

MARYLAND UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, INC.

Fall 2005 NEWSLETTER Volume 16, Number 4

Inside this issue:

Highlights of Coordinating Body meeting.....1
Darfur Pledge.....2
Bush Recalled to National Guard.....2
An Essay by E..L. Doctorow.....2
Department of Peace.....3
No One Can Say They Didn't See It Coming!.....4
Counter-recruitment News.....5
Anne Arundel Peace Action News.....5
Operation Homecoming.....6
Nuclear Fusion in France.....7
Just Shut it Down.....8

Note: All opinions expressed in this publication are those solely of their authors and do not necessarily reflect those of MUPJ and/or its members...as usual! Many thanks to Carol Solomon, Ron Solomon, and Paulette Hammond for helping with this issue.



Maryland United for Peace and Justice

Coordinating Body Meeting

11 September at the Solomons'

Present were: Ron & Carol Solomon, Mary & Phil Chenoweth, Bernie Brown, Dan Frasier, Deborah Cunningham, Paulette Hammond, Chuck Frascati

History of MUPJ: The late Helen Hollingsworth, of the American Friends Service Committee, started the monthly calendar, which Carol Solomon inherited and still publishes. The late Jesse Aiken, saw the need for a unified coalition of peace and justice activists in Maryland, and called the original meeting in New Windsor in 1976.

Financial Reports:

MUPJ: Chuck said we have \$1900 and change. Since we are now paying for copying, our expenses are greater. We may need to look at raising more money (perhaps raising membership dues) at the next meeting.

IPA: Carol said the IPA has \$1559.63. Chuck will pay IPA/Carol \$500 for memberships and calendar.

PaxWorld Fund and Domini Social Fund remain at a little less than \$10,000.

Updating of membership list. This was deferred (hopefully soon!)

Committee Reports

Benjamin Peace Awards: Carol can't do it herself. Nil Deo may be interested. Carol has already written up a letter to send to previous entrants and teachers asking for their input on a theme. Dan volunteered to read the essays.

Peace Conference: We did receive some responses to the questionnaire. Everyone wanted to have work sessions in the afternoon. Perhaps have another workshop or two also in the afternoon for those who don't want to get involved in actions.

Theme: "Peace begins at Home" was suggested.

Date: Saturday, April 29, 2006

Place: Church of the Redeemer, North Charles Street?

Keynote: Suzanne Hardjoe, Cindy Sheehan? Dan will email the name of a woman from India who is coming to Baltimore

Everyone think of ideas for the Conference. Email to Ron peacepepper@comcast.net or Paulette phamm001@earthlink.net

Unfinished Business:

Please email Carol contact names: peacecalendar@comcast.net

New Business:

Wal-Mart Watch: Paulette passed around the information on the campaign Have a workshop at the Peace Conference.

Maryland Conservation Council: we agreed to renew our membership for \$50.

Paulette's copying machine needs to be fixed for \$247. Carol will explore the Maryland Non-profit store. Otherwise, we'll have the machine fixed.

Baltimore News Network: We agreed to provide mailing labels. They will give us a donation to IPA.

Next meeting:

Place: Chenoweth's, LeisureWorld

Time: 10 am to 1 pm

Date: Saturday, December 17, 2005.



1,000 TAKE "DARFUR PLEDGE" TO END GENOCIDE

As "Shake Hands with the Devil" Opens Nationwide, Dallaire-Inspired Campaign Reaches Milestone

Kensington, MD, June 17 - One thousand Americans have pledged to contact President Bush every day until 44,000 peacekeepers have been deployed to stop the genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan, Africa. The "Darfur Pledge Campaign" was inspired by General Romeo Dallaire, whose return to Rwanda on the tenth anniversary of the genocide he futilely sought to prevent is depicted in the film "Shake Hands with the Devil."

The Essence of True Humanity Is Compassion (The ETHIC), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, launched the Darfur Pledge Campaign after hearing General Dallaire speak at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in February. In his speech, General Dallaire estimated that 44,000 peacekeepers -with a mandate to protect innocent civilians- could stop the cycle of violence in Darfur. Currently, there are fewer than 3000 African Union monitors without peacekeeping authority in the region, which is the size of Texas. Dallaire encouraged American citizens to call for more leadership and involvement from the U.S. to stop the killing.

"With the memory of Rwanda weighing heavily on our conscience, we simply cannot be silent while another genocide goes unchallenged," said The ETHIC's Founder John Morlino. "General Dallaire reminds us that as citizens of the US, we have the collective capacity to compel our government leaders to act. We just need to use that power."

Over the past two years, 400,000 Sudanese have been systematically slaughtered by government-

sponsored militias in the Darfur region. Two million more have been displaced and face the prospect of death from disease or starvation. There has been a shameful lack of action by the US and the international community to stop the genocide and protect the people of Darfur.

As John Morlino states, "I have become increasingly frustrated and despondent over the lack of will to send an adequate number of peacekeepers to stop the genocide in Darfur. I simply had to do something. This campaign represents a simple act that everyday people can do to make a difference and hopefully save lives."

In its entirety, the Darfur Pledge consists of the following:

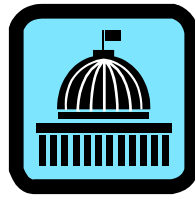
Until 44,000 peacekeepers have been deployed in Darfur to stop the killing, I pledge to take the following actions:

1) EVERY DAY*, I will call the White House switchboard (202-456-1414) and leave the following message for President Bush: "This is [name] from [state]. Forty-four thousand peacekeeping troops could stop the genocide in Darfur. Please act immediately. Thank you." If calling long distance is a financial hardship or if I can't leave a message due to the volume of calls, I will send an email to President@WhiteHouse.gov every day with the same message. (* You can leave a voice message at the White House Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. eastern time.)
2) I will recruit at least ONE other person to take this pledge.
3) To ensure that my actions are counted, I will register my pledge with The ETHIC by emailing my name and address to DarfurPledge@peacemail.com or by signing the online pledge petition at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/391810134>.

As of June 17, one thousand people from across the United States have taken the Darfur Pledge, either by signing the online petition or by emailing their pledge to The ETHIC.

The ETHIC is an all-volunteer non-profit founded in 2002 to promote peace, nonviolence and compassion toward all beings. More information

about this campaign is available on our website at <http://www.the-ethic.org/>.



BUSH RECALLED TO NATIONAL GUARD!

9/2/2005

Iraq-depleted, desperate Guard calling back those with unfulfilled commitments for hurricane emergency.

EWM - (September 2, 2005) A White House already reeling from a "God awful" federal response to Hurricane Katrina, chaos in Iraq, and plummeting poll numbers received another blow today when President Bush was ordered to report to Montgomery, Alabama immediately to resume his incomplete National Guard service.

The Guard, facing a crisis of its own due to over-deployment and under-enlistment is scouring its records to identify former guardsmen with dubious service histories so they can be pressed back into duty. The move was necessitated when the guard was asked to deploy massive aid to hurricane-stricken regions and discovered that the "cupboard was bare."

Pentagon computer experts identified prospects by doing a Google search on the terms, "National Guard," "skipped requirements," "accomplished nothing" and "left early." The President's name was said to be the first on the search results.

Those recalled will receive certified letters today notifying them to report immediately to the units from which they bailed and will be enrolled into "Slacker Battalions." Although Bush was identified as owing service to units in both Alabama and Texas, Alabama received his recall rights after losing a coin flip.

U.S. National Guard commander Brigadier General Morley Brassbuttons put an optimistic spin on prospects that the Slacker

Battalions will make a contribution this time around. "Given the less than stellar records of the recalled, our expectations are pretty low. That said, we believe the Slacker Battalions can handle menial but necessary chores such as emptying trash receptacles, washing dishes and scrubbing lavatories.

"But this time there will be no deferments, transfers to work on political campaigns, or early-outs to attend MBA school. As an incentive to comply we've arranged for violators to be shipped to Abu Ghraib prison wearing nothing but a garbage bag."

For his part, the President is said to be relieved to get a break from the "hard work" of being President, but was crestfallen when told that this time he will not make his entrance in a flight suit under a "Mission Accomplished" banner.

Meanwhile, as a contingency, Karl Rove is checking General Brassbuttons' genealogy chart to find relatives with sensitive secrets that could be leaked to the media.

The issue was not discussed at this morning's press gaggle as White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan showed up wearing earplugs, gagged and blindfolded.

Editor's Note: *Please excuse the Muse for reporting fantasy. As a Fairly Unbalanced Journalist, it is his calling.*

www.eyewitnessmuse.com



An Essay By E.L Doctorow

Edgar Lawrence Doctorow occupies a central position in the history of American literature. He is generally considered to be among the most talented, ambitious, and admired novelists of the second half of the twentieth century. Doctorow has received the National Book Award, two National Book Critics Circle Awards, the PEN/Faulkner Award, the Edith Wharton Citation for Fiction, the William Dean Howell Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the residentially conferred National Humanities Medal.

I fault this president (George W. Bush) for not knowing what death is. He does not suffer the death of our twenty-one year olds who wanted to be what they could be.

On the eve of D-day in 1944 General

Eisenhower prayed to God for the lives of the young soldiers he knew were going to die. He knew what death was.

Even in a justifiable war, a war not of choice but of necessity, a war of survival, the cost was almost more than Eisenhower could bear.

But this president does not know what death is. He hasn't the mind for it. You see him joking with the press, peering under the table for the WMDs he can't seem to find, you see him at rallies strutting up to the stage in shirt sleeves to the roar of the carefully screened crowd, smiling and waving, triumphal, a he-man. He does not mourn. He doesn't understand why he should mourn. He is satisfied during the course of a speech written for him to look solemn for a moment and speak of the brave young Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

But you study him, you look into his eyes and know he dissembles an emotion which he does not feel in the depths of his being because he has no capacity for it. He does not feel a personal responsibility for the thousand dead young men and women who wanted be what they could be.

They come to his desk not as youngsters with mothers and fathers or wives and children who will suffer to the end of their days a terribly torn fabric of familial relationships and the inconsolable remembrance of aborted life.... They come to his desk as a political liability which is why the press is not permitted to photograph the arrival of their coffins from Iraq.

How then can he mourn? To mourn is to express regret and he regrets nothing. He does not regret that his reason for going to war was, as he knew, unsubstantiated by the facts. He does not regret that his bungled plan for the war's aftermath has made of his mission-accomplished a disaster. He does not regret that rather than controlling terrorism his war in Iraq has licensed it.

So he never mourns for the dead and crippled youngsters who have fought this war of his choice. He wanted to go to war and he did. He had not the mind to perceive the costs of war, or to listen to those who knew those costs. He did not understand

that you do not go to war when it is one of the options, but when it is the only option; you go not because you want to but because you have to.

This president knew it would be difficult for Americans not to cheer the overthrow of a foreign dictator. He knew that much. This president and his supporters would seem to have a mind for only one thing --- to take power, to remain in power, and to use that power for the sake of themselves and their friends. A war will do that as well as anything. You become a wartime leader. The country gets behind you. Dissent becomes inappropriate.

And so he does not drop to his knees, he is not contrite, he does not sit in the church with the grieving parents and wives and children.

He is the President who does not feel. He does not feel for the families of the dead; he does not feel for the thirty five million of us who live in poverty; he does not feel for the forty percent who cannot afford health insurance; he does not feel for the miners whose lungs are turning black or for the working people he has deprived of the chance to work overtime at time-and-a-half to pay their bills --- it is amazing for how many people in this country this President does not feel.

But he will dissemble feeling. He will say in all sincerity he is relieving the wealthiest one percent of the population of their tax burden for the sake of the rest of us, and that he is polluting the air we breathe for the sake of our economy, and that he is decreasing the safety regulations for coal mines to save the coal miners' jobs, and that he is depriving workers of their time-and-a-half benefits for overtime because this is actually a way to honor them by raising them into the professional class.

And this litany of lies he will versify with reverences for God and the flag and democracy, when just what he and his party are doing to our democracy is choking the life out of it.

But there is one more terribly sad thing about all of this. I remember the millions of people here and around the world who marched against the war. It was extraordinary, that spontaneously aroused oversoul of alarm and protest that transcended national borders.

Why did it happen? After all, this was not the only war anyone had ever seen coming. There are little wars all over the world most of the time.

But the cry of protest was the appalled understanding of millions of people that America was ceding its role as the last best hope of mankind. It was their perception that the classic archetype of democracy was morphing into a rogue nation. The greatest democratic republic in history was turning its back on the future, using its extraordinary power and standing not to advance the ideal of a concordance of civilizations but to endorse the kind of tribal combat that originated with the Neanderthals, a people, now extinct, who could imagine ensuring their survival by no other means than pre-emptive war.

The president we get is the country we get. With each president the nation is conformed spiritually. He is the artificer of our malleable national soul. He proposes not only the laws but the kinds of lawlessness that govern our lives and invoke our responses. The people he appoints are cast in his image. The trouble they get into and get us into, is his characteristic trouble.

Finally the media amplify his character into our moral weather report. He becomes the face of our sky, the conditions that prevail: How can we sustain ourselves as the United States of America given the stupid and ineffective war-making, the constitutionally insensitive lawgiving, and the monarchal economics of this president? He cannot mourn but is a figure of such moral vacancy as to make us mourn for ourselves.



Department of Peace

Efforts are underway nationally to support a new federal Department of Peace. A conference was held in Washington, DC this month to

promote the idea. If you want to learn more, go to the web site at the bottom of this message.

With the activity being generated by the conference, right now would be a good time for people from all around the country to let their senators and representatives in Congress know that they support a Department of Peace.

Such an institution would help establish nonviolence as an organizing principle of American society. The Department would focus on nonmilitary peaceful conflict resolutions, prevent violence and promote justice and democratic principles to expand human rights. Domestically, the Department would be responsible for developing policies which address issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, mistreatment of the elderly, school and gang violence and other issues of cultural violence. Internationally, the Department would gather research, analyze foreign policy and make recommendations to the President on how to address the underlying causes of war and intervene before violence begins.

If you want to take action, please go to the following web site. There is information about the upcoming conference, and a link at the top of the page to "Take Action," such as sending a message of support to your congressional representatives and senators.

<http://www.thepeacealliance.org/main.htm>



No One Can Say They Didn't See It Coming

By Sidney Blumenthal

In 2001, FEMA warned that a hurricane striking New Orleans was one of the three most likely disasters in the U.S. But the Bush administration cut New Orleans flood control funding by 44 percent to pay for the Iraq war.

Biblical in its uncontrolled rage and scope, Hurricane Katrina has left millions of Americans to scavenge for food and shelter and hundreds to thousands reportedly dead. With its main levee broken, the evacuated city of New Orleans has become part of the Gulf of Mexico. But the damage wrought by the hurricane may not entirely be the result of an act of nature.

A year ago the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed to study how New Orleans could be protected from a catastrophic hurricane, but the Bush administration ordered that the research not be undertaken. After a flood killed six people in 1995, Congress created the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project, in which the Corps of Engineers strengthened and renovated levees and pumping stations. In early 2001, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a report stating that a hurricane striking New Orleans was one of the three most likely disasters in the U.S., including a terrorist attack on New York City. But by 2003 the federal funding for the flood control project essentially dried up as it was drained into the Iraq war. In 2004, the Bush administration cut funding requested by the New Orleans district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for holding back the waters of Lake Pontchartrain by more than 80 percent. Additional cuts at the beginning of this year (for a total reduction in funding of 44.2 percent since 2001) forced the New Orleans district of the Corps to impose a hiring freeze. The Senate had debated adding funds for fixing New Orleans' levees, but it was too late.

The New Orleans Times-Picayune, which before the hurricane published a series on the federal funding problem, and whose presses are now underwater, reported online: "No one can say they didn't see it coming ... Now in the wake of one of the worst storms ever, serious questions are being asked about the lack of preparation."

The Bush administration's policy of turning over wetlands to developers almost certainly also contributed to the heightened level of the storm

surge. In 1990, a federal task force began restoring lost wetlands surrounding New Orleans. Every two miles of wetland between the Crescent City and the Gulf reduces a surge by half a foot. Bush had promised "no net loss" of wetlands, a policy launched by his father's administration and bolstered by President Clinton. But he reversed his approach in 2003, unleashing the developers. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency then announced they could no longer protect wetlands unless they were somehow related to interstate commerce.

In response to this potential crisis, four leading environmental groups conducted a joint expert study, concluding in 2004 that without wetlands protection New Orleans could be devastated by an ordinary, much less a Category 4 or 5, hurricane. "There's no way to describe how mindless a policy that is when it comes to wetlands protection," said one of the report's authors. The chairman of the White House's Council on Environmental Quality dismissed the study as "highly questionable," and boasted, "Everybody loves what we're doing."

"My administration's climate change policy will be science based," President Bush declared in June 2001. But in 2002, when the Environmental Protection Agency submitted a study on global warming to the United Nations reflecting its expert research, Bush derided it as "a report put out by a bureaucracy," and excised the climate change assessment from the agency's annual report. The next year, when the EPA issued its first comprehensive "Report on the Environment," stating, "Climate change has global consequences for human health and the environment," the White House simply demanded removal of the line and all similar conclusions. At the G-8 meeting in Scotland this year, Bush successfully stymied any common action on global warming. Scientists, meanwhile, have continued to accumulate impressive data on the rising temperature of the oceans, which has produced more severe hurricanes.

In February 2004, 60 of the nation's

leading scientists, including 20 Nobel laureates, warned in a statement, "Restoring Scientific Integrity in Policymaking":

"Successful application of science has played a large part in the policies that have made the United States of America the world's most powerful nation and its citizens increasingly prosperous and healthy ... Indeed, this principle has long been adhered to by presidents and administrations of both parties in forming and implementing policies. The administration of George W. Bush has, however, disregarded this principle ... The distortion of scientific knowledge for partisan political ends must cease." Bush completely ignored this statement.

In the two weeks preceding the storm in the Gulf, the trumping of science by ideology and expertise by special interests accelerated. The Federal Drug Administration announced that it was postponing sale of the morning-after contraceptive pill, despite overwhelming scientific evidence of its safety and its approval by the FDA's scientific advisory board. The United Nations special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa accused the Bush administration of responsibility for a condom shortage in Uganda -- the result of the administration's evangelical Christian agenda of "abstinence." When the chief of the Bureau of Justice Statistics in the Justice Department was ordered by the White House to delete its study that African-Americans and other minorities are subject to racial profiling in police traffic stops and he refused to buckle under, he was forced out of his job. When the Army Corps of Engineers' chief contracting oversight analyst objected to a \$7 billion no-bid contract awarded for work in Iraq to Halliburton (the firm at which Vice President Cheney was formerly CEO), she was demoted despite her superior professional ratings. At the National Park Service, a former Cheney aide, a political appointee lacking professional background, drew up a plan to overturn past environmental practices and prohibit any mention of evolution while allowing sale of religious materials through the Park

Service.

On the day the levees burst in New Orleans, Bush delivered a speech in Colorado comparing the Iraq war to World War II and himself to Franklin D. Roosevelt: "And he knew that the best way to bring peace and stability to the region was by bringing freedom to Japan." Bush had boarded his very own "Streetcar Named Desire."

Sidney Blumenthal, a former assistant and senior advisor to President Clinton and the author of "The Clinton Wars," is writing a column for Salon and the Guardian of London.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,372455,00.html>



Counter-recruitment News

The Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a series of tests developed by Pentagon in the 1960s. The battery consists of several individual tests on the following subjects: Word Knowledge, Paragraph Comprehension, Arithmetic Reasoning, Mathematics Knowledge, General Science, Auto & Shop Information, Mechanical Comprehension, Electronics Information, Numerical Operations, and Coding Speed. The "High School Version" is officially called "Form 18/19." The paper-based ASVAB is commonly given to juniors and seniors in high school through a cooperative program between the Department of Defense and the Department of Education. The test is offered at more than 13,000 high schools and post secondary schools in the United States, as well as most, if not all of Montgomery's schools. Nationally, about 900,000 students will take Form 18/19 ASVAB this year.

The problem with ASVAB is that the military, through slick marketing techniques, is attempting to disassociate itself from the ASVAB in the mind of the public, preferring to minimize its primary purpose as a military recruiting tool. Examine the following two military-sponsored sites

regarding this military test and recruiting questionnaire, then open the MCPS website and search for "ASVAB." You'll discover that the military is succeeding in pitching the ASVAB as a "must take" test for ALL students serious about professional and educational advancement. Mention of the military is difficult to find, especially on the government site where they don't even tell you what "ASVAB" stands for. They are honest, however, in stating in their marketing materials that ASVAB is "not just another test."

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

<http://www.asvabprogram.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=overview.test>

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/>

If your child took the ASVAB test, his results may make it into the hands of recruiters as is the case in jurisdictions across the country. This is much more intrusive than the lists given under the "No Child Left Behind" Act, because the ASVAB results include career interests and their aptitude test scores. If you find your school released this information, you may have a basis for legal action, since a school can release educational records of a minor student only with the parents' consent.

Pat Elder, Montgomery Counter Counter-Recruitment Coalition



Anne Arundel Peace Action News

Youth in Anne Arundel County are invited to join in making 1,000 paper cranes in the memory of all victims of war and violence.

This project is based on the story of a 13-year old Japanese girl named Sadako who died of leukemia as a result of exposure to the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

During her illness, Sadako buoyed her spirits by folding paper cranes. In Japan, there is a myth that cranes live for 1,000 years and that a person who folds 1,000 cranes has a wish granted. Sadako died after folding 644 cranes. In her memory, Sadako's classmates folded 356 more cranes so that she could be buried with the

full number. Friends collected money from children throughout Japan to build a monument to Sadako in Hiroshima's Peace Park. Each year, people place paper cranes at the base of the statute to recall the tragedy of war and to celebrate humanity's undying hope for peace. More details about the Sadako story can be found at www.sadako.org/sadakostory.htm. Instructions for making paper cranes are at www.sadako.com/howtofold.html.

There will be a special program this fall recognizing the work of all participants in The Crane Project. This will feature:

- *Display of the cranes
- *A showing of the film, Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes
- *Special awards to all of the youngsters who took part in the project
- *The making of a videotape featuring messages of greeting from participants.

This videotape will be sent, along with the cranes, to the World Friendship Center in Hiroshima. The cranes will be displayed at Peace Park.



Operation Homecoming

By Erik Leaver, YES! Magazine
Posted on September 13, 2005,
Printed on September 13, 2005
<http://www.alternet.org/story/25257/>

"There is an old military doctrine called the First Rule of Holes: If you find yourself stuck in one, stop digging." -- The late Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll, U.S. Navy

The invasion, occupation, and continuing war in Iraq has cost the lives of more than 1,700 U.S. soldiers. Thousands more have been physically and emotionally scarred. Iraqis have suffered in even larger numbers. The BBC reports that nearly 25,000 Iraqi civilians have lost their lives and their country has been shattered by violence and continues to languish. Cities such as Fallujah,

population 300,000, have been virtually destroyed.

Ending the U.S. occupation of Iraq is the only way to move closer to peace and reconstruction. U.S. and coalition troops are both the cause of and the magnet for the violence in Iraq, not its solution. A goal that would help both the troops currently in Iraq and the Iraqi people would be to bring the troops home by January 2006.

Setting a date will transform the dynamics in Iraq. Iraqis will start to realize that they are in control, not the U.S., and this will give them hope that they will be an independent nation with the responsibility to create their nation on their own terms.

Ending the occupation

The U.S. operates out of approximately 50 locations, including 14 "enduring bases" in Iraq with unabashed names like "Camp Slayer," "Forward Operating Base Steel Dragon" and "Camp Headhunter." Iraqis have on their soil 150,000 U.S. soldiers, an additional 30,000 coalition troops, and 20,000 U.S. military contractors who conduct 12,000 or more patrols each week.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi resistance has grown larger and stronger. In November 2003 the Pentagon estimated that there were about 5,000 Iraqi resistance fighters. Today, estimates range from 16,000 to 40,000 fighters with about 200,000 supporters. The continuing presence of U.S. troops has strengthened, not weakened, the resistance.

With the withdrawal of the occupation forces and the resulting end of the Iraqi structures supporting those forces, the major target for resistance attacks will disappear.

Iraq's best chance

January's elections were an important first step toward democracy, but Iraqis still have little oversight over U.S. operations, which affect Iraqi security, natural resources, reconstruction and the economy. The elections appear to have deepened Iraq's sectarian divisions between the Shia, Sunnis

and Kurds. These divisions stalled the formation of the government and are slowing the writing of a new constitution. Politicians who are seen as collaborating with the U.S. increasingly are targeted by insurgents.

Having Iraqis in charge of their own security is a goal that the Bush administration and the peace movement can agree upon. But that can only happen in a truly sovereign nation. The police and military forces the U.S. is trying to create in Iraq have failed to provide security for the Iraqi people because they are fighting in a war that puts anyone associated with the U.S. occupation at great risk.

At the same time, soldiers and police officers lack training, and with unemployment in Iraq ranging between 30 and 70 percent, many Iraqi soldiers are loyal only to the paycheck they receive. More importantly, Iraqi security forces cannot succeed as long as the U.S. is leading a war on the ground in Iraq, as it is unclear who the security forces are fighting for--the U.S. or a nascent Iraqi government with no real power or popular support.

What will happen when U.S. troops are withdrawn? No one can say with any certainty. But it is certain that if Washington continues to "stay the course," U.S. troops will continue to die, and they will continue to kill. And Iraq's reconstruction will remain stalled.

It is likely that the withdrawal of U.S. troops would lead to the collapse of at least some parts of the current government, but some of its institutions--including the police, the military, and other security agencies--could survive under new leadership untainted by association with the U.S. occupation.

Without an outside enemy occupying the country, it is also possible that the kind of secular nationalism long dominant in Iraq would again prevail as the most influential political force in the emerging Iraqi polity, replacing the fundamentalist tendencies currently on the rise among Iraqis facing the desperation of occupation, repression, and growing impoverishment.

It is unlikely that the violence will completely disappear with the end of

the occupation, or that the Iraqi military can rebuild itself instantly after U.S. troops are withdrawn. As a result, there should be plans for providing temporary peacekeeping or security assistance if Iraq requests it.

Temporary on-the-ground security assistance cannot be imposed by U.S. (or U.S.-led coalition) forces. Nor can an international peace force function safely if it is perceived as colluding with an occupying force.

Only a truly multilateral force can be credible to the Iraqi people. For example, a combination of United Nations blue-helmet peacekeepers and temporary forces accountable to the Arab League and/or the Organization of the Islamic Conference could provide international legitimacy as well as regional accountability. The effect would be to reduce regional tensions and encourage neighboring countries to provide support throughout Iraq's reconstruction process.

A plan for withdrawal

Once a date for troop withdrawal has been announced, the following steps can facilitate phasing out U.S. involvement and building peace and reconstruction:

Reduce number of U.S. troops and end offensive operations. As a first step to withdrawal, the U.S. should declare an immediate cease-fire and reduce the number of troops deployed in Iraq. Continuing offensive operations will only escalate the violence and make Iraq less secure and less safe. The U.S. should pull troops out of major cities and shift troop strength to guarding the borders to stem the flow of foreign fighters and money used to fund the resistance. If Iraqi security forces need help maintaining order, they can invite in outside forces.

Declare that the U.S. will not maintain a permanent military presence in Iraq. Congress needs to affirm its commitment to a responsible withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. A congressional resolution clarifying that the U.S. has no plan to control Iraq's oil, to establish permanent military bases in

Iraq, or to suppress Muslims, would deprive insurgents of their central organizing message. Without such a resolution, Iraqis will assume that the U.S. intends to make the occupation a permanent feature of Iraqi life.

Hand over the restoration of services to Iraqis. The U.S. government and its contractors have failed to restore public safety, public services, strengthen institutions, or provide jobs. By giving Iraqis control over reconstruction funds, more Iraqis will get jobs and projects will be better targeted to the needs of Iraqis.

Lowering the unemployment rate will weaken insurgency recruitment efforts.

Put the brakes on fraud, waste, and abuse. Lawmakers should clamp down on the rampant war profiteering that has caused widespread waste, fraud, and abuse. To do this, the U.S. must stop awarding no-bid contracts and open-ended, "cost-plus," multi-billion dollar contracts such as those awarded to Halliburton and Bechtel, and increase oversight over the military and its contractors.

Make reparations. The United States owes a massive financial debt to Iraq. Over time, the obligation must be honored to repay Iraq for the collapse of their economy as a result of the economic sanctions of 1990-2003 and for the damage of the 2003-2005 invasion and occupation. The United States must also follow through on promises of reconstruction funds, beyond the small amount so far released.

Enter into negotiations. As with any guerrilla war, the Iraqi resistance is unlikely to be defeated by military means. Political and diplomatic solutions are the keys to ending the violence. Recent news reports indicate that some discussions between insurgent groups and the U.S. military have occurred. But even more important than negotiations with the U.S. is a dialogue between the insurgents and newly elected Iraqi leaders.

Looking Forward

All scenarios in today's war-ravaged Iraq are risky. Maintaining the U.S. occupation in Iraq, with U.S.

troops killing and dying in Iraq, violates U.S. and international law, the U.N. Charter, and the Geneva Conventions. Clearly this is not the way forward.

A January 2005 Zogby poll found that 82 percent of Sunnis and 69 percent of Shiites favor U.S. withdrawal either immediately or after an elected government is in place. How withdrawal is accomplished will be our legacy. What we propose is that that legacy be based on giving the Iraqis true control over their political, economic, and military conditions.

Erik Leaver is policy outreach director for the Foreign Policy In Focus project at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

Reprinted from Yes! A Journal of Positive Futures, PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. Subscriptions: 800/937-4451.



Nuclear Fusion Reactor Project in France: an expensive and senseless nuclear stupidity

Source: Greenpeace International
Posted by: Greenpeace International
<http://www.greenpeace.org>

Paris, 28 June 2005 - Greenpeace deplores the agreement by the Representatives of the Parties to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) (1) to construct one of the world's largest nuclear fusion experiments in Cadarache, Southern France. The project, estimated to cost 10bn euros, will not generate any electricity, instead it will need massive amounts of energy to heat up.

"With 10 billion, we could build 10,000MW offshore wind farms, delivering electricity for 7.5 million European households," said Jan Vande Putte of Greenpeace International. Advocates of fusion research predict that the first commercial fusion electricity might be delivered in 50 to 80 years from now.

But most likely, it will lead to a dead end, as the technical barriers to be overcome are enormous.

Today, the nuclear industry presents itself as the solution to climate change in a massive greenwashing drive. Far from being a solution, the nuclear option stalls real action to combat dangerous climate change. It is taking away the money for real solutions that are ready and economically available at a large scale, such as wind energy.

Fusion energy - if it would ever operate - would create a serious waste problem, would emit large amounts of radioactive material and could be used to produce materials for nuclear weapons. A whole new set of nuclear risks would thus be created.

"Governments should not waste our money on a dangerous toy which will never deliver any useful energy," said Jan Vande Putte of Greenpeace International. Instead, they should invest in renewable energy which is abundantly available, not in 2080 but today"

For more information please contact:

Jan Vande Putte, Greenpeace International nuclear campaigner +32 496161584



Just Shut It Down

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Shut it down. Just shut it down.

I am talking about the war-on-terrorism P.O.W. camp at Guantánamo Bay. Just shut it down and then plow it under. It has become worse than an embarrassment. I am convinced that more Americans are dying and will die if we keep the Gitmo prison open than if we shut it down. So, please, Mr. President, just shut it down.

If you want to appreciate how corrosive Guantánamo has become form America's standing abroad, don't read the Arab press. Don't read the Pakistani press. Don't read the Afghan press. Hop over here to London or go online and just read the British press! See what our

closest

allies are saying about Gitmo. And when you get done with that, read the Australian press and the Canadian press and the German press.

It is all a variation on the theme of a May 8 article in The Observer of London that begins, "An American soldier has revealed shocking new details of abuse and sexual torture of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay in the first high-profile whistle-blowing account to emerge from inside the top-secret base." Google the words "Guantánamo Bay and Australia" and what comes up is an Australian ABC radio report that begins: "New claims have emerged that prisoners at Guantánamo Bay are being tortured by their American captors, and the claims say that Australians David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib are among the victims."

Just another day of the world talking about Guantánamo Bay.

Why care? It's not because I am queasy about the war on terrorism. It is because I want to win the war on terrorism. And it is now obvious from reports in my own paper and others that the abuse at Guantánamo and within the whole U.S. military prison system dealing with terrorism is out of control. Tell me, how is it that over 100 detainees have died in U.S. custody so far? Heart attacks? This is not just deeply immoral, it is strategically dangerous.

I can explain it best by analogy. For several years now I have argued that Israel needed to get out of the West Bank and Gaza, and behind a wall, as fast as possible. Not because the Palestinians are right and Israel wrong. It's because Israel today is surrounded by three large trends. The first is a huge population explosion happening all across the Arab world. The second is an explosion of the worst interpersonal violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the history of the conflict, which has only recently been defused by a cease-fire. And the third is an explosion of Arabic language multimedia outlets – from the Internet to Al Jazeera.

What was happening around Israel at the height of the intifada was that the Arab multimedia explosion was

taking the images of that intifada explosion and feeding them to the Arab population explosion, melding in the minds of a new generation of Arabs and Muslims that their enemies were J.I.A. - "Jews, Israel and America." That is an enormously toxic trend, and I hope Israel's withdrawal from Gaza will help deprive it of oxygen.

I believe the stories emerging from Guantánamo are having a similar toxic effect on us - inflaming sentiments against the U.S. all over the world and providing recruitment energy on the Internet for those who would do us ill.

Husain Haqqani, a thoughtful Pakistani scholar now teaching at Boston University, remarked to me: "When people like myself say American values must be emulated and America is a bastion of freedom, we get Guantánamo Bay thrown in our faces. When we talk about the America of Jefferson and Hamilton, people back home say to us: 'That is not the America we are dealing with. We are dealing with the America of imprisonment without trial.' "

Guantánamo Bay is becoming the anti-Statue of Liberty. If we have a case to be made against any of the 500 or so inmates still in Guantánamo, then it is high time we put them on trial, convict as many possible (which will not be easy because of bungled interrogations) and then simply let the rest go home or to a third country. Sure, a few may come back to haunt us. But at least they won't be able to take advantage of Guantánamo as an engine of recruitment to enlist thousands more. I would rather have a few more bad guys roaming the world than a whole new generation.

"This is not about being for or against the war," said Michael Posner, the executive director of Human Rights First, which is closely following this issue. "It is about doing it right. If we are going to transform the Middle East, we have to be law-abiding and uphold the values we want them to embrace - otherwise it is not going to work."

The New York Times - May 26, 2005
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/27/opinion/27friedman.html>
Copyright 2005 The New York Times Company



Fair Use Notice

This newsletter contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of environmental, political, human rights, economic, democratic, scientific, and social justice issues, etc. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, such material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. For more information: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>. If you wish to use such copyrighted material for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.