan that includes funding for developing green job opportunities that reduce the need for

logging, especially in intact old-growth valleys.

Another area we mentioned in our 1997 article was the Great Bear Rainforest. Following the lead of the Clayoquot ecosystem management plan, First Nations, environmental groups, logging companies and the B.C. government negotiated a landmark deal in 2006. The deal increases protected areas, makes logging practices more sustainable, and promotes diversification of local economic opportunities. The changes are to be implemented by 2009.

Events in Clayoquot Sound and the Great Bear Rainforest highlight a positive trend in forest conservation efforts in British Columbia. First Nations are gaining more control over their traditional lands while considerations of sustainability are becoming central to forestry planning.

—Noah Grant

Interested? See our original story at www.yesmagazine.org/logging. It's one of more than 1,700 YES! Magazine articles in our online archive.



www.YesMagazine.org/greatbear
Photo essay of the Great Bear
Rainforest by Tim Ennis