

# Rock Creek Free Press

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A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Washington, D.C.

## Concentration Camps in America

By MICHEL CHOSSUDOVSKY / GLOBAL RESEARCH

The financial meltdown has unleashed a latent and emergent social crisis across the United States.

What is at stake is the fraudulent confiscation of lifelong savings and pension funds, the appropriation of tax revenues to finance the trillion dollar "bank bailouts", which ultimately serve to line the pockets of the richest people in America.

This economic crisis is, in large part, the result of financial manipulation and outright fraud to the detriment of entire populations: a renewed wave of corporate bankruptcies; mass unemployment; and poverty.

The criminalization of the global financial system, characterized by a "Shadow Banking" network, has resulted in the centralization of bank power and an unprecedented concentration of private wealth.

Obama's "economic stimulus" package and budget proposals contribute to a further process of concentration and centralization of bank power, the cumulative effects of which will eventually

see CAMPS p. 5



### Red Cross: It Was Torture

By DAVID EDWARDS AND MURIEL KANE / RAW STORY

A leaked report by the International Committee of the Red Cross on treatment of detainees held at CIA "black sites" describes a variety of interrogation techniques which the report says "constituted torture." UC-Berkeley journalism professor Mark Danner, who has published excerpts from the report in a lengthy article for the *New York Review of Books*, told MSNBC's Rachel Maddow on March 17 that he regards the detainees' accounts as completely credible.

Danner pointed out that the fourteen prisoners interviewed by the Red Cross had been "kept rigorously isolated throughout their detention" and "had no chance to compare their stories," and yet their accounts were "strikingly similar in almost every minute detail."

Maddow commented that the similarity of the stories also implies that "this was a very organized situation. This is not rogue CIA officers taking the gloves off and deciding what to do in the moment."

"What do we know about the level of coordination between officials at these black sites and officials in Washington?" she asked.

Danner replied that "the interrogators were in constant touch with their superiors at CIA headquarters" and were getting authorization for every interrogation technique. "The chain of decision-making ... is very well-established," he emphasized. "These weren't rogue officers."

"The director of Central Intelligence at the time [in 2002] ... was George Tenet, who

see RED CROSS p. 5

### Cheney Directed Assassination Ring

By MATT SULLIVAN / RCFP

Investigative journalist Seymour Hersh revealed during a talk at the University of Minnesota, March 10, that Dick Cheney orchestrated assassination squads directly out of the office of the vice president.

Here is what Hersh said: "After 9/11, I haven't written about this yet, but the Central Intelligence Agency was very deeply involved in domestic activities against people they thought to be enemies of the state. Without any legal authority for it. They haven't been called on it yet. That does happen."

"Right now, today, there was a story in *The New York Times* that if you read it carefully

mentioned something known as the Joint Special Operations Command — JSOC it's called. It is a special wing of our special operations community that is set up independently. They do not report to anybody, except in the Bush-Cheney days, they reported directly to the Cheney office. They did not report to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or to Mr. [Robert] Gates, the secretary of defense. They reported directly to him [Cheney].

"Congress has no oversight of it. It's an executive assassination ring essentially, and it's been going on and on and on. Just today in the *Times* there was a story that its leader, a three star admiral named [William H.] McRaven,

ordered a stop to it because there were so many collateral deaths.

"Under President Bush's authority, they've been going into countries, not talking to the ambassador or the CIA station chief, and finding people on a list and executing them and leaving. That's been going on, in the name of all of us."

Interestingly, Hersh gives us two pieces of information here. First he tells us that the CIA has been "deeply involved" in domestic operations; something that is forbidden by law. And second, he reveals that the office of vice president has been directing assassination squads abroad, also clearly illegal under

see CHENEY pg. 5

### Diebold Software Designed for Election Fraud

*Startling admission made during public hearing in CA to consider decertification of the company's voting and tabulation software...*

By MITCH TRACHTENBERG AND BRAD FRIEDMAN / BRADBLOG.COM

Even the audit log system on current versions of Premier Election Solutions' (formerly Diebold's) electronic voting and tabulating systems — used in some 34 states across the nation — fail to record the wholesale deletion of ballots, even when ballots are deleted on the same day as an election. That's the shocking admission heard March 17 from Justin Bales, Premier's Western Region manager, at a State of California public hearing on the possible decertification of Diebold/Premier's tabulator system, GEMS v. 1.18.19.

An election system's audit logs are meant to record all activity during the system's actual counting of ballots, so that later examiners may determine, with certainty, whether any fraudulent or mistaken activity had occurred during the count. Diebold's software fails to do that, as has recently been discovered by election integrity advocates in Humboldt County, CA, and then confirmed by the CA Secretary of State. The flaws, built into the system for more than a decade, are in serious violation of federal voting system certification standards.

see DIEBOLD p. 8

### Vaccines as Biological Weapons

*Live Avian Flu Virus Placed in Baxter Vaccine Materials Sent to 18 Countries*

By MIKE ADAMS / NATURALNEWS

There's a popular medical thriller novel in which a global pandemic is intentionally set off by an evil plot designed to reduce the human population. In the book, a nefarious drug company inserts live avian flu viruses into vaccine materials that are distributed to countries around the world to be injected into patients as "flu shots." Those patients then become carriers for these highly-virulent strains of avian flu who go on to infect the world population and cause widespread death.

There's only one problem with this story: It's not fiction. Or, at least, the part about live avian flu viruses being inserted into vaccine materials isn't fiction. It's happening right now.

Deerfield, Illinois-based pharmaceutical company Baxter International, Inc. has just been caught shipping live avian flu viruses mixed with vaccine material to medical distributors in 18 countries. The "mistake" (if you can call it that) was discovered by the National Microbiology Laboratory in Canada. The World Health Organization was alerted and panic spread throughout the vaccine community as health experts asked the obvious question: How could this have happened?

As published on LifeGen.de (<http://www.lifegen.de/newsip/showne...>), serious questions like this are being raised:

"Baxter International, Inc. in Austria 'unintentionally contaminated samples with

the bird flu virus that was used in laboratories in three neighboring countries, raising concern about the potential spread of the deadly disease'. Austria, Germany, Slovenia and the Czech Republic — these are the countries in which labs were hit with dangerous viruses. Not by bioterrorist commandos, but by Baxter. In other words; one of the major global pharmaceutical players seems to have lost control over a virus which is considered by many virologists to be one of the components leading some day to a new pandemic."

Or, put another way, Baxter is acting a whole lot like a biological terrorism organization these days, sending deadly viral samples around the

see AVIAN FLU p. 2

### Eyewitnesses Contradict Pentagon 9/11 Story

By SHEILA CASEY / RCFP

Two California men who call themselves the Citizen Investigation Team (CIT) have compiled impressive video evidence that the plane seen flying towards the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, 2001 could not have caused the death and damage at the Pentagon, nor the damage to five light poles outside the Pentagon.

Frustrated with the inability of 9/11 researchers to do anything other than speculate about what really happened that day, Craig Ranke and Aldo Marquis decided to take matters into their own hands. They have repeatedly flown in from southern California, canvassed the area near the Pentagon on foot to find people who saw a plane just prior to the fireball, and

then quizzed these eyewitnesses extensively on-camera to establish exactly what they saw, when they saw it and where they saw it from.

Their research is summarized at their website: [thepentagon.com](http://thepentagon.com), as well as in four DVDs containing interviews with 13 witnesses who attest that they saw a plane fly to the north of the Citgo gas station on Pentagon property, not south of the Citgo station as required by the official story.

CIT had each witness draw the flight path he witnessed on a map; the compilation from all the witnesses is shown below (see page 7). The curved lines clustered together toward the top of the map are from the witnesses; the single straight line angling up from the bottom edge of the map is the official flight path of the plane, as

described by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Taken together, the 13 witnesses deliver a devastating blow to the official story about the Pentagon attack. Five 40-foot, 247-pound light poles were knocked down that day. If the plane flew north of the Citgo station, it could not have knocked down those poles. The west side of the Pentagon was damaged as if it were hit by a plane heading north, with the zone of destruction angling north. If the plane flew to the north of the Citgo station before hitting the Pentagon, it would not have caused this kind of damage.

CIT's evidence is compelling for a number of reasons. Three of their witnesses are Pentagon

see 9/11 STORY p. 7

### NIST's Quiet Admission of Controlled Demolition

By MATT SULLIVAN / RCFP

Has the government has finally admitted, albeit indirectly, that at least one of the buildings destroyed on 9/11 was a controlled demolition?

The National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), located in Gaithersburg Maryland, is the government agency responsible for investigating and reporting on the destruction of the World Trade Center Buildings. In 2005 they published a very controversial report on the destruction of the two WTC towers, but the report did not address the third skyscraper

felled that day, WTC7. The report on WTC7 was delayed into the final months of the Bush administration.

Most Americans are still not aware that a third building fell on 9/11. World Trade Center Building 7 collapsed at 5:20 in the evening, seven hours after the destruction of the other two buildings. It was a 47 story office tower that occupied an entire city block and was located across the street and over 100 yards from the two towers. It collapsed completely, in less than 7 seconds into a compact pile of

debris on its own footprint. The destruction of WTC7 was witnessed by thousands of people (not counting the live television audience) and filmed from over a dozen different angles.

Critics of the government's official story, such as physicist Steven Jones, have pointed out that the destruction of the buildings, especially WTC7, have all the hallmarks of controlled demolition including a period of freefall acceleration. This point is crucial because there is absolutely no way to explain a freefall

see FREEFALL p. 7

### The Real AIG Conspiracy

By PROF. MICHAEL HUDSON / GLOBAL RESEARCH It may seem odd, but the public outrage against \$165 million in AIG bonuses is a godsend to Wall Street, AIG scoundrels included. How can the media be so preoccupied with the discovery that there is self-serving greed to be found in the financial sector? Every TV channel and every

newspaper in the country, from right to left, have made these bonuses the lead story over recent days.

What is wrong with this picture? Is there not something over-inflated about the outrage led most vociferously by Senator Charles Schumer and Rep. Barney Frank, the two leading shills for the bank giveaways over the past year? And does Pres. Obama perhaps find it convenient that finally, at long last, he has been able to criticize something that he believes Wall Street has done wrong? Even the *Wall Street Journal* has gotten into the act. The government's takeover of AIG, it pointed out, "uses the firm as a conduit to bail out other institutions." So much more greed is involved than just that of AIG employees. The firm owed much more to other players — abroad as well as on Wall Street — than the assets it had. That is what drove it to insolvency. And popular opposition has been rising to how Mr. Obama and Mr. McCain could have banded together to support the bailout that, in retrospect, amounts to trillions and trillions of dollars thrown "down the drain." Not really down the drain at all, of course — but given to financial speculators on the winning "smart" side of AIG's bad financial gambles.

"The Washington crowd wants to focus on bonuses because it aims public anger on private actors," the *Wall Street Journal* accused in a March 17 editorial. But instead of explaining that attention is being shifted away from Wall Street grabbers of a thousand times the amount

see AIG p. 8

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## French Nuclear Power Industry in Money Meltdown

By HARVEY WASSERMAN / FREEPRESS.ORG

The myth of a successful nuclear power industry in France has melted into financial chaos.

With it dies the corporate-hyped poster child for a “nuclear renaissance” of new reactor construction that is drowning in red ink and radioactive waste.

Areva, France’s nationally-owned corporate atomic façade, has plunged into a deep financial crisis led by a devastating shortage of cash.

Electricite de France (EdF), the French national utility, has been raided by European Union officials charging that its price-fixing may be undermining competition throughout the continent.

Delays and cost overruns continue to escalate at Areva’s catastrophic Olkiluoto reactor construction project in Finland. Areva has admitted to a \$2.2 billion, or 55%, cost increase in the Finnish building site after three and a half years. The Flamanville project — the only one now being built in France — is already over \$1 billion more expensive than projected after a single year under construction.

In 2008, France’s nuclear power output dropped 0.1%, while wind generation rose more than 37%.

Attempts to build new French reactors in the US are meeting stiffened resistance.

And the definitive failure of America’s Yucca Mountain, Nevada nuke waste dump mirrors France’s parallel inability to deal with its own radioactive trash.

Widely portrayed as the model of corporate success, reactor-builder Areva is desperately short of money. As it begs a bailout from its dominant owner, the French government, Areva’s mismanagement and overextension in promoting and building new reactors has wrecked its image in worldwide capital markets. According to Mycele Schneider, Paris-based author of “Nuclear Power in France — Beyond the Myth,” Areva shares have plunged by over 60% since June 2008, twice as much as the CAC40, the standard indicator of the 40 largest French companies on the stock market.

Areva’s hyper-active public relations department has made much of recent orders to build two new reactors in China. But it’s now begging France’s taxpayers for some \$4 billion in short term bailout money, and may need still another \$6 billion more to pay for investments in uranium mines, fuel production and heavy manufacturing ventures.

Areva will also need more than 2 billion Euros (about US\$3 billion) to buy back shares in its nuke reactor unit after Germany’s Siemens pulled out of a joint venture. There have been significant, highly-publicized bumps in the Chinese transaction. And Areva may now be forced to pony up billions more in penalties from delays and overruns at its reactor construction fiasco in Finland.

The Finnish government will also have to meet additional costs from trading in carbon emissions because it had firmly counted on the new reactor to supply “green” power as of this year. Olkiluoto is now not expected to deliver electricity before 2012.

Areva’s woes have caused French President Nicolas Sarkozy to face possible job cuts and asset sales at the government-controlled energy giant, which was formed in 2001.

China’s two-reactor order includes a promise from Areva to supply up to 20 years worth of nuclear fuel. Areva also hopes to sell at least seven reactors in the US, but these plans are meeting stiff resistance. Complex ownership and licensing battles have erupted at Constellation Energy, meant to be the conduit

for two new reactors in Maryland. Ratepayer revolts in Florida and Missouri have arisen over plans to force the public to pay for new reactors as they are being built. Electric rates in the Sunshine State have already begun to soar due to proposed nuke construction, prompting an angry grassroots upheaval.

The potential American reactor market has also been bloodied by the definitive disposal of the proposed high level dump at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. After decades as the centerpiece of America’s “solution” to the nuke waste problem, with at least \$10 billion spent on it, Yucca’s failure underscores France’s own waste dilemma.

The French reprocessing center at La Hague has come under widespread attack for its massive radiation discharges into the English Channel and surrounding atmosphere. The plant has produced over nine thousand containers of extremely high-level wastes with no safe place to go. Its by-product of plutonium has complicated global attempts to curb the spread of radioactive materials capable of being turned into nuclear bombs.

In addition to the reprocessing wastes, without a permanent repository of its own, France’s 58 reactors have also accumulated over ten thousand tons of spent fuel rods, as the 104 units in the US constantly generate.

Areva says it hopes to raise cash by selling part of a uranium enrichment plant under construction in southern France to Japan’s Kansai Electric. Other asset sales may be hampered by slumping market values. Areva also hopes to partner with US weapons builder Northrop Grumman to build heavy reactor equipment in Virginia.

But on March 11, European Union regulators raided EdF offices because “suspected illegal conduct may include actions to raise prices on the French wholesale electricity market.” The stunning action against the massive conglomerate, which is 84.8% owned by the French government, could result in huge fines.

The EU says EdF may have manipulated prices and redrawn contracts for some 60 key corporate users. Nuke backers constantly tout that close to 80% of France’s electricity comes from reactors whose power flows through EdF. But Areva’s cash shortage and EdF’s price-fixing scandal underscore the huge financial imbalances imposed by building and operating atomic reactors. According to Schneider, “EDF’s shares dropped by over 40% during the last six months alone. When management in February 2009 announced that larger than expected charges had corroded profits, share value dropped by 7% overnight and continued to fall since. The EDF share now stands 12% below the value when it was first introduced to the stock market in November 2005. Not really a brilliant investment.”

EDF and Areva are at the core of what has been labeled as the global “nuclear renaissance.” Their escalating money problems underscore an epic failure that has been a significant factor in the current global economic crisis. After a half-century of massive government subsidies in the US, UK, France and elsewhere, atomic energy still staggers under an unsustainable load of high construction costs and uncompetitive prices for the electricity it generates.

EdF’s recent \$17.5 billion takeover of nuke utility British Energy came with a warning from EdF officials that England’s commitment to wind turbines could undermine the future of nuclear power. The statement evoked widespread astonishment and scorn from the environmental community.

In the financial community, concerns still linger over the half-trillion-dollar (and still climbing) cost of the 1986 explosion at Chernobyl in the then-Soviet Union. The instant \$900 million conversion of the “asset” at Three Mile Island into an epic liability occurred 30 years ago this month. (The conversion of Michigan’s Fermi I reactor at Monroe into a \$100 million molten mess happened October 5, 1966).

The costs from the earthquake last year that crippled seven reactors at Japan’s Kashiwazaki are still rising. The failure of Yucca Mountain has converted billions of dollars in utility and taxpayer investments into pure waste. Growing grassroots movements in Vermont and elsewhere threaten to cut off license extensions and shut American reactors at which decommissioning funds have been slashed by the collapse of US investment funds.

The argument that atomic energy provides an answer for global warming turned to a deep embarrassment in France when reactors were forced to shut during the summer heat because they were raising river temperatures far beyond legal limits. In another case, a reactor containment had to be sprayed in order to cool it back down to operational temperatures. Similar shutdowns came at a reactor in Alabama.

But as massive cost overruns and delays continue to escalate at Areva’s showpiece reactor construction fiasco in Finland, the industry clamors for unlimited access to taxpayer funds. The surging stream of atomic failure continues to guarantee that private investors will instead favor true green technologies like solar, wind and efficiency.

Thus in France, as elsewhere, the “nuclear renaissance” may be still-born. In 2007, world nuclear electricity generation dropped by an unprecedented 2%. According to Schneider, in 2008, for the first time in nuclear power history, no new reactor was connected to the grid anywhere on Earth.

As Schneider’s “Nuclear Power” in France — Beyond the Myth” points out, after 35 years of nuclear power development, the French “nuclear dreamland” gets only 16% of its final energy from nuclear power. Commissioned by the Greens-EFA Group in the European Parliament (Brussels, December, 2008) Schneider’s report (<http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/topics/rubrik/6/6659.energy@en.htm>) shows that despite its huge nuclear commitment, almost half of France’s energy consumption still comes from oil.

In fact, says Schneider, “the wasteful nature of the French economy and households leads to a higher per capita consumption of oil than in Germany, Italy, the UK or even the EU on average.”

“Those who think that nuclear power would be a cheap and clean way to render the US less dependent on oil should have a close look at the French record.”

At the French heart of its “renaissance,” the nuclear clock is winding down, not up. Time is running out for a radioactive technology that, after fifty years, remains unable to muster a sustainable level of private financing, shows no real promise of ever paying for itself, and has now plunged into deepening financial chaos.

Harvey Wasserman is author of “Solartopia! Our Green-Powered Earth” (<http://solartopia.org>). He is Senior Editor of <http://freepress.org>, where this article first appeared.

## Vaccines as Biological Weapons

AVIAN FLU from p. 1

world. If you mail an envelope full of anthrax to your Senator, you get arrested as a terrorist. So why is Baxter — which mailed samples of a far more deadly viral strain to labs around the world — getting away with saying, essentially, “Oops?”

But there’s a bigger question in all this: How could this company have accidentally mixed LIVE avian flu viruses (both H5N1 and H3N2, the human form) in this vaccine material?

**Was the viral contamination intentional?**

The shocking answer is that this couldn’t have been an accident. Why? Because Baxter International adheres to something called BSL3 (Biosafety Level 3) — a set of laboratory safety protocols established by the Center for Disease Control that prevent the cross-contamination of biologically hazardous materials.

As explained on Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biosaf...>):

“Laboratory personnel have specific training in handling pathogenic and potentially lethal agents, and are supervised by competent scientists who are experienced in working with these agents. This is considered a neutral or warm zone. All procedures involving the manipulation of infectious materials are conducted within biological safety cabinets or other physical containment devices, or by personnel wearing appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment. The laboratory has special engineering and design features.”

Under the BSL3 code of conduct, it is impossible for live avian flu viruses to contaminate production vaccine materials that are shipped out to vendors around the world.

This leaves only two possibilities that explain these events:

Possibility #1: Baxter isn’t following BSL3 safety guidelines or is so sloppy in following them that it can make monumental mistakes that threaten the safety of the entire human race. And if that’s the case, then why are we injecting our children with vaccines made from Baxter’s materials?

Possibility #2: A rogue employee (or an evil plot from the top management) is present at Baxter, whereby live avian flu viruses were intentionally placed into the vaccine materials in the hope that such materials might be injected into humans and set off a global bird flu pandemic.

It just so happens that a global bird flu pandemic would sell a lot of bird flu vaccines. Although some naive people have a hard time believing that corporations would endanger human beings to make money, this is precisely the way corporations now behave in America’s ethically-challenged free-market environment. (Remember Enron? Exxon? Merck? DuPont? Monsanto? Need I go on?)

Make no mistake: Spreading bird flu is a clever way to create demand for bird flu vaccines, and we’ve all seen very clearly how drug companies first market the problem and then “leap to the rescue” by selling the solution. (Disease mongering of ADHD, bipolar disorder, etc.)

**Why it all suddenly makes sense**

Until today, I would not have personally believed such a story. I personally thought talk of bird flu vaccines being “weaponized” was just alarmist hype. But now, in light of the fact that live bird flu viruses are being openly found in vaccine materials that are distributed around the world, I must admit the evidence is increasingly compelling that something extremely dangerous is afoot.

Baxter, through either its mistakes or its evil intentions, just put the safety of the entire human race at risk. Given all the laboratory protocols put in place to prevent this kind of thing, it is difficult to believe this was just a mistake.

There is some speculation, in fact, that the 1918 influenza pandemic, which killed up to 50 million people worldwide (<http://images.google.com/images?hl=...>) was intentionally started by injecting servicemen with “experimental” flu vaccines that actually contained live, “weaponized” flu material just like the material being distributed by Baxter today.

Examine the historical record. You’ll find that the 1918 flu originated with servicemen. Even more interestingly, it began in multiple cities, simultaneously! There is no single point of origin with the 1918 flu. It appears to have

“spontaneously” sprung up across multiple cities all at once, including Camp Funston, a sub-post of Fort Riley, Kansas. (Kansas? Yep. So how did it get to Kansas in an era when air traffic was virtually non-existent? Vaccines, of course!)

All those cities and servicemen have one thing in common: Flu shot vaccinations given to them by the military.

If you put the pieces together on this, it’s not too difficult to suspect that influenza could potentially be used as a tool of control by governments or drug companies to catalyze outrageous profit-taking or power grabbing agendas. A desperate, infected population will gladly give up anything or pay anything for the promise of being cured.

**Or was it just an innocent mistake? Oops!**

But for the skeptics, who dismiss any such talk of conspiracy theories, let’s examine the other possibility: That a global avian flu pandemic was nearly unleashed unintentionally due to the outrageous incompetence of the companies handling these viral strains.

As we just saw, this is a very real possibility. Had this live bird flu virus not been detected, it could have very easily found its way into vaccines that were injected into human beings. And this, in turn, could have unleashed a global avian flu pandemic.

If the drug companies making and handling these materials are so careless, then it seems like it’s only a matter of time before something slips through the safety precautions again and gets unleashed into the wild. And that leads to essentially the same scenario: A global pandemic, widespread death, health care failures and a desperate population begging for vaccines.

So either way -- whether it’s intentional or not -- you essentially get the same result.

**Why a global pandemic is only a matter of time**

I am on the record stating that a global pandemic is only a matter of time. The living conditions under which humans have placed themselves (crowded cities, suppressed immune systems, etc.) are ideal for the spread of infectious disease. But I never dreamed drug companies could actually be accelerating the pandemic timeline by contaminating vaccine materials with live avian flu viruses known to be highly infectious to humans. This, it seems, is a whole new cause for concern.

You can believe what you will. Maybe you agree with the nefarious plot theory and you agree that corporations are capable of great evils in their quest for profits. Or perhaps you can’t accept that, so you go with the “accidental contamination” theory, in which your beliefs describe a very dangerous world where biohazard safety protocols are insufficient to protect us from all the crazy viral strains being toyed with at drug companies and government labs all across the world.

In either case, the world is not a very safe place when deadly viral strains are placed in the hands of the inept.

We are like children playing God with Mother Nature, rolling the dice in a global game of Viral Roulette where the odds are not in our favor. With companies like Baxter engaged in behaviors that are just begging to see the human race devastated by a global pandemic wipeout, it might be a good time to question the sanity of using viral strains in vaccines in the first place.

Vaccine-pushing scientists are so proud of their vaccines. They think they’ve conquered Mother Nature. Imagine their surprise when one day they learn they have actually killed 100 million human beings by unleashing a global pandemic.

We came close to it this week. A global pandemic may have just been averted by the thinnest of margins. Yet people go on with their lives, oblivious to what nearly happened.

What’s inescapable at this point is the fact that the threat of a pandemic that looms for all of human civilization, and that drug companies may, themselves, be the source of that threat.

Mike Adams is an author, investigative journalist and educator. He is the founder of the website *Health Ranger* ([www.healthranger.org](http://www.healthranger.org)) which strives to educate people on how to achieve and maintain peak human health. He founded *NaturalNews.com*, an online news source covering all areas of personal and planetary wellness from nutrition to renewable energy. His books include *Grocery Warning* and *How to Beat the Bird Flu*.



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A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## Was The Bailout Itself a Scam?

By PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS

Professor Michael Hudson (*CounterPunch*, March 18) is correct that the orchestrated outrage over the \$165 billion AIG bonuses is a diversion from the thousand times greater theft from taxpayers of the approximately \$200 billion "bailout" of AIG. Nevertheless, it is a diversion that serves an important purpose. It has taught an inattentive American public that the elites run the government in their own private interests.

Americans are angry that AIG executives are paying themselves millions of dollars in bonuses after having cost the taxpayers an exorbitant sum. Senator Charles Grassley put a proper face on the anger when he suggested that the AIG executives "follow the Japanese example and resign or go commit suicide."

Yet, Obama's White House economist, Larry Summers, on whose watch as Treasury Secretary in the Clinton administration financial deregulation got out of control, invoked the "sanctity of contracts" in defense of the AIG bonuses.

But the Obama administration does not regard other contracts as sacred. Specifically: labor unions had to agree to give-backs in order for the auto companies to obtain federal help; CNN reports that "Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki confirmed Tuesday, March 10 that the Obama administration is considering a controversial plan to make veterans pay for treatment of service-related injuries with private insurance" the *Washington Post* reports that the Obama team has set its sights on downsizing Social Security and Medicare.

According to the *Post*, Obama said that "it is impossible to separate the country's financial ills from the long-term need to rein in health-care costs, stabilize Social Security and prevent the Medicare program from bankrupting the government."

After Washington's trillion dollar bank bailouts and trillion dollar gratuitous wars for the sake of the military industry's profits and Israeli territorial expansion, there is little money for Social Security and Medicare.

The US government breaks its contracts with US citizens on a daily basis, but AIG's bonus contracts are sacrosanct. The Social Security contract was broken when the government decided to tax 85% of the benefits. It was broken again when the Clinton administration rigged the inflation measure in order to beat retirees out of their cost-of-living adjustments. To have any real Medicare coverage, a person has to give up part of his Social Security check to pay Medicare Part B premium and then take out a private supplemental policy. The true cost of Medicare to beneficiaries is about \$6,000 annually in premiums, plus deductibles and the Medicare tax if the person is still earning.

Treasury Secretary Geithner, the fox in charge of the hen house, has resolved the problem for us. He is going to withhold \$165 million (the amount of the AIG bonuses) from the next taxpayer payment to AIG of \$30,000 million. If someone handed you \$30,000 dollars, would you mind if they held back \$165?

PR flaks have rechristened the bonus payments "retention payments" necessary if AIG is to retain crucial employees. This lie was shot down by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who informed the House Committee on Financial Services that the payments went to members of AIG's Financial Products subsidiary, "the unit of AIG that was principally responsible for the firm's meltdown." As for retention, Cuomo pointed out that "numerous individuals who received large 'retention' bonuses are no longer at the firm."

Eliot Spitzer, the former New York Governor who was set-up in a sex scandal to prevent him investigating Wall Street's financial gangsterism, pointed out on March 17 that the real scandal is the billions of taxpayer dollars paid to the counter-parties of AIG's financial deals. These payments, Spitzer writes, are "a way to hide an enormous second round of cash to the same group that had received TARP money already."

Goldman Sachs, for example, had already received a taxpayer cash infusion of \$25 billion and was sitting on more than \$100 billion in cash when the Wall Street firm received another \$13 billion via the AIG bailout.

Moreover, in my opinion, most of the billions of dollars in AIG counter-party payments were unnecessary. They represent gravy paid to firms that had made risk-free bets, the non-payment of which constituted no threat to financial solvency.

Spitzer identifies a conflict of interest that could possibly be criminal self-dealing. According to reports, the AIG bailout decision involved Bush Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, formerly of Goldman Sachs, Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke, and Timothy Geithner, former New York Federal Reserve president and currently Secretary of the Treasury. No doubt the incestuous relationships are the reason the original bailout deal had no oversight or transparency.

The Bush/Obama bailouts require serious investigation. Were these bailouts necessary, or were they a scam, like "weapons of mass destruction," used to advance a private agenda behind a wall of fear? Recently I heard Harvard Law professor Elizabeth Warren, a member of a congressional bailout oversight panel, say on NPR that the US has far too many banks. Out of the financial crisis, she said, should come consolidation with the financial sector consisting of a few mega-banks. Was the whole point of the bailout to supply taxpayer money for a program of financial concentration?

*Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal editorial page and Contributing Editor of National Review. He is coauthor of The Tyranny of Good Intentions. He has held numerous academic appointments, including the William E. Simon Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, and Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.*



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## Inheriting an Empire

By MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Of all the myriad things to inherit, perhaps the worst is an empire, for such a transmission brings with it the duty of defense, which, in time, invariably becomes defending the indefensible.

For empires are constructed of crimes, and similarly so maintained.

They are birthed in invasion, nursed on occupation and raised on the cruel gruel of repression, torture and brutality.

That is their intrinsic nature as shown by the abundant examples of history. This was shown best by Rome, which ravaged the then-known world to enrich the 'eternal city'. Nations were invaded, their nobles either slain or enslaved, puppets were installed, and the natural resources extracted to feed the ever-hungry maw of Rome.

For millions of Blacks, the Obama election has sparked a new way of thinking and speaking of an America that has, heretofore, been a subject of considerable ambivalence. For perhaps

the first time in US history (certainly since Reconstruction), millions speak of the US as "we", instead of "they."

This may well be a turning point in American history. But is the American Empire "ours" simply because a Black man is the nation's chief executive? Did we vote it into being, or did we merely inherit it?

Most who voted for Obama certainly didn't vote for the Iraq War, one of the most over imperial projects in modern US history. They supported a quick and decisive end of the war; not its continuation nor its expansion.

Indeed, of all Americans, Blacks opposed the war the most vehemently, according to national polls. Perhaps it was the deep memory of national oppression that made it so unseemly to support such an oppressive occupation against the Iraqi people; perhaps it was the clumsiness of the government's lies used to 'sell' the invasion.

But empires begotten by violence and

exploitation are poisonous things that damage both sides of this deadly duo.

The British Empire toiled for generations to conquer and exploit over half of Africa, most of Asia and two-thirds of the Americas. But all of that crumbled when the nation was almost broken under the weight of the Germans, and she was too weak to hold her colonies. Indeed America, as the strongest to emerge from the war, inherited much of Britain's loss, as well as other European powers.

It inherited the Vietnam War when the French could no longer sustain it and paid a heavy price of death and defeat. Empires shouldn't be inherited lightly, like knickknacks from an elderly grandma.

This is especially so in democracies, where the people allegedly determine public policy, for what public policy could be more dire than imperial war?

*Mumia Abu-Jamal is a renowned journalist from Philadelphia who has been on death row since 1983.*

## The CIA: Beyond Redemption and Should Be Terminated

By SHERWOOD ROSS

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has confirmed the worst fears of its creator President Harry Truman that it might degenerate into "an American Gestapo." It has been just that for so long it is beyond redemption. It represents 62 years of failure and fascism utterly at odds with the spirit of a democracy and needs to be closed, permanently.

Over the years "the Agency" as it is known, has given US presidents so much wrong information on so many critical issues, broken so many laws, subverted so many elections, overthrown so many governments, funded so many dictators, and killed and tortured so many innocent human beings that the pages of its official history could be written in blood, not ink. People the world over regard it as infamous, and that evaluation, sadly for the reputation of America, is largely accurate. Besides, since President Obama has fifteen other major intelligence agencies to rely on

for guidance, why does he need the CIA? In one swoop he could lop an estimated 27,000 employees off the Federal payroll, save taxpayers umpteen billions, and wipe the CIA stain from the American flag.

If you think this is a "radical" idea, think again. What is "radical" is to empower a mob of covert operatives to roam the planet, wreaking havoc as they go with not a care for morality or, for that matter, the tenets of mercy implicit in any of the great faiths. The idea of not prosecuting CIA interrogators (i.e., torturers), as President Obama has hinted, is chilling. These crimes have to be stopped somewhere, sometime, or they will occur again.

"The CIA had run secret interrogation centers before — beginning in 1950, in Germany, Japan, and Panama," writes *New York Times* reporter Tim Weiner in his book *Legacy of Ashes, The History of The CIA* (Random House). Weiner has won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the intelligence community. "It had

participated in the torture of captured enemy combatants before — beginning in 1967, under the Phoenix program in Vietnam. It had kidnapped suspected terrorists and assassins before..."

In Iran in 1953, for example, a CIA-directed coup restored the Shah (king) to absolute power, initiating what journalist William Blum in "Rogue State" (Common Courage Press) called "a period of 25 years of repression and torture; while the oil industry was restored to foreign ownership, with the US and Britain each getting 40 percent." About the same time in Guatemala, Blum adds, a CIA-organized coup "overthrew the democratically-elected and progressive government of Jacobo Arbenz, initiating 40 years of military government death squads, torture, disappearances, mass executions, and unimaginable cruelty, totaling more than 200,000 victims — indisputably one of the most inhuman chapters of the 20th see CIA p. 4



## 9/11: Time for a Second Look

From David Ray Griffin:

My April lecture tour will be "9/11: Time for a Second Look."

I will be pointing out that many people—including politicians and journalists—formed their ideas about 9/11 and the 9/11 truth movement early on, when there seemed little reason to doubt the Bush administration's honesty and when the 9/11 truth movement could be caricatured, without too much exaggeration, as a bunch of kids on the Internet.

But now we have abundant evidence of the Bush-Cheney's administration's willingness to break the law and to tell lies that would lead to millions of deaths.

And the 9/11 truth movement is now led intellectually by scientists and other professionals, as shown by the emergence of various organizations, including Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, Firefighters for 9/11 Truth, Lawyers for 9/11 Truth, Medical Professionals for 9/11 Truth, Pilots for 9/11 Truth, Political Leaders for 9/11 Truth, Religious Leaders for 9/11 Truth, Scholars for 9/11 Truth and Justice (which includes a lot of scientists), Veterans for 9/11 Truth, and the Scientific Panel to Investigate 9/11. The movement also includes several

former intelligence officers.

Thanks to these professionals, the evidence that the official story is false is now overwhelming. The only problem is to get people to look at the evidence. Once they are willing to do this, they quickly see that the official story simply cannot be true.

Finally, the replacement of the Bush administration with the Obama administration is important in three respects. First, potential whistleblowers may become less afraid to come forward. Second, the media may become more willing to expose the dozens of contradictions and other problems in the official myth. And third, there is at least the chance for a real investigation. The petition for both Religious Leaders for 9/11 Truth and Political Leaders for 9/11 Truth, for example, ends by asking President Obama to authorize a new, truly independent, investigation.

Sincerely,  
David Ray Griffin

Lecture dates and locations:  
April 7 - Wayne, PA April 8 - Vassar, PA  
April 9 - Portsmouth, NH April 10 - Keene, NH  
April 11 - Boston, MA April 15 - Brussels

STIMULUS CRIMULUS

Dear Editor,

The "Stimulus" and earlier "Bailout" measures are nothing more than a "taking" of the people's credit [money] and handing that all over to the Big Banks and corporations.—without getting a single thing for the people in return for these pay-ins. It's larceny. Pure and simple. Very large.

And worse: These bills are literally thousands of pages in length, which no one in Congress has read. Nor did Congress or Obama write them. They were written by lobbyists for the recipients of these funds. The bills contain hundreds of complex provisions all designed to tighten controls over we the people by leaps and bounds. You are literally seeing here in these measures the architecture of the coming police state under construction. Nothing less. And there is nothing left out there that can stop it, save you and me.

"Members of Congress should be made to wear coveralls like NASCAR drivers so we can identify their corporate sponsors."

Dennis Morrisseau, West Pawlet, VT

RFK ASSASSINATION

Dear Editor,

It was like getting a breath of fresh air when I read your article on the RFK murder in Los Angeles. While your article states that there is a need for re-opening the case, I would also think that there is equal evidence

that proves Lee Harvey Oswald was not the shooter that killed Jack Kennedy in 1963.

The American people may not deserve to have the truth, but there are many of us who play by the rules and would appreciate a non-biased investigation of that murder and bring to justice those who were involved, living or dead. It is long past the time when we should tell the Commission, that concluded Oswald acted alone, where it can go.

Respectfully,  
Robert Reed, Greenville, SC

TOO BIG TO FAIL?

Dear Editor,

Who doesn't hate Bernie Madoff?

After contributing to the collapse of the global market and defrauding investors of between \$50 and \$65 billion, he's finally going to jail.

Madoff makes a great villain.

Madoff's investors knew, should have known, or didn't want to know — which is what makes the conflict between Madoff and his class-envied investors so delicious to the unaffected. Intoxicated by their collective *schadenfreude*, many Americans are too distracted to notice an even larger story that has remained largely unnoticed for more than 25 years: PHARMACEUTICAL FRAUD

As Sarah Rubenstein reported, Massachusetts anesthesiologist Scott Ruben, MD now admits that he faked 21

medical studies that were used by drug companies like Pfizer, Wyeth, and Merck to market drugs like Bextra, Lyrica, Effexor, and Viiox. Like Madoff's faked statements, these companies and investors profited, as did the elected officials who control our investigative agencies, while thousands of patients were injured, killed, or were prescribed drugs that did not do what those drug companies implied they would do. As America's latest fall guys, Madoff and Ruben are supposed to make us believe that our investigative agencies (SEC, FDA, NIH, and FBI) have finally stirred from their institutional narcolepsy.

Think again.

Sixteen years after the Organization of Research Integrity (ORI) and Dingell Investigation found Dr. Robert Gallo guilty of scientific misconduct, Gallo still receives millions of dollars in taxpayer-funded research grants, while the NIH and CDC continue to enforce America's deadly HIV/AIDS policy. The editors of *Science* still refuse to respond to questions from well-respected scientists despite the mounting evidence that weighs heavily against Dr. Gallo's original reports (1, 2, 3, & 4).

Madoff and Ruben may fall, but some frauds are apparently too big to fail.

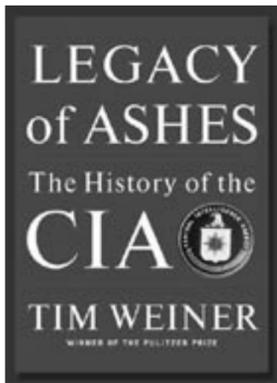
Clark Baker (LAPD retired)  
Los Angeles, CA

# A Dozen Books for Americans That Tell It Like It Is

By SHERWOOD ROSS

If newspaper readership is plummeting, maybe it's because readers are turning elsewhere to catch a glimpse of the causes behind the official story. Recognizing this, some book publishers courageously are using their printing presses to bring interpretive reporting to the reading public. Here are a dozen books Americans need to read, as they paint a realistic picture of how our government's policies are inflicting needless suffering at home and globally.

**Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA** (Anchor) by *New York Times* Pulitzer Prize-winner Tim Weiner, contains some sweeping, but accurate, generalizations, such as this one: "By 1970, the CIA's influence was felt in every nation in the Western Hemisphere, from the Texas border to Tierra del Fuego." Weiner spotlights how the spy agency's operatives exerted more influence than the State Department. "In Mexico, the president dealt exclusively with the station chief, not the ambassador, and he received a personal New Year's Day briefing at his home from the director of central intelligence. In Honduras, two successive station chiefs had privately pledged the support of the United States to the military junta, in defiance of the ambassadors they served." Weiner doesn't mince words about how President Kennedy, who once said he was proud to be a liberal, "first approved a political-warfare program to subvert [Salvador Allende] more than two years before the September 1964 Chilean elections" when the CIA pumped \$3 million into the pockets of his political opponent.



In **Free Lunch** (Penguin Books), Pulitzer Prize-winner David Cay Johnston, writes, "Over the past three decades the rules affecting who wins and who loses economically have been quietly and subtly rewritten," and "In the past quarter century or so our government has enacted new rules that have created not only free markets, but rigged ones." One outcome of these policies is that, in 2005, "the 300,000 men, women, and children who comprised the top tenth of 1 percent had nearly as much income as all 150 million Americans who make up the economic lower half of our population."



**The Three Trillion Dollar War** (W.W. Norton) by Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes charts the true costs of President George W. Bush's tragic aggression against Iraq, a war waged with borrowed bucks. Noting the total cost to American taxpayers "will turn out to be around \$3 trillion," the famous economist and Harvard government finance expert, respectively, write large in their preface: "Miserable though Saddam Hussein's regime was, life is actually worse for the Iraqi people now. The country's roads, schools, hospitals, homes, and museums have been destroyed and its citizens have less access to electricity and water than before the war. Sectarian violence is rife."

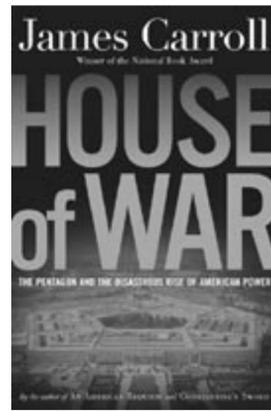


**Armed Madhouse** (Plume) by Greg Palast, is subtitled "From Baghdad to New Orleans — Sordid Secrets & Strange Tales of a White House GONE WILD" and contains much factual data about how the members in good standing of the military-industrial complex are profiting from the Iraq holocaust. "For the first time in its [General Dynamics] history, [profits are] exceeding a billion dollars a year. Lockheed Martin is doing even better, scoring a record \$2.5 billion. I know that with weaponry profits bouncing off the clouds, you're concerned that the firms will have a huge tax



bill. Not to worry. In 2004, just before the election, the Bush Administration slipped a special provision into tax legislation to cut the tax on war profits to an effective 7% compared to the 21% paid by most US manufacturers."

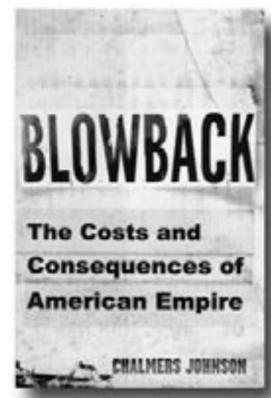
In **House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power** (Houghton Mifflin), winner of the National Book Award, James Carroll writes, "The Pentagon is now the dead center of an open-ended martial enterprise that no longer pretends to be defense. The world itself must be reshaped. Nothing less than evil must be vanquished. Its good intentions heavily armed, its scope extending from 'prevention' to something called 'operations other than war,' the Pentagon has, more than ever, become a place to fear."



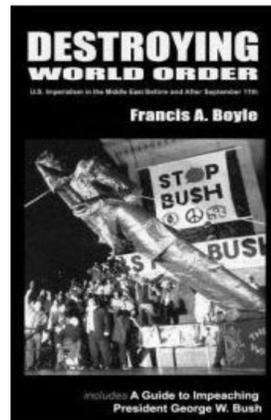
**The Sorrows of Empire** (Henry Holt) by Chalmers Johnson, also tackles the issue of the Pentagon's spreading hegemony: "Overseas bases, of which the Defense Department acknowledges some 725, come within the scope of the peacetime standing army and constitute a permanent claim on the nation's resources while being almost invariably inadequate for actually fighting a war. The great enclaves of bases, such as those in Okinawa or Germany, have not been involved in combat since World War II and are not really intended to contribute to war-fighting capabilities. They are the headquarters for our proconsuls, visible manifestations of our imperial reach." Johnson is also the author of the national bestseller **Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire** (Henry Holt), in which he relates how the CIA intervened in the Afghan civil war, and the ensuing cataclysm "turned Kabul, once a major center of Islamic culture, into a facsimile of Hiroshima after the bomb," words President Obama might ponder as he prepares to inject more warriors into that luckless nation.



**Destroying World Order** (Clarity) by international law authority Francis Boyle, includes his petition on behalf of the children of Iraq that charges the US with genocide for the economic sanctions imposed by the first President Bush that led to "death, disease, malnutrition, starvation, and extermination." Some say up to half a million kids perished. Yup, years before the second President Bush attacked Iraq: "Malnutrition has become severe and widespread...since imposition of the embargo and the war due to severe food shortages and the inflation of food prices of up to 1000%, which has effectively priced many Iraqis, especially the poor and disadvantaged, out of the food market."

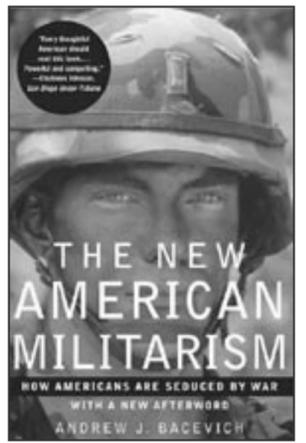


The Presidents Bush cannot be considered to have delivered a one-two punch against Iraq, because President Clinton, sandwiched between them, also attacked Iraq. So American intervention has really delivered a one-two-three punch. Andrew Bacevich, Director of the Center for International Relations at Boston University, in his **The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War** (Oxford University Press), writes: "Over the course of his eight years in office, he [Clinton] clung to the Bush policy of containing Iraq while ratcheting up the frequency with which the United States used violence to enforce that policy. Indeed, during the two concluding years of the Clinton presidency, the United States bombed Iraq on almost a daily basis, a campaign largely ignored by the media and thus aptly dubbed by one observer 'Operation Desert Yawn.'" The chapter from which that quote is extracted is titled,

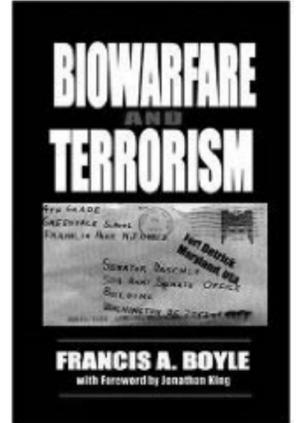


**Blood For Oil**. Bacevich, a West Point graduate who served in Viet Nam, also writes, "Whether considering George H.W. Bush's 1992 incursion into Somalia, Bill Clinton's 1999 war for Kosovo, or George W. Bush's 2003 crusade to overthrow Saddam Hussein, the growing US predilection for military intervention in recent years has so mangled the concept of common defense as to make it all but unrecognizable."

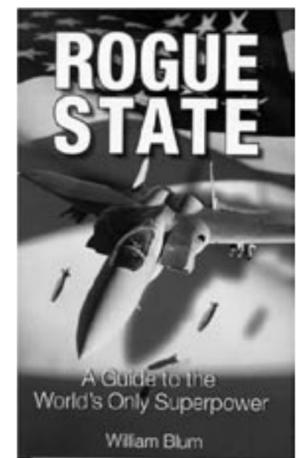
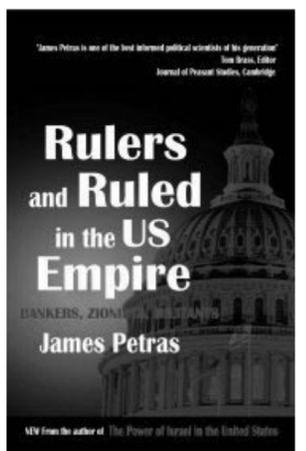
Author Boyle, cited above, is also the author of **Bio warfare and Terrorism** (Clarity), in which he terms the anthrax attacks of 2001 "the greatest political crime" in US history and asks the question: "Could it truly be coincidental that two of the primary intended victims of the terrorist anthrax attacks — Senators Daschle and Leahy — were holding up the speedy passage of the pre-planned USA Patriot Act after the terrible tragedy of 11 September 2001 -- an Act which provided the federal government with unprecedented powers in relation to US citizens and institutions?"



**Rulers and Ruled in the US Empire: Bankers, Zionists, Militants** (Clarity Press) by political scientist James Petras ranges over many topics from the worsening plight of American workers to the hardships inflicted on Palestinians by Israel's leaders. On the former: "Between 2000 and 2005, the US economy grew 12 percent, and productivity rose 17 percent while hourly wages rose only 3 percent. Real family income fell during the same period. According to a poll in November 2006, three quarters of Americans say they are either worse off or no better off than they were six years ago." (Need to know why the 'housing bubble' burst?) On the latter issue, Petras writes: "The Israeli-Palestinian genocide is a continuing process that is gaining momentum: daily military assaults, execution of leaders and murder of civilians, continued extension of colonies, non-recognition of elected Palestinian leaders, and above all a total blockade of finances and basic food and medicine — a Nazi style 'encirclement of ghettos' and 'starvation to surrender' strategy."



In **Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower** (Common Courage Press), investigative journalist-historian William Blum catalogues CIA interventions around the world and throws light on how the so-called National Endowment for Democracy, set up under President Reagan, "meddles in the internal affairs of numerous foreign countries" to "do somewhat overtly what the CIA had been doing covertly for decades." Blum notes NED "successfully manipulated elections in Nicaragua in 1990 and Mongolia in 1996; helped to overthrow democratically elected governments in Bulgaria in 1990 and Albania in 1991 and 1992, and worked to defeat the candidate for prime minister of Slovakia in 2002 who was out of favor in Washington." Blum's reporting is the sort readers are not getting from the mainstream outlets and proof that books such as his represent one of the last outposts of veracity in the print media.



## The CIA Should Be Terminated

CIA from p. 6

century." The massive slaughter compares, at least in terms of sheer numbers, with Hitler's massacre of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Holocaust. Yet, few Americans know of it.

Blum provides yet other examples of CIA criminality. In Indonesia, it attempted in 1957-58 to overthrow neutralist president Sukarno. It plotted Sukarno's assassination, tried to blackmail him with a phony sex film, and joined forces with dissident military officers to wage a full-scale war against the government, including bombing runs by American pilots, Blum reported. This particular attempt, like one in Costa Rica about the same time, failed. So did the CIA attempt in Iraq in 1960 to assassinate President Abdul Kassem. Other ventures proved more "successful" like the 1965-66 CIA bloodbath-coup in Indonesia which resulted in the deaths of one to two million people.

In Laos, the CIA was involved in coup attempts in 1958, 1959, and 1960, creating a clandestine army of 30,000 to overthrow the government. In Ecuador, the CIA ousted President Jose Velasco for recognizing the new Cuban government of Fidel Castro. The CIA also arranged the murder of elected Congo Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in 1961 and the installation of Mobutu Seko who ruled "with a level of corruption and cruelty that shocked even his CIA handlers," Blum recalls.

In Ghana in 1966, the CIA sponsored a military coup against leader Kwame Nkrumah; in Chile, it financed the overthrow of elected

President Salvador Allende in 1973 and brought to power the murderous regime of General Augusto Pinochet who executed 3,000 political opponents and tortured thousands more. In Greece in 1967, the CIA helped subvert the elections and backed a military coup that killed 8,000 Greeks in its first month of operation. "Torture, inflicted in the most gruesome of ways, often with equipment supplied by the United States, became routine," Blum writes.

In South Africa, the CIA gave the apartheid government information that led to the arrest of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, who subsequently spent 27 years in prison. In Bolivia in 1964, the CIA overthrew President Victor Paz; in Australia from 1972-75, the CIA slipped millions of dollars to political opponents of the Labor Party; ditto, Brazil in 1962; in Laos in 1960, the CIA stuffed ballot boxes to help a strongman into power; in Portugal in the Seventies the candidates it financed triumphed over a pro-labor government; in the Philippines, the CIA backed governments in the 1970-90 period that employed torture and summary execution against its own people; in El Salvador, the CIA in the Eighties and Nineties backed the wealthy in a civil war in which 75,000 civilians were killed; and the list goes on and on.

Of course, the hatred that the CIA engenders for the American people and American business interests is enormous. Because the Agency operates largely in secret, most Americans are unaware of the uncounted crimes it perpetrates

in their names. As Chalmers Johnson writes in **Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire** (Henry Holt), former long-time CIA director Robert Gates, now Obama's defense secretary, admitted US intelligence services began to aid the mujahideen guerrillas in Afghanistan six months before the Soviet invasion in December, 1979.

As has often been the case, the CIA responded to a criminal order from one of the succession of imperial presidents that have occupied the White House, in this instance one dated July 3, 1979, from President Jimmy Carter. The Agency was ordered to aid the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul — aid that might sucker the Kremlin into invading. "The CIA supported Osama bin Laden, like so many other extreme fundamentalists among the mujahideen in Afghanistan, from at least 1984 on," Johnson writes, helping bin Laden train many of the 35,000 Arab Afghans.

Thus Carter, like his successors in the George H.W. Bush government — Gates, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, Paul Wolfowitz, and Colin Powell — "all bear some responsibility for the 1.8 million Afghan casualties, 2.6 million refugees, and 10 million unexploded land mines that followed from their decisions, as well as the 'collateral damage' that befell New York City in September 2001 from an organization they helped create during the years of anti-Soviet Afghan resistance," Johnson added. Worse, the Bush-Cheney regime after 9/11 "set no limits on what the agency could do. It was the foundation for a system of secret prisons where CIA officers and contractors used techniques that included torture," Weiner has written. By some

estimates, the CIA in 2006 held 14,000 souls in 11 secret prisons, a vast crime against humanity.

That the CIA has zero interest in justice and engages in gratuitous cruelty may be seen from the indiscriminate dragnet arrests it has perpetrated: "CIA officers snatched and grabbed more than three thousand people in more than one hundred countries in the year after 9/11," Weiner writes, adding that only 14 men of all those seized "were high-ranking authority figures within al Qaeda and its affiliates. Along with them, the agency jailed hundreds of nobodies... (who) became ghost prisoners in the war on terror."

As for providing the White House with accurate intelligence, the record of the CIA has been a fiasco. The Agency was telling President Carter the Shah of Iran was beloved by his people and was firmly entrenched in power in 1979 when any reader of *Harper's* magazine, available on newsstands for a buck, could read that his overthrow was imminent — and it was. Over the years, the Agency has been wrong far more often than it has been right.

According to a February 13 *Associated Press* report, when confirmed by the Senate as the new CIA director, Leon Panetta said the Obama administration would not prosecute CIA officers that "participated in harsh interrogations even if they constituted torture as long as they did not go beyond their instructions." This will allow interrogators to evade prosecution for following the clearly criminal orders they would have been justified to disobey.

"Panetta also said that the Obama administration would continue to transfer foreign detainees to other countries for questioning but only if US officials are confident that the prisoners

will not be tortured," the AP story continued. If past is prologue, how confident can Panetta be that the CIA's fellow goons in Egypt, Morocco, and Thailand will stop torturing prisoners? Why did the CIA kidnap men off the streets of Milan and New York and fly them to those countries in the first place if not for torture? They certainly weren't treating them to a Mediterranean or Asian vacation. By its long and nearly perfect record of reckless disregard for international law, the CIA has deprived itself of the right to exist.

It would be worse than unfortunate if President Obama continues the inhumane (and illegal) CIA renditions that President Bill Clinton began and President Bush vastly expanded. If the White House thinks its operatives can roam the world and arrest and torture any person it chooses without a court order without due process and without answering for their crimes, this signifies that Americans believe themselves to be a Master Race better than others and above international law. That's not much different from the philosophy that motivated Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.

It would be the supreme irony if the American electorate that repudiated racism last November has voted into its highest office a constitutional lawyer who reaffirms his predecessor's illegal views on this activity. Renditions must be stopped. The CIA must be abolished.

*Sherwood Ross has worked as a reporter for the Chicago Daily News and Reuters. He has also been a media consultant to colleges, law schools, labor unions, and to the editors of more than 100 national magazines. He was formerly News Director for the National Urban League and a talk show host at WOL Radio, Washington, D.C. He now lives in Florida.*

# Red Cross: It Was Torture

RED CROSS from p. 1

was traveling across the river every day to principals' meetings at the White House," Danner continued.

"The principals' committee includes the National Security Adviser, then Condoleezza Rice; the then-Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld; the then-Secretary of State Colin Powell; the then-Attorney General, John Ashcroft," Danner noted, "all of whom were briefed on this day by day — not least because George Tenet apparently was worried that he would get stuck with this and he wanted to be sure that he had explicit confirmation that these procedures could go forward."

## Professor: Detainees' accounts confirm White House authorized torture

MSNBC's Keith Olbermann also referred to the Red Cross revelations, March 17, under the heading, "Definitely: It Was Torture-gate."

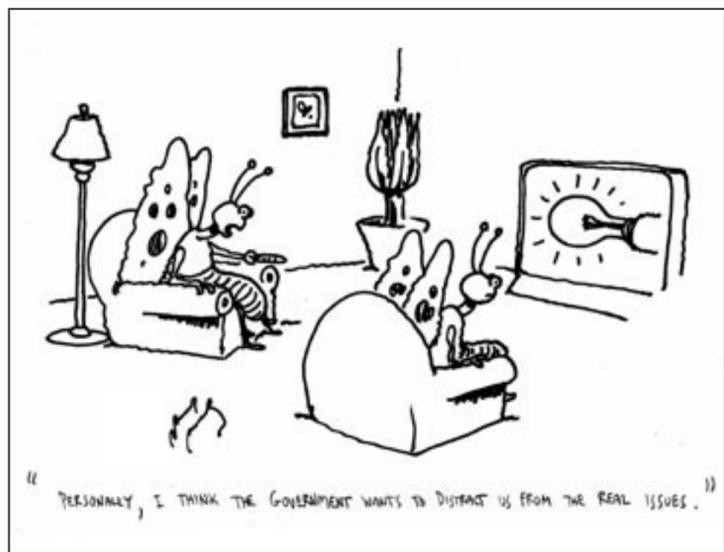
"The Geneva Conventions, to which the United States is a signatory, establishes how it shall be determined whether 'torture' has

been committed," Olbermann observed. "The ultimate deciding body, as agreed to by our country, is — the Red Cross."

"The debate is over," Olbermann concluded. "Let the prosecutions begin."

The ACLU announced on Wednesday that it has sent a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder calling for the Justice Department "to appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate the authorization to use torture at CIA secret prisons."

"The fact that such crimes have been committed can no longer be doubted or debated, nor can the need for an independent prosecutor be ignored by a new Justice Department committed to restoring the rule of law," the letter states. "The country deserves to have these outstanding matters addressed and have the assurance that torture will stop and never happen again."



# Concentration Camps in America

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result in large-scale corporate bankruptcies and a new wave of foreclosures, not to mention fiscal collapse and the downfall of state social programs. (Michel Chossudovsky, "America's Fiscal Collapse", *Global Research*, March 2, 2009).

The cumulative decline of real economic activity backlashes on employment and wages, which, in turn, leads to a collapse in public purchasing power. The proposed "solution" under the Obama administration contributes to exacerbating, rather than alleviating, social inequalities and the process of wealth concentration.

## The Protest Movement

When people across America, whose lives have been shattered and destroyed, come to realize the true face of the global "free market" system, the legitimacy of Wall Street, the Federal Reserve and the US administration will be challenged.

A latent protest movement directed against the seat of economic and political power is unfolding. How this process will occur is hard to predict. All sectors of American society are potentially affected: wage earners; small, medium and even large businesses; farmers; professionals; federal, state and municipal employees; students; teachers; health workers; and unemployed. Protests will initially emerge from these various sectors. There is, however, at this stage, no organized national resistance movement directed against the administration's economic and financial agenda.

Obama's populist rhetoric conceals the true nature of macro-economic policy. Acting on behalf of Wall Street, the administration's economic package, which includes close to a trillion dollar "aid" package for the financial services industry, coupled with massive austerity measures for the masses, contributes to precipitating America into a bottomless crisis.

## "Orwellian Solution" to the Great Depression: Curbing Civil Unrest

At this particular juncture, there is no economic recovery program in sight. The Washington-Wall Street consensus prevails. There are no policies, no alternatives formulated from within the political and economic system.

What is the way out? How will the US government face an impending social catastrophe?

The solution is to curb social unrest. The chosen avenue, inherited from the outgoing Bush administration is the reinforcement of the Homeland Security apparatus and the militarization of civilian State institutions.

The outgoing administration has laid the groundwork. Various pieces of "anti-terrorist" legislation (including the Patriot Acts) and presidential directives have been put in place since 2001, largely using the pretext of the "Global War on Terrorism."

## Homeland Security's Internment Camps

Directly related to the issue of curbing social unrest, a cohesive system of detention camps is also envisaged, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security and the Pentagon.

A bill titled the National Emergency Centers Establishment Act (HR 645) was introduced in the US Congress in January 2009. It calls for the establishment of six national emergency centers in major regions in the US to be located on existing military installations (<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h111-645>).

The stated purpose of the "national emergency centers" is to provide "temporary housing, medical, and humanitarian assistance to individuals and families displaced due to an emergency or major disaster." In actuality, what we are dealing with are FEMA internment camps. HR 645 states that the camps can be used to "meet other appropriate needs, as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security."

## Virtually no press coverage of HR 645

These "civilian facilities" on US military bases are to be established in cooperation with the US Military, modeled on Guantanamo. What we are dealing with is the militarization of FEMA internment facilities.

Once a person is arrested and interned in a FEMA camp located on a military base, that person would in all likelihood, under a national emergency, fall under the de facto jurisdiction of the Military: civilian justice and law enforcement including *habeas corpus* would no longer apply.

HR 645 bears a direct relationship to the economic crisis and the likelihood of mass protests across America. It constitutes a further move to militarize civilian law enforcement, repealing the Posse Comitatus Act.

In the words of Rep. Ron Paul:

"...the fusion centers, militarized police, surveillance cameras and a domestic military command is not enough... Even though we know that detention facilities are already in place, they now want to legalize the construction of FEMA camps on military installations using the ever popular excuse that the facilities are for the

purposes of a national emergency. With the phony debt-based economy getting worse and worse by the day, the possibility of civil unrest is becoming a greater threat to the establishment. One need only look at Iceland, Greece and other nations for what might happen in the United States next." (*Daily Paul*, September 2008)

The proposed internment camps should be seen in relation to the broader process of militarization of civilian institutions. The construction of internment camps predates the introduction of HR 645 (Establishment of Emergency Centers) in January 2009. There are, according to various (unconfirmed) reports, some 800 FEMA prison camps in different regions of the US. Moreover, since the 1980s, the US military has developed "tactics, techniques and procedures" to suppress civilian dissent, to be used in the eventuality of mass protests (United States Army Field Manual 19-15 under Operation Garden Plot, titled "Civil Disturbances" was issued in 1985).

In early 2006, tax revenues were allocated to building modern internment camp facilities. In January 2006, Kellogg, Brown and Root, which at the time was a subsidiary of Halliburton, received a \$385 million contract from the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):

"The contract, which is effective immediately [January 2006], provides for establishing temporary detention and processing capabilities to augment existing ICE Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) Program facilities in the event of an emergency influx of immigrants into the US, or to support the rapid development of new programs.

The contract may also provide migrant detention support to other U.S. Government organizations in the event of an immigration emergency, as well as the development of a plan to react to a national emergency, such as a natural disaster. (KBR, 24 January 2006)

The stated objectives of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are to:

"protect national security and uphold public safety by targeting criminal networks and terrorist organizations that seek to exploit vulnerabilities in our immigration system, in our financial networks, along our borders, at federal facilities and elsewhere in order to do harm to the United States. The end result is a safer, more secure America" (ICE homepage).

The US media is mum on the issue of the internment camps on US soil. While casually acknowledging the multimillion dollar contract granted to Halliburton's subsidiary, the news reports largely focused their attention on possible "cost overruns" (similar to those which occurred with KBR in Iraq).

What is the political intent and purpose of these camps? The potential use of these internment facilities to detain American citizens under a martial law situation is not an object of media debate or discussion.

## Combat Units Assigned to the Homeland

In the last months of the Bush administration, prior to the November 2008 presidential elections, the Department of Defense ordered the recall of the 3rd Infantry's 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) from Iraq. The relocation of a combat unit from the war theater to the domestic front is an integral part of the Homeland Security agenda. The BCT was assigned to assist in law enforcement activities within the US.

The BCT combat unit was attached to US Army North, the Army's component of US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). The 1st BCT and other combat units would be called upon to perform specific military functions in the case of civil unrest:

The 1st BCT's soldiers also will learn how to use "the first ever nonlethal package that the Army has fielded," 1st BCT commander Col. Roger Cloutier said, referring to crowd and traffic control equipment and nonlethal weapons designed to subdue unruly or dangerous individuals without killing them (Gina Cavallaro, "Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1," *Army Times*, September 8, 2008).

In the course of the proposed withdrawal of US forces from Iraq under the Obama administration, one expects that other combat units will be brought home from the war theater and reassigned in the United States.

The evolving national security scenario is characterized by a mesh of civilian and military institutions:

- Army combat units working with civilian law enforcement, with the stated mission to curb "social unrest".

- The establishment of new internment camps under civilian jurisdiction located on US military facilities.

The FEMA internment camps are part of the Continuity of Government (COG), which would be put in place in the case of martial law.

The internment camps are intended to "protect

the government" against its citizens, by locking up protesters as well as political activists who might challenge the legitimacy of the Administration's national security, economic or military agenda.

## Spying on Americans: The Big Brother Data Bank

Related to the issue of internment and mass protests, how will data on American citizens be collected?

How will individuals across America be categorized? What are the criteria of the Department of Homeland Security?

In a 2004 report of the Homeland Security Council entitled "Planning Scenarios," pertaining to the defense of the Homeland, the following categories of potential "conspirators" were identified:

- "foreign [Islamic] terrorists",
- "domestic radical groups", [antiwar and civil rights groups]
- "state sponsored adversaries" ["rogue states", "unstable nations"]
- "disgruntled employees" [labor and union activists].

In June of last year, the Bush administration issued a National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD 59-HSPD 24) entitled Biometrics for Identification and Screening to Enhance National Security (for further details see Michel Chossudovsky, "Big Brother" Presidential Directive: "Biometrics for Identification and Screening to Enhance National Security," *Global Research*, June 2008).

Adopted without public debate or congressional approval, its relevant procedures are far-reaching. They are related to the issue of civil unrest. They are also part of the logic behind the establishment of FEMA internment camps under HR 645.

NSPD 59 (Biometrics for Identification and Screening to Enhance National Security) goes far beyond the narrow issue of biometric identification, it recommends the collection and storage of "associated biographic" information, meaning information on the private lives of US citizens, in minute detail, all of which will be "accomplished within the law":

"The contextual data that accompanies biometric data includes information on date and place of birth, citizenship, current address and address history, current employment and employment history, current phone numbers and phone number history, use of government services and tax filings. Other contextual data may include bank account and credit card histories, plus criminal database records on a local, state and federal level. The database also could include legal judgments or other public records documenting involvement in legal disputes, child custody records and marriage or divorce records." (Jerome Corsi, June 2008)

The directive uses 9/11 and the "Global War on Terrorism" as an all encompassing justification to wage a witchhunt against dissenting citizens, establishing at the same time an atmosphere of fear and intimidation across the land.

It also calls for the integration of various data banks as well as inter-agency cooperation in the sharing of information, with a view to eventually centralizing the information on American citizens.

In a carefully worded text, NSPD 59 "establishes a framework" to enable the Federal government and its various police and intelligence agencies to:

"use mutually compatible methods and procedures in the collection, storage, use, analysis, and sharing of biometric and associated biographic and contextual information of individuals in a lawful and appropriate manner, while respecting their information privacy and other legal rights under United States law."

The NSPD 59 Directive recommends: "actions and associated timelines for enhancing the existing terrorist-oriented identification and screening processes by expanding the use of biometrics."

The procedures under NSPD 59 are consistent with an earlier June 2005 decision which created a "domestic spy service", under the auspices of the FBI. (For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, "Bush Administration creates 'Secret State Police'", June 30, 2005.)

Working hand in glove with Homeland Security (DHS), the proposed "domestic intelligence department" would combine FBI counterterrorism, intelligence and espionage operations into a single service.

The new department operating under the auspices of the FBI would have the authority to "seize the property of people deemed to be helping the spread of WMD": They would be able to "spy on people in America suspected of terrorism or having critical intelligence information, even if they are not suspected of committing a crime." (NBC Tonight, June 29, 2005.)

Michel Chossudovsky is a professor of economics at the University of Ottawa. He is editor for the Centre for Research on Globalization, which operates a website at [globalresearch.ca](http://globalresearch.ca).

# Cheney Directed Assassination Ring

CHENEY from p. 1

domestic and international law.

It is not much of a leap of logic to put these two bits of information together and ask the question: 'Did the CIA engage in domestic assassination as well?' Clearly the fact that this would be illegal is no barrier; according to neo-con doctrine, the unitary executive is above and beyond any law.

Let's see if there have been any likely assassinations that may be the handiwork of the Cheney hit teams. For example:

September 9, 2001; Ahmed Shah Massoud, leader of the Northern Alliance, is assassinated in Afghanistan just two days before the 9/11 attack. His death cleared the way for the Afghan invasion.

Shortly before his October 2002 death in a mysterious airplane crash, Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone met with the Vice President. Cheney was rounding up Senate support for the vote giving the administration the go ahead to invade Iraq in spite of United Nations objections. At a campaign stop in Willmar, Minn., days before his death, Wellstone told attendees that Cheney told him, "If you vote against the war in Iraq, the Bush administration will do whatever is necessary to get you. There will be severe ramifications for you and the state of Minnesota." Senator Wellstone's death cleared the way for the Iraq Invasion.

On February 5, 2005, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was killed in an explosion. His death was immediately blamed on Syria, but without any evidence. Within weeks Syrian peacekeeping forces which had

been in Lebanon for a decade, were forced to leave. Syria's departure cleared the way for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006.

The DC Madam, Deborah Palfrey, found dead on May Day, 2008, was very likely murdered. She had a very embarrassing little black book of clients for her prostitution service which included Washington lobbyists, defense contractors, intelligence operatives and even, reportedly, Dick Cheney himself. Before she was 'suicided' she made several public statements, including in radio interviews, that she had no intention of committing suicide and that if she was to be found dead, that it would be murder.

Mike Connell was a republican IT specialist. He helped the GOP orchestrate the electronic theft of the 2004 Ohio election (among others). He was scheduled to testify in a federal probe about not only the election thefts, but also about the "missing" White House e-mails. Before his death, Connell's lawyers were on-record requesting protection for their client based on threats from Karl Rove.

Connell's death appears to be part of a 'clean-up' operation.

This is but a brief list of possible, even likely, executive assassinations. Now that it has been revealed that a sophisticated covert program of assassination has been ongoing under the direction of VP Cheney, a thorough review of unsolved, politically convenient murders would seem to be in order. Let's start with the 3000 killed in lower Manhattan.

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## Book Review



## Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism



by Sheldon S. Wolin -  
Princeton University Press  
376 pp., \$29.95

REVIEWED BY CHRIS HEDGES

The United States, if it does not radically alter course, will become a totalitarian state. That is the argument of Sheldon S. Wolin's *Democracy Incorporated*.

This is no political screed. It is a brilliant, nuanced, and detailed dissection of the abject failings of the American political system by one of the nation's preeminent political theorists. It is a work that will rank as one of the most important pieces of political philosophy of the new century. By the time Wolin, who taught political philosophy at Berkeley and Princeton, is finished, it is clear that unless Barack Obama radically restructures corporate and military industrial power, our democracy is doomed.

Wolin uses the term inverted totalitarianism to describe our descent into despotism. "Inverted" totalitarianism does not revolve around a demagogue or charismatic leader, as "classical" kinds of totalitarianism do. The power centers of inverted totalitarianism are corporate and usually anonymous. It does not openly discredit democracy. It pays homage to the democratic ideal, patriotism, and the Constitution while quietly subverting democratic institutions.

The New Deal was the closest the nation came to a popular democracy, according to Wolin. But the rise of the country as a superpower after World War II led, in Wolin's eyes, to an increasingly tamed or "managed democracy." The unchecked power of a corporate elite made possible inverted totalitarianism. It has developed "imperceptibly," he writes, "unpremeditatedly, and in seeming unbroken continuity with the nation's political traditions."

In inverted totalitarianism, pliant legislators are elected by citizens - but they are beholden to armies of corporate lobbyists. Corporate media, which control nearly everything we read, watch or hear, lock out critics of corporate power (as an example, Wolin names Ralph Nader) and imposes a bland uniformity of opinion.

In totalitarian regimes such as Nazi fascism or Soviet communism, economics was subordinate to politics. "Under inverted totalitarianism," writes Wolin, "the reverse is true: economics dominates politics - and with that domination come different forms of ruthlessness."

It is hard to argue with Wolin's thesis, especially as hundreds of billions in taxpayer dollars are funneled to Wall Street while the rest of us wonder if we will have a job next month.

"The new system, inverted totalitarianism, is one that professes to be the opposite of what, in fact, it is," Wolin writes. "It disclaims its real identity, trusting that its deviations will become normalized as 'change.'"

Wolin notes that the framers of the Constitution distrusted and often feared popular democracy. They established constitutional restraints - the Electoral College is one - to protect the power of the elite. The rise of

democracy was a slow, arduous struggle, decade after decade, that pitted citizens against the elite. The republic existed for three-quarters of a century before the formal end of slavery. It was an additional 100 years before black Americans were assured their voting rights. It was not until the 20th century that women gained the right to vote and trade unions were able to engage in collective bargaining.

"Far from being innate," Wolin writes, "democracy in America has gone against the grain, against the very forms by which the political and economic power of the country has been and continues to be ordered."

The hijacking of government by corporations has permitted the military-industrial complex (which, in a clever sleight of hand, is no longer considered part of the government) to bleed the country. "Big government may be the problem," Wolin quips, "but military is the solution." The social programs implanted by the New Deal have been reduced or eliminated as part of the "selective abdication of governmental responsibility for the well-being of the citizenry" under cover of cost-cutting and improving "efficiency." The official US defense budget for fiscal year 2008 is \$624 billion. The next closest national military budget is China's, at \$65 billion, according to the Central Intelligence Agency. And yet, even in the midst of our economic collapse, the two main political parties refuse to challenge the right of the military-industrial complex to gorge itself on taxpayer dollars.

Imperialism and democracy are, Wolin writes, incompatible. But imperial politics is what we have, and since our leaders refuse to limit the resources devoted to sustaining empire, democracy will perish.

"Imperial politics represents the conquest of domestic politics and the latter's conversion into a crucial element of inverted totalitarianism," Wolin writes. "It makes no sense to ask how the democratic citizen could 'participate' substantively in imperial politics; hence it is not surprising that the subject of empire is taboo in electoral debates."

Wolin has only one blind spot, a minor one. He believes that no one actively challenges the way things are because the lives of ordinary people are "materially tolerable and safer" in the United States. But this ignores what is happening to consumers and working people in the present economic downturn. As tens of thousands of workers join the ranks of the unemployed daily, as they watch helplessly while their homes are foreclosed on, and as they are unable to pay for health insurance, they could easily turn inverted totalitarianism into classical totalitarianism. And demagogues too often crawl up out of the slime to prey on those in despair during a crisis.

# History's Lessons

## JFK, FDR and 'Seven Days in May'

By LISA PEASE

Robert Parry recently wrote of how President Obama's early actions might bring him a "Seven Days in May moment," (consortiumnews.com) referring to a fictitious coup attempt from a film of the same name, in which a popular military figure nearly took over the government.

In Parry's piece, he compared Obama's situation to that of President Jimmy Carter. I was reminded, however, of President John Kennedy's comments regarding his own brush with the "Seven Days in May" scenario, and the dangers Obama, too, will face.

I was also reminded of the coup that almost came about during President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first term.

The film "Seven Days in May" began as a novel by Fletcher Knebel, inspired to a great degree by Knebel's conversations with Gen. Curtis LeMay, President Kennedy's contentious Air Force Chief of Staff who was furious at Kennedy for not sending in full military support during the Bay of Pigs incident, and advocated bombing the Vietnamese "back into the Stone Age".

Additionally, LeMay infamously argued during the Cuban Missile Crisis for a preemptive nuclear first-strike against the Soviet Union, a move Kennedy abhorred.

One of Kennedy's friends, Paul Fay, Jr., wrote in his book *The Pleasure of His Company* how one summer weekend in 1962, one of Kennedy's friends brought Knebel's book to his attention, and Kennedy read the book that night.

The next day, Kennedy discussed the plot with friends who wanted to know if Kennedy felt such a scenario was possible. Bear in mind this was after the Bay of Pigs but before the Cuban Missile Crisis.

"It's possible," Kennedy acknowledged. "It could happen in this country, but the conditions would have to be just right. If, for example, the country had a young President, and he had a Bay of Pigs, there would be a certain uneasiness."

"Maybe the military would do a little criticizing behind his back, but this would be written off as the usual military dissatisfaction with civilian control. Then, if there were another Bay of Pigs, the reaction of the country would be, 'Is he too young and inexperienced?'"

"The military would almost feel that it was their patriotic obligation to stand ready to preserve the integrity of the nation, and only God knows just what segment of democracy they would be defending if they overthrew the elected establishment."

After a moment, Kennedy continued. "Then, if there were a third Bay of Pigs, it could happen."

Kennedy wanted the public to understand the threat to the presidency and encouraged the



film's director and longtime Kennedy friend John Frankenheimer to make the film "as a warning to the Republic."

Kennedy even offered to leave Washington for a few days so Frankenheimer could shoot at the White House.

### Learning Limits

In the wake of the tragically flawed Bay of Pigs operation, Kennedy learned a valuable lesson that Obama has yet to learn: the limits of presidential authority.

As Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas recounted later, "He had experienced the extreme power that these groups had, these various insidious influences of the CIA and the Pentagon, on civilian policy, and I think it raised in his own mind the specter: Can Jack Kennedy, President of the United States, ever be strong enough to really rule these two powerful agencies?"

It's a question we could ask of Obama as well. As Parry noted, Obama has already moved to exert authority over the military by ordering a plan to withdraw from Iraq within 16 months, even though top generals David Petraeus and Ray Odierno have expressed their belief that thousands of troops should remain in Iraq for years to come.

Obama is also ruffling mighty feathers by calling out top banking officials on their egregious bonuses at a time when so many Americans are out of work or struggling to get to the next paycheck.

If he nationalizes the banks to any degree, no matter how necessary or temporary, he'll place himself square in the shoes of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who also challenged the bankers early in his first term.

In FDR's case, the bankers responded by attempting to lure the widely known and very popular General Smedley Butler into a coup against Roosevelt. (Some commentators believe

this failed coup also helped shape Knebel's novel.)

Butler was first approached on the issue of the gold standard. One of FDR's early acts as President was to decouple the country's money supply from the gold supply. This outraged the banking establishment, as the resulting inflation devalued their holdings.

Through a proxy, several prominent Americans approached General Butler and asked him to lobby the veterans who adored him for a return to the gold standard, using the argument that inflation would devalue the veterans' bonuses that had yet to be paid.

The point man for the conspiracy, Gerald MacGuire, had studied the fascist coups in Europe and found that they were made possible only by the cooperation of a strong faction in the military. MacGuire offered to provide Butler with a speech to give before the American Legion that would fire up the troops and rally them behind Butler.

Butler smelled a rat right away. He decided to string MacGuire along until he could unravel the details of the plot. He learned the goal was to appoint a special assistant to President Roosevelt, a sort of "co-president," after which Roosevelt would be forced to resign using his polio-ravaged condition as an excuse.

With Butler's help, or so they hoped, the military would quickly side with the coup plotters should any challenge arise during the transfer of power.

The men approached Butler because they believed that he, like many others, would be corruptible. Offers of wealth and mortgage forgiveness were made.

But instead, Butler brought a reporter into the fold so it wouldn't be just Butler's word against the conspirators. When the two of them had gathered enough data, they went to Congress.

Congress was initially outraged and curious. But when the investigation soon led to some of the biggest names in the Establishment, the investigation was prematurely aborted, and not one person was charged with any crime, despite solid evidence of perjury, at a minimum.

Obama seeks to pattern himself after Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John Kennedy. But two of the three had their presidencies cut short by assassins, and one was challenged by a fascist group within the Establishment.

Truly, President Obama will need to be extremely vigilant, courageous and wily if he seeks to achieve their stature while avoiding the wrath of similar, and powerful, enemies.

*Lisa Pease is an historian and writer who specializes in the mysteries of the John F. Kennedy era.*

## Shipping News

### SS *Poet's* Checkered Past and CIA Connections

By Wayne Madsen / WayneMadsenReport

The ill-fated SS *Poet*, which transported arms to Iran on behalf of the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign to prevent a US hostage release that would have benefited Jimmy Carter's re-election campaign, was chartered to Israel in the months before its voyage to Iran.

According to the September 16, 1982, Congressional report on the disappearance of the *Poet*, the ship was bought by Hawaiian Eugenia from Asbury Steamship Company in May 1979. Asbury had bought the former SS *Portmar* from Calmar Lines in 1976 and renamed it the *Poet*. In his testimony to Congress on the *Poet's* disappearance, owner Henry J. Bonnabel said that there was an unnamed "additional party" to his ownership of the *Poet*. Prior to its mission to Iran, the *Poet* had been time chartered to Israel for unknown reasons.

WMR has gathered the following details on *Poet's* pre-Iran mission activities from a source knowledgeable about the vessel's operations. The *Poet* carried urea to Ceylon and returned, nearing Portland, Oregon on October 18, 1979. By early December, the *Poet* was laid up for nearly a month. After being reactivated, the *Poet* sailed empty to Houston, Texas and Mobile, Alabama for the loading of prefabricated housing, and sailed on January 14, 1980, toward Eilat, Israel. Surprisingly, at a time when the ink on the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt was still wet, the *Poet's* next port of call was Port Said, Egypt. This was at a time when the *Poet* was chartered to Israel and arriving directly in Egypt from an Israeli port.

From February 20 to March 4, 1980, the *Poet* was in dry dock in Orange, Texas. On March 7, the *Poet* sailed for Galveston to pick up a load of 14,000 tons of wheat and departed Galveston on March 17 for Egypt. On April 28, the *Poet* departed Port Said, Egypt and arrived in New Orleans on May 14.

The *Poet* then hauled 12,500 tons of wheat to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and returned to the Gulf of Mexico, and then departed again for Santo Domingo with 12,000 tons of wheat, arriving June 21. On July 7, the *Poet* was back in New Orleans and returned



on July 24, to Santo Domingo with 13,750 tons of wheat. The *Poet* then sailed to Corpus Christi, arriving on August 2. The *Poet* left Philadelphia's Girard Point marine pier on October 24. The *Poet's* crew was declared missing and presumed dead on December 8, 1980 by the US Coast Guard.

The *Poet's* charter agent, Universal Shipping Company, was located at 1911 North Fort Myer Drive, in the Rosslyn, Virginia area and shared the building with the Egyptian American Transport and Services Company (EATSCO). Also located in the same building was the firm of former CIA number two clandestine operations official Theodore Shackley, Research Associates International (RAI) Ltd. All were involved in various off-the-books CIA operations. RAI, Systems Services International Inc. (SSI), International Research and Trade Ltd. (IRT), and EATSCO all shared the same Washington law firm, Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge.

EATSCO was established by Edwin Wilson, later convicted and jailed for smuggling US weapons to Libya, as a CIA arms smuggling front company in 1979. Longtime CIA covert operations officer Thomas Clines headed up EATSCO and another CIA front, API Distributors, Inc., an oil well drilling supply company with operations in Houston. Clines' (SSI), founded in 1978, held a 49 percent stake in EATSCO. Clines also owned (IRT), incorporated in Delaware in December 1980

and International Research and Trade Ltd. incorporated in Bermuda in April 1979.

In July 1980, according to Gary Sick, a National Security Council official in the Carter administration, Reagan campaign director William Casey met with representatives of the Ayatollah Khomeini's regime in Madrid and agreed to provide arms to Iran in exchange for the Iranians holding the US hostages until the January 20, 1981, inauguration of Ronald Reagan as president.

The *Poet's* presence in the Dominican Republic in July 1980 during the Casey meetings with the Iranians in Madrid is significant. Wilson and his covert operations, including EATSCO, used the Dominican Republic as a base for weapons smuggling to Libya. Wilson was arrested by US Marshals as he attempted to de-plane in the Dominican Republic on a flight from Libya in 1982.

Two Carter National Security Council officials were reportedly feeding classified information to the Casey team on Carter's negotiations to free the hostages before the November 4 presidential election. They were Robert Gates, assigned by the CIA to the NSC and who now serves as Barack Obama's Secretary of Defense as the only Cabinet holdover from the George W. Bush administration, and Donald Gregg, also assigned from the CIA to the NSC. Gregg later served as Vice President Bush's national

see SS *POET* p. 7

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# NIST's Quiet Admission of Controlled Demolition

FREEFALL from p. 1

acceleration of the building without the use of controlled demolition explosives.

NIST has studiously avoided the admission that there was any freefall acceleration of the building, even though it is visible on all the videos and easily measurable. Freefall is simply not compatible with the fire-induced collapse scenario proposed by NIST. Even in



Time lapse sequence of Building 7 collapse showing a distinct "crimp" characteristic of controlled demolition.

the draft final report on August 26, 2008, nearly seven years after the event, the NIST report's lead authors still held firmly to their position that freefall did not occur.

However, once NIST invited comments on its draft report, which it is required to do by law, it was confronted with questions about this obvious error. During the question and

answer period of the televised press briefing for the NIST draft report, David Chandler, a high school physics teacher and Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (AE911Truth) member, asked the crucial question about freefall acceleration.

In replying to Chandler's question, NIST lead investigator Dr. Shyam Sunder, explained why freefall was not compatible with the NIST model of collapse: "The structural analysis [of the NIST model of collapse] shows that there was structural resistance that was provided in this particular case and you had a sequence of structural failures that had to take place and everything was not instantaneous."

Unfortunately for Dr. Sunder and for NIST's model, as David Chandler pointed out, the fact of freefall is easily measurable and readily observable on the dozen or so publicly available videos of the event.

Since being publicly confronted on this glaring omission in the WTC7 report, NIST has quietly retracted the claim that there was no period of building freefall. In the final report issued November 20, 2008, NIST reports that "after a more detailed examination", they had in fact found a 2.25-second period in which the center roofline exhibited a "freefall drop for approximately 8 stories."

While the final NIST report does not acknowledge the significance of this freefall drop, the meaning is not lost on the Architects and Engineers who are aware of it. The significance is that, during a period of freefall, all of the gravitational potential energy is converted to energy of motion (kinetic energy). There is no energy available for doing other work, such as breaking up structural columns or hurling structural pieces out of the way as required by NIST's fire-induced collapse scenario.

NIST tried to hide its admission of freefall from public view by not listing it in the description of the changes it made in response to public comments. Admitting to freefall leads directly to the question of what source of energy eliminated the eight stories of building structure. Evidently the NIST authors didn't want to go there. They tried to hide their dramatic change of position on the question of freefall acceleration.

NIST's quiet admission of a 2.25 second period of freefall acceleration during the collapse of WTC7 is a tacit admission that the building was destroyed by controlled demolition explosives. Their attempt to hide this dramatic change of official position is evidence of an intentional cover-up.

More information can be found at Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, AE911Truth.org

# SS Poet's Checkered Past and CIA Connections

SS POET from p. 6

security adviser. Air Force Major General Richard Secord, who was involved in the shipment of arms to Iran as the Pentagon's key point man, was also reportedly involved with the Casey arms transfer. After his retirement from the Air Force in 1983, Secord headed up the Stanford Technology Trading Group International, a CIA front company involved in the Iran-Contra scandal. Bush's close aide and attorney, C. Boyden Gray, was also reportedly involved in the summer 1980 Madrid meetings between the Casey team and the Iranians.

EATSCO's sweetheart deal to supply weapons to Egypt was worked out by Secord, while he was a deputy assistant secretary of defense, and Erich F. von Marbod, the head of the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), which authorized the arms shipments, via EATSCO, to Egypt. Glenn A. Robinette, a former CIA agent and employee of EATSCO, told congressional investigators in 1987 that he delivered a \$33,000 cashiers check from Secord to Clines.

As a result of the Madrid agreement between Casey and the Iranians, it was also agreed that a Greek ship would be purchased to commence arms deliveries consisting of four shipments of ammunition, valued at some \$150 million, from the Israeli port of Eilat to Bandar Abbas, Iran. WMR has previously reported that Bandar Abbas was the actual destination of the Poet in October 1980 and that after its delivery, the ship and its crew, of 34 US nationals, was quickly destroyed by an Israeli military operation.

The Iran-Iraq war began on September 22, 1980, and the Poet's charter shows that a war risk insurance clause was added as a last page addendum. The Poet's official destination was Port Said, not in a war zone at the time. The Poet never transited through the Strait of Gibraltar nor the Suez Canal, suggesting its route took it around the Cape of Good Hope to Iran. If the Poet had sailed around the Cape, its presence would have been detected by South Africa's Silvermine listening post, built by NATO in 1973 and tasked with monitoring maritime transits around the Cape of Good

Hope and from the South Atlantic approaches into the Indian Ocean. Silvermine also was linked to an array of underwater hydrophones that detected the acoustic signatures of submarines and surface traffic. Surface ships like the Poet, operating at top speed, would have been easily detected by the undersea hydrophones. Silvermine's intelligence was passed to Britain, which then passed it on to the United States. The close relationship between the Reagan administration and South Africa's apartheid regime ensured that any intelligence on the Poet's transit around the Cape would remain secret.

WMR has learned from informed sources that the Poet's skipper, Captain Leroy Warren, had discussed personal financial arrangements with his wife prior to the October 24, 1980 departure of the ship from Philadelphia's Girard Point marine pier ostensibly with corn for Port Said but, in reality, with weapons in its rear number four cargo hold for Iran. WMR has also learned that the Poet's radio officer, Joseph Vyhnek, a Czechoslovak national with US residence, had reportedly told his wife that he saw two armed guards from his aft stateroom present standing around the number four cargo hold before the ship left port in Philadelphia.

Casey later used EATSCO and its freight forwarder firm, R.G. Hobelman Shipping Company of Baltimore, to combine weapons shipments for the Afghan mujahideen resistance to the Soviets with aid to Egypt under the Camp David Accords. A Hobelman subsidiary, Air Freight International Inc., was also involved in the covert weapons shipments.

The story of the SS Poet and the murder of 34 US merchant mariners on the high seas continues to be covered up by the US government. President Obama has added to the cover-up by retaining, as his Secretary of Defense, one of the main perpetrators of the crime: Robert Gates.

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# 13 Eyewitnesses Contradict Pentagon 9/11 Story



9/11 STORY from p. 1

police officers who were on duty at the time of the attack. Most of the others were government employees at their jobs, and their presence at that place and time can be verified. This stands in sharp contrast to the witnesses who claim they saw the attack from their cars, as their presence on the road cannot be confirmed.

CIT's witnesses are quite sure about what they saw. Sergeant William Lagasse, an officer with what is now known as the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, was fueling his patrol car at the Citgo station when the jet flew past him. He has stated that he is "100% sure" that the plane flew to the north of the gas station, that he would "bet his life on it."

There is a remarkable degree of congruence in the witnesses' accounts. They are not 9/11 researchers and none of them seemed to be aware that they were describing a flight path at odds with the official story, thus they had no reason to be less than forthcoming. Each was interviewed separately, yet their stories are quite similar.

CIT includes each interview in its entirety, without editing. Although this makes for a long video, it preempts any accusations of misinterpreting or leading the witnesses. We have the advantage of seeing the witnesses' body language and hearing their tone of voice. We get a glimpse into their personalities and character, and are given the maximum amount of information possible with which to assess if they are telling the truth. We found the witnesses credible and convincing.

After thousands of hours of painstaking investigation and analysis, Ranke and Marquis have concluded that the plane seen by so many people did not hit the Pentagon, but flew over the building at the same time that pre-planted explosives caused a huge fireball and thick, black smoke, obscuring the fact that the plane was still in the air and flying away.

Several of CIT's witnesses mentioned a second plane that came along about 30 seconds later, but media reports immediately after 9/11 talked about a second plane "shadowing" the attack plane. The belief that there were two planes in very close proximity serves as a useful fiction to confuse anyone who saw the plane fly over the Pentagon as the fireball exploded. Rather than concluding that the plane never actually hit the building, observers would almost certainly conclude that they had seen the "shadowing" second plane.

All of CIT's witnesses also believe that the plane they saw hit the Pentagon, although this cannot be possible. This fact has been used to dismiss CIT's work as irrelevant, but it's not a compelling argument.

Less than an hour earlier, America had seen the south tower of the World Trade Center being hit by a plane and exploding into a huge fireball. Most people were aware that an attack was underway. If they saw a jet heading directly towards the Pentagon, and next saw a massive fireball, it is doubtful that one person in a thousand would question whether the plane had crashed and caused the fireball. To conclude that the fireball was caused by explosives pre-planted in one of the most heavily guarded buildings on the planet, in an intentional false flag attack to justify war, would require observers to have a degree of perspicacity that was extremely rare in the pre-9/11 world, and only slightly less rare now.

The most riveting segment in the CIT footage is of the interview with Lloyde England, a taxi cab driver who was photographed numerous times just after the attack. In all the photos, England and his cab are on Route 27, on the bridge going over Columbia Pike. The front windshield of his cab has a big hole in it and the cab is at a stop and straddling the lanes. A broken light pole lies nearby.

England's story is that he was going 40 mph when he felt the jet go over head, and then the light pole came smashing through his front windshield. He says he then skidded sideways to a stop, and that a stranger stopped and helped him remove the light pole from the windshield, and then left without ever giving his name or even speaking a word.

England's story is suspect because photos show the hood of his sedan untouched and gleaming like a mirror, although his front windshield was destroyed. England is quite clear that it was not the smaller section at the top of the light pole that impaled his windshield, but the big, 40 foot, 247 pound pole. He contends

that after it pierced his windshield, with perhaps five feet of the top end of the pole inside the cab, that the other 35 feet stuck straight out into the air, not touching the hood of the cab.

The question is, with the windshield destroyed, what held the pole up in the air? CIT drove with England to his property in the country to inspect the cab. They hypothesized that perhaps the narrow end of the pole had pierced the back seat or floorboards of the cab, holding it in place and not allowing it to touch the hood of the cab. But their inspection showed that there was only an insignificant rip in the rear seat, and no damage to the floorboards. Although the dashboard was damaged, no part of the hood, including the edge near the windshield, showed any damage.

What makes the story even more incredible is that England claims that as he was removing the pole from the windshield, he fell down, but managed, even as he was on the ground, to keep holding the pole in the air. Remember that the pole is 40 feet long and weighs 247 pounds, while England appears to be about 65 years old.

Pressed to explain how it can be that the pole never touched the hood of the sedan, England said only "The car speaks for itself." Unfortunately for England, the car seems to be saying that his account cannot possibly be true.

In addition, with 13 eyewitnesses saying that the plane went nowhere near those light poles, it seems clear that something else caused the damage to England's windshield.

The video with England validates CIT's practice of keeping the camera rolling as much as possible, even during casual conversation, as the most damning statements from both England and his wife came out spontaneously and unexpectedly. While Ranke and England's wife were chatting at the Englands' home, Ranke told her that they had determined that the jet never hit the Pentagon, but kept on going, and, amazingly, she agreed! The audio is hard to hear and she then refused to say more, but her meaning was clear. Mrs. England, who works for the FBI, also said that she knows why her husband's car was not impounded as evidence, but wasn't going to tell.

England spontaneously offered this damning statement: "You gotta understand something. When people do things and get away with it, you...eventually it's gonna come to me, and when it comes to me, it's gonna be so big, I can't do nothing about it."

CIT also kept the camera running during the 90-minute drive to see England's car, and captured a few very interesting statements on tape. Although England speaks generally and indirectly, in the context of a conversation about the attack at the Pentagon, his meaning is clear.

**England:** *I wasn't supposed to be involved with this, this is too big for me, man, this is a big thing. This is a world thing happening, I'm a small man...I'm not supposed to be involved in this. This is for other people, people who have money and all this kind of stuff.*

**Ranke:** *Your point that these people who have all the money...*

**England:** *This is their thing.*

**Ranke:** *This is their event.*

**England:** *This is for them.*

**Ranke:** *Meaning they're doing it for their own reasons...*

**England:** *(with conviction) That's right. I'm not supposed to be in it.*

...



Lloyde England's with his cab in front of the Pentagon on 9/11.

**Ranke:** *They must have planned it.*

**England:** *It was planned.*

...

**England:** *You know what history is? It's not the truth. It's "his story." Has nothing to do with the truth.*

As someone who has been researching the 9/11 story for two years, and has experienced mockery, abuse and denials from the government and media, I was a thrilled to hear someone who was directly involved in the cover-up admit on tape that it was a big event, a world event, planned by rich people for their own reasons.

Incredibly, once Ranke explained that 13 witnesses had all placed the jet at the north side of the Citgo station on a trajectory that could not have knocked down the five light poles, England changed his story and declared that he was not where all the photographs show him to be, but actually well north of Columbia Pike.

Ranke showed England numerous photos of himself, his damaged cab and the downed light pole on the bridge over Columbia Pike. Even faced with incontrovertible evidence of his exact location, England resolutely maintained that pictures don't always tell the truth and that the accident with the light pole had taken place much further north.

The 90-minute video of the interview with Lloyde England, completely discredits England. Ranke points out that England may well be a victim himself, in that he may have been forced to tell the story of the pole impaling his windshield. But his story is so incredible, and his protestations that he was not in the location where multiple photos and videos place him on that day are so absurd, that Lloyde England's account now stands as perhaps the most vulnerable point in the edifice of lies that constitute the official story of the attack on the Pentagon.

The entire body of work from CIT is a testament to the tremendous power of dedicated citizen journalists to uncover the truth behind a government story. Using thousands of dollars of their own money and thousands of hours of unpaid time, Craig Ranke and Aldo Marquis have performed a significant public service. They have created a body of work that definitively shows the government story about the Pentagon to be a lie.

CIT's next move is to consolidate their research into a more concise format that edits all the lengthy interviews into a single 60 minute video called "National Security Alert." The video will have no music or other artistic flourishes, which will make it suitable for informing government or media figures. Within the next 30 days, they expect to go live with a new website at CitizenInvestigationTeam.com. That site will have a link for free downloads of their new video, plus detailed information on how citizens can use the video to get action, including a series of steps to take if the appropriate authorities don't respond.

Ranke and Marquis will be returning to the DC area to present a four hour conference in tandem with Pilots for 9/11 Truth. The free conference will be held at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) conference center in Arlington, Virginia from 12:30 pm to 5 pm on Saturday, July 11.

Sheila Casey is a DC-based journalist. Her work has appeared in The Denver Post, Reuters, Chicago Sun-Times, Dissident Voice and Common Dreams. She blogs at <http://www.sheilacasey.com>



# Diebold Software Designed for Election Fraud

DIEBOLD from p. 1

The problems may lead to decertification of the company's voting systems, as well as an examination of voting systems made by other companies to determine if they too may have been able to sneak such violations past both federal and state testers.

The March 17 hearing was a response to the startling discovery last December, by a volunteer group in Humboldt County that, under fairly common circumstances, the older version of GEMS used by the county, and several others in the state, dropped all votes from the ballots in the first deck of ballots run through GEMS.

The Humboldt County Election Transparency Project (HTP), using the free and open source software program Ballot Browser, found that Diebold's GEMS system had eliminated all votes from 197 vote-by-mail ballots cast in a single precinct in Eureka, CA during last November's general election. [Mitch Trachtenberg, author of this article, was one of the HTP volunteers. He developed Ballot Browser for use by the project.]

The revelations were made just after Humboldt County Registrar of Voters Carolyn Crnich had certified the election results with the state, forcing her to recertify with new numbers after the discovery. Crnich, who helped found the Transparency Project, was present at the hearing.

Following the discovery of Diebold's dropped votes and the equally disturbing revelation that Diebold had been aware of the problem for years, California's Secretary of State Debra Bowen, initiated an investigation which confirmed that, under common circumstances, the GEMS software would drop all votes from the first scanned deck of ballots, the so-called "deck zero."

The investigation also revealed that the problems went far beyond the dropping of votes. GEMS v1.18.19, the version used in Humboldt County — as well as versions 1.18.20, 1.18.21, 1.18.22 and 1.18.23 — were discovered to have defective audit logs.

In addition, the software was discovered to have a "Clear" button which, when pressed, would actually delete the contents of an audit log without even asking for confirmation from the user. That, despite repeated federal and state testing and certification of the software which failed to notice the egregious programming flaws in violation of federal voting system standards requiring indestructible logs to track all system events.

The flaws should have kept the systems from receiving certification at all.

"In terms of being able to track down the precise mechanism by which the problem had occurred in [the Humboldt] election, critical

information was simply never recorded," in the audit logs, Deputy Sec. of State Lowell Finley said at the hearing which was made available to

empty "deck zero."

However, Diebold never sent similar instructions to the federal body that had certified their software, never notified the California Secretary of State of the problem, and never modified their instruction manuals. In Humboldt County, the previous election manager left the county without alerting his successor or his superiors of Diebold's suggested "workaround", sent out as a single notice, via email, back in 2004.

Although the California Secretary of State's report indicated that the problem was Premier's responsibility, Premier's representative attempted to tell the hearing that the blame should be shared, suggesting that Crnich, the Humboldt Registrar, should have somehow known to delete "deck zero" before using GEMS to count ballots, despite her having access to no such instructions.

Humboldt Registrar Carolyn Crnich responded that she was "offended" by Diebold's attempt to shift blame, adding "if you are saying that your system needs to be checked every damn time you turn it on, then I agree with you."

Tom Pinto, a staffer at Humboldt County's District Attorney's office and a volunteer with the Transparency Project, urged that the approach used in Humboldt — independently scanning ballots with separately developed open source software and off-the-shelf hardware — be expanded statewide. Pinto stated that the project had demonstrated the need for "100% audits."

The question of whether similar problems exist in the audit logs of systems certified by other companies was also raised at the hearing by both Election Integrity advocates during the public comment period, and afterwards by Bowen herself.

"Clearly, we're going to have to look at this," she told *Wired*. "That's one of the obvious next steps."

*Mitch Trachtenberg is a member of the Humboldt County Election Transparency Project, and the author of Ballot Browser, free and open source ballot counting software. He is also a partner in Trachtenberg Election Verification Systems (TEVSystems), which provides support for Ballot Browser.*

*Brad Friedman is an investigative journalist/blogger and the creator/publisher of The BRAD BLOG, which has been focusing for some years on the many issues involved in election integrity. He can currently be seen in a number of documentaries on the topic, now in release around the country, including David Earnhardt's "Uncounted: The New Math of American Elections," and the just-released "Murder, Spies & Voting Lies: The Clint Curtis Story," by documentarian Patty Sharaf.*



Diebold electronic voting machine

the public via one-way audio teleconference.

The hearing was meant to help determine whether or not GEMS v. 1.18.19, as used in Humboldt County, should now be decertified by the state. However, in response to a question, Premier representative Justin Bales admitted that even the most recent versions of GEMS, used in a number of other states, such as Florida and Texas, as well as California, still fail to record the deletion of ballots in their audit logs.

For a decade or more, e-vote system vendors have pointed to the audit logs as a way of ensuring that every operation performed by their software would be available for inspection in post-election examinations. As a result of today's hearing, it has become clear that even the most recent versions of Diebold/Premier's vote counting software do not actually record all system events.

Bales admitted that his company had "not yet" corrected the problem, which was first implemented in the company's software more than a decade ago.

*Wired's* Kim Zetter quotes Bales as noting "We never, again, intended for any malicious intent and not to log certain activities. ... It was just not in the initial program, but now we're taking a serious look at that."

**CA Secretary of State Bowen described the Diebold audit logs as "useless".**

According to the Secretary of State's report, the four year-old bug in Diebold/Premier's software triggered a problem in Humboldt's election as a result of a personnel change. Diebold had sent a memo, back in 2004, to elections managers still using GEMS 1.18.19. This memo, without going into details of the software bug, instructed elections officials to begin their elections by creating and deleting an

# The Real AIG Conspiracy

AIG from p. 1

of bonuses being contested, it blames its usual all-purpose *bete noire*: Congress. Where the right and left differ is just whom the public should be directing its anger at!

Here's the problem with all the hoopla over the \$165 million in AIG bonuses: This sum is only less than 0.1% — one thousandth — of the \$183 BILLION that the U.S. Treasury gave to AIG as a "pass-through" to its counterparties. This sum, over a thousand times the magnitude of the bonuses on which public attention is conveniently being focused by Wall Street promoters, did not stay with AIG. For over six months, the public media and Congressmen and women have been trying to find out just where this money *did go*. *Bloomberg News* brought a lawsuit to find out, only to be met with a wall of silence.

Finally, on March 15, the government released the details. They were indeed highly embarrassing. The largest recipient turned out to be just what earlier financial reporters had said was rumored: Mr. Paulson's own firm, Goldman Sachs, headed the list. It was owed \$13 billion in counterparty claims. So here's the picture that's emerging. Last September, Treasury Secretary Paulson, from Goldman Sachs, drew up a terse 3-page memo outlining his bailout proposal. The plan specified that whatever he and other Treasury officials did (thus including his subordinates, also from Goldman Sachs), could not be challenged legally or undone, much less prosecuted. This condition enraged Congress, which rejected the bailout in its first incarnation.

It now looks as if Mr. Paulson had good reason to put in a fatal legal clause blocking any clawback of funds given by the Treasury to AIG's counterparties. This is where public outrage should be focused.

Instead, the leading Congressional shepherds of the bailout legislation — along with Mr. Obama, who came out in his final, Friday night presidential debate with Sen. McCain strongly in favor of the bailout in Mr. Paulson's awful "short" version — have been posing as conspicuously as possible for the media to cover a deflected target — the AIG executives receiving bonuses, not the company's counterparties.

There are two questions that one always must

ask when a political operation is being launched. First, *qui bono*? Who benefits? And second, why now? In my experience, timing almost always is the key to figuring out the dynamics at work.

Regarding *qui bono*, what do Sen. Schumer, Rep. Frank, Pres. Obama and other Wall Street sponsors gain from this public outcry? For starters, it depicts them as hard taskmasters of the banking and financial sector, not its lobbyists carrying water for one giveaway after another. So the AIG kafuffle has muddied the water about where their political loyalties really lie. It enables them to strike a misleading pose — and hence to pose as "honest brokers" next time they dishonestly give away the next few trillion dollars to their major sponsors and campaign contributors.

Regarding the timing, I think I have answered that above. Talking about AIG bonuses has effectively distracted attention from the AIG counterparties who received the \$183 billion in Treasury giveaways. The "final" sum to be given to its counterparties has been rumored to be \$250 billion, do Sen. Schumer, Rep. Frank and Pres. Obama still have a lot more work to do for Wall Street in the coming year or so.

To succeed in this work — while mitigating the public outrage already rising against the bad bailouts — they need to strike precisely the pose that they're striking now. It is an exercise in deception.

The moral should be: The wetter the crocodile tears shed over giving bonuses to AIG individuals (who seem to be largely on the healthy, bona fide insurance side of AIG's business, not its hedge-fund Ponzi-scheme racket), the more they will distract public attention from the \$180 billion giveaway, and the better they can position themselves to give away yet more government money (Treasury bonds and Federal Reserve deposits) to their favorite financial charities.

*Dr. Hudson is President of The Institute for the Study of Long-Term Economic Trends (ISLET), a Wall Street Financial Analyst, Distinguished Research Professor of Economics at the University of Missouri, Kansas City and author of Super-Imperialism: The Economic Strategy of American Empire (1968 and 2003) and of The Myth of Aid (1971). Michael Hudson is a frequent contributor to Global Research. Dr. Hudson was Chief Economic Policy Adviser for the Kucinich for President campaign.*

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