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A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Washington, D.C.



Shocking Revelations CNN Refused to Air:

Ex-ISI Chief Says Mumbai and 9/11 Were Inside Jobs

By PAUL JOSEPH WATSON / PRISON PLANET.COM
Former Pakistani ISI chief Hamid Gul appeared on the Alex Jones Show Dec. 10th and shared his contention that the 9/11 attack was an inside job, laying out details that were censored during a CNN interview on the same subject the previous weekend.

Gul served as Director General of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence during 1987-89 and worked with the CIA in the covert war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, helping to train the

US-backed mujahideen.

During the CNN interview on Sunday, December 7, host Fareed Zakaria attacked Gul and claimed his opinions on 9/11 were "thoroughly discredited," but the majority of the evidence he presented for 9/11 being a false flag attack was edited out by CNN bosses.

No such censorship took place during the Alex Jones interview as Gul got in depth on why he considered 9/11 to be a staged event.

see MUMBAI p. 7

IRAQ War Spending Hammers Economy

US in Recession Since 2007: Iraq War Key Factor in Economic Downturn

By ELAINE SULLIVAN / RCFP

Many economists have been predicting this recession. Nobel-prize winning economist and former chief economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, declared the US economy to be in recession in February of 2008. Stiglitz and Harvard public finance lecturer Linda J. Bilmes cited the \$3 trillion cost of the Iraq war as a key factor in the economic downturn, saying it had increased the budget deficit and consumed resources that would otherwise promote growth. (Linda J. Bilmes and Joseph

E. Stiglitz, "The Iraq War Will Cost Us \$3 Trillion, and Much More," March 9, 2008; *Washington Post*)

The Business Cycle Dating Committee of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) has confirmed that the US has been in a recession since December 2007. The NBER, founded in 1920, "... is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization dedicated to promoting a greater understanding of how the economy works" The NBER's Business Cycle

see RECESSION p. 8

Bush and Rove Launch Legacy Project Attempt to Rewrite History



Campaign to Rehabilitate Bush's Image Starts with Denial of Bush's Role in Decision to Invade Iraq...

By JON PONDER / PENSITO REVIEW

In early December, Stephen Hayes, a

conservative columnist and analyst for CNN, revealed that George Bush and Karl Rove have launched a new propaganda campaign with the monumental goal of rewriting the history of the past eight years. The newspeak title of the enterprise is the "Bush legacy project."

The campaign rolled out this week, first in an "exit interview" Bush gave Charlie Gibson of ABC News, and then in an Oxford-style debate in Manhattan, in which Rove argued against the proposition that "Bush 43 Is the Worst President of the Last 50 Years." In the separate venues, both men attempted to reposition Bush's role in the invasion of Iraq from resolute war president, as he depicted himself at the time, to a reluctant warrior who was misled by bad intelligence into making what many analysts rate as the worst military decision in US history.

The BRAD BLOG commented previously on the newly retreaded myth of "bad" pre-war intel, and how it's now being used to prop up both Bush's and the mainstream corporate media's tragic legacy of failure, which led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of US troops and innocent Iraqi civilians.

Bush was up first, on Monday night, with the interview with ABC's Gibson, but notice

see LEGACY p. 2

"Oops, We Meant \$7 TRILLION!"

What Hank and Ben Are Up to and How They Plan to Pay for It All

By ELLEN BROWN

The \$700 billion that was arm-twisted from Congress by Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson in October was evidently just the camel's nose under the tent. According to a November 24 *Bloomberg* report, the Paulson/Bernanke team is now prepared to pay \$7.76 trillion to rescue the financial system. Prepared to pay how? Congress has not raised its debt ceiling to anywhere near that level; but the approval of Congress, which originally voted

down the controversial \$700 billion bailout, is apparently no longer necessary. The door has been opened, and the Treasury Secretary and Fed Chairman feel they can now pledge whatever they want. Perhaps they are inching up a zero at a time just to see what the public's tolerance is for unrepayable debt. The new sum - \$7.76 trillion - represents \$25,000 for every citizen in the country, or half the value of everything produced in the nation last year; yet it's not clear that a mere half of our net worth

will rescue the financial system. One bankrupt bank after another has been bailed out with public money, in a futile effort to prevent a collapse of a massive multi-trillion dollar derivatives pyramid created by the banks. But according to the Comptroller of the Currency, US commercial banks now carry over \$180 trillion in derivatives on their books. The public is liable to be bankrupted before this mess is resolved.

see OOPS p. 4

Obama to Escalate Afghan War

By GABRIEL CARLYLE / PEACENEWS

Building on plans and programs set in motion by the outgoing Bush administration, president-elect Barack Obama intends to escalate the US war in Afghanistan, and to force Britain to sharply increase its troop strength there from 8,000 to 11,000 soldiers on the ground.

There are already plans to spend \$100 million next year expanding Kandahar airport to house 26 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft for a US army ODIN ("observe, detect, identify and

neutralize") task force of the kind already operating in Iraq.

The chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Michael Mullen has ordered that the map of the Afghanistan battle space be redrawn to include the tribal regions of western Pakistan, according to *The Washington Post* (11 November).

Mullen is likely to stay in place for at least the first year or two of Obama's presidency. By tradition, he can expect to be appointed for a second term as the president's top military adviser.

TIME TO FIGHT

What is Mullen thinking? According to *The Sunday Telegraph* (2 November), "American commanders have looked at all the options in a thorough review and... have decided that now is the time to fight." They are to present president Obama with plans to fight an intense five-year war against the guerrillas, "a war that commanders think looks winnable."

A senior NATO source in Kabul confirmed: "They [US generals] are simply not prepared to let the people responsible for 11 September

see ESCALATE p. 7

Syphilis, Lyme Disease and AIDS

A call for a re-evaluation of the AIDS dogma

By MATT SULLIVAN / RCFP

A paper about to be published in a scientific journal raises the intriguing possibility that many AIDS cases are in fact misdiagnosed cases of syphilis. The paper was authored by an International group of scientists led by National Academy of Sciences member Lynn Margulis, of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Wolfgang E. Krumbein, professor of Geomicrobiology in Oldenburg, Germany.

The paper, titled *Spirochete round bodies. Syphilis, Lyme disease & AIDS: Resurgence of "the great imitator,"* will be published in SYMBIOSIS V47, No.1, 2009.

John Scythes, one of the researchers on the paper, reports that he has not found a

single case of an immune suppressed patient (regardless of HIV status) who has died of complications of syphilis since the discovery of AIDS in the early 80s. The implications of this are staggering. It is simply not possible that syphilis stopped being fatal just as the new disease of AIDS came on the scene.

The researchers speculate that, because of its immune suppression effect and its ability to imitate other diseases, syphilis is being missed or misdiagnosed as AIDS. Now that improved tests for syphilis infection are available, the researchers urge a large scale investigation into the extent that this is happening.

In addition to Dr. Margulis, other members of the Berlin group include Andrew Maniotis

PhD. Department of Pathology, University of Illinois at Chicago; J. MacAllister, U. Mass Amherst; J. Scythes of the Community Initiative for AIDS Research, Ontario, Canada; O. Brorson, Tonsberg, Norway; J. Hall, U. Mass. Amherst; W.E. Krumbein, Carl von Ossietzky Universität, Oldenburg Germany; and M.J. Chapman, U. Mass, Amherst.

Ever since Luc Montagnier of the Institut Pasteur in Paris first described HIV virus-like particles isolated from "patient 1" in 1983, a close connection has been shown between AIDS and a history of syphilis exposure.

As with AIDS, patients infected with syphilis do not die from syphilis directly, but

see AIDS p. 2

Biggest Bailouts to Biggest Contributors: AIG, Ford, Freddie Mac, Citigroup

Newly analyzed reports reveal biggest underwriters of Dem. and Rep. conventions

FROM CENTER FOR RESPONSIVE POLITICS
WASHINGTON — Just weeks before they turned to the federal government for rescue, companies such as AIG, Ford, Citigroup and Freddie Mac were among the biggest sponsors of the summertime political conventions that nominated Barack Obama and John McCain for president, according to a new analysis by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics, in collaboration with the Campaign Finance Institute. CFI's full study can be found at www.cfnst.org.

Taking advantage of an unusual opportunity to support political parties and candidates without being limited by campaign finance

rules, these companies, along with some of the most politically influential sectors and industries in America—including pharmaceutical manufacturers, Wall Street and high-tech—paid out millions of dollars to underwrite the Democratic and Republican gatherings in Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

In total, private interests gave \$118 million to cover the two conventions, \$61 million to the host committee putting on the Democratic National Convention in Denver and \$57 million to the hosts of the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis-St. Paul—four times the \$16 million that each

party received from the federal government to support its convention. The conventions' private fundraising was reported to the Federal Election Commission in mid-October, long after the events themselves had ended.

Wealthy donors, major corporations, labor unions and other organizations could donate money they'd otherwise be prohibited from contributing because it went to the conventions' host committees, not directly to the parties or candidates. In each city, the host committee was largely responsible for organizing the political parties' multi-day infomercials that showcased their candidates for president and

see BAILOUT p. 4

HPV Vaccine: Significant Risks, Unproven Benefits

Gardasil Linked to 78 Outbreaks of Genital Warts and Severe Side-effects

By JOANNE WALDRON / NATURALNEWS

The Gardasil vaccine has been linked to 78 outbreaks of genital warts, according to an article in *The Fiji Times* entitled "Are our girls guinea pigs?" by Matelita Ragogo. That's right. In addition to all of the other adverse reactions to this controversial vaccine, children who receive it are subject to outbreaks of genital warts. Unfortunately, not too many doctors take the time to educate parents about some of these possible reactions prior to giving little girls this expensive jab.

DEATHS, MISCARRIAGES AND OTHER ADVERSE EVENTS

While genital warts are certainly disgusting, parents who think that genital warts are the worst possible adverse reaction to the vaccine should think again. According to Ragogo, as of August 14th, including the 78 outbreaks of genital warts, there have been 9,748 adverse events reported as per Judicial Watch, a non-profit watchdog group. Judicial Watch also reports that there have been 21 deaths, not including the deaths (by miscarriage) of 10 unborn babies.

VACCINE NO GUARANTEE AGAINST CELL ABNORMALITIES

"Hundreds of thousands of women who are vaccinated with Gardasil and get yearly pap testing will still get high-grade dysplasia (cell abnormalities)," Ragogo reports. It's not a cancer vaccine, as media hype may lead some people to believe. Ragogo also points out, "Gardasil has been shown to prevent precancerous lesions, but it has been impossible to ascertain whether it will actually prevent cancer because the testing period has been so short."

see VACCINE p. 2

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HPV Vaccine: Significant Risks, Unproven Benefits

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80% OF CERVICAL CANCER DEATHS HAPPEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

According to an article by the King County Health Department in Washington, the “average age of women newly diagnosed with cervical cancer is between 50 and 55 years,” and “risk of developing this cancer is very low among girls less than fifteen years old.” How long will any possible immunity from a vaccine given to a young girl last? No one really knows. So, young girls are being vaccinated for potential problems that they may experience 40 years down the road, if at all, at which time any possible immunity conferred from the vaccine may be long gone. Of course, according to an article by the World Health Organization (WHO), 80% of all cervical cancer deaths happen in developing countries.

DIETS LOW IN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES INCREASE CERVICAL CANCER RISK

The King County Health Department also points out that of the various risk factors for cervical cancer, many can be controlled. One risk factor for cervical cancer is HPV. (Hmmm... does this mean that girls who get the vaccine and develop genital warts are now actually increasing their risk for developing cervical cancer?) Ordinarily, getting HPV is not exactly a

huge risk for girls that are not having sex. Other risk factors include smoking, HIV, race (African American, Latino, Vietnamese and Native American women are more likely to die from cervical cancer), reduced access to health care, and (possibly) the use of oral contraceptives. The article also states, “Diets low in fruits and vegetables are associated with an increased risk of cervical cancer and several other cancers.”

COULD THE VACCINE CAUSE CANCER, GENOTOXICITY OR INFERTILITY?

Another concern about the HPV vaccine is that it has not even been evaluated for its potential to actually cause cancer. Nor has the vaccine been evaluated for its ability to cause genotoxicity (DNA damage). Moreover, it is also unknown as to whether or not this vaccine could possibly cause future infertility. For all of these reasons, and many others that have been previously reported, it would be prudent for all parents to think twice before subjecting their children to this “mystery jab.”

Joanne Waldron is a computer scientist with a passion for writing and sharing health-related news and information with others. She runs the Naked Wellness: The Gentle Health Revolution forum, which is devoted to achieving radiant health, well-being, and longevity.

Syphilis, Lyme Disease and AIDS

A call for a re-evaluation of the AIDS dogma

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rather suffer from opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, or dysentery.

Syphilis was once known by doctors as “the great imitator” because of its immune suppression effects and its ability to mimic the symptoms of many other diseases. If syphilis and other spirochete diseases are being misdiagnosed as AIDS, that would explain why the number of reported syphilis deaths has plummeted since the introduction of AIDS.

Many human infections such as Lyme disease, syphilis, anthrax and many others are caused by a class of bacteria called spirochetes. These bacteria are characterized by a spiral free swimming form, and by the ability to revert into a cyst form when subjected to threat such as heat, starvation or antibiotic attack. This ability to form cysts (also called “round bodies”) makes spirochete diseases extremely resistant to treatment.

Contrary to the prevailing wisdom that syphilis is easily treated with antibiotics, the disease is frequently impervious to antibiotic treatment except in its earliest stages. Far from eradicating syphilis, antibiotics have driven the disease underground.

Until recently, the only way to definitively tell if someone had the syphilis germ, was high magnification microscopy by an expert microscopist. Since this is not usually done for patients in a clinical setting, reported cures of either syphilis or Lyme disease are suspect.

Spirochetes are an ancient form of bacteria. The oldest spirochete in the fossil record was discovered in the intestine of a 20 million year old termite preserved in amber.

Scientists know that Lyme and syphilis

are caused by spirochete bacteria because the spirochete is able to cause the symptoms of the disease when it is introduced into a healthy test subject. This observation is one of the steps needed to verify that an infectious agent is the cause of a disease. Called Koch’s Postulates, the four steps require that the agent must:

1. be found in all cases of the disease;
2. be isolated from the host;
3. cause the same disease when injected into a healthy host, and
4. then be found growing again in the newly infected host.

While syphilis and Lyme bacteria meet the test of Koch’s postulates, HIV fails all four.

In the case of both Lyme and syphilis, it is very likely that the disease-causing bacteria establishes a permanent human-spirochete symbiosis soon after infection. The symptoms of the disease vary greatly and may be easily overlooked or misinterpreted.

Most spirochetes are harmless, free swimming species in nature, unrelated to any disease, therefore unknown to medical science. Animals and spirochetes have co-existed for millions of years and have co-evolved to the point that they have a symbiotic relationship, a partnership. It is theorized that some components of mammalian cells such as sperm tails and cilia are descended from these ancient bacteria. If this theory is correct, spirochete remnants have dwelled in stable symbiotic partnership inside animal cells for about 1 billion years.

Over eons of time, integrated symbiotic bacteria (which include Lyme and syphilis as well as many other non-pathogenic bacteria) have lost the ability to live independently. They have shed much of their own DNA and have become dependent

on the gene products of the human host.

Scientists call this relationship “cyclical symbiosis” and have shown that in this type of symbiosis, virus-like particles are created as part of the integration process between the symbiotic partners. These virus-like particles are not the disease-causing agents themselves; they are simply packets of genetic information being exchanged between co-evolved symbionts. Reverse transcriptases and virus-like particles are abundant in such cyclical symbioses.

Is it possible that HIV and other retroviruses are not disease-causing agents at all, but are rather genetic messages being passed between symbiotic partner cells? If so, that would explain why AIDS vaccine trials failed so spectacularly. It would also explain why HIV fails every one of Koch’s postulates for a disease causing agent.

Is it possible that the conventional HIV-AIDS medical orthodoxy is wrong? That certainly would explain why we are no closer to a cure today than we were 25 years ago when AIDS was first discovered; nor have we experienced the long predicted “AIDS pandemic.” There were approximately 1 million AIDS cases in 1990 and there are roughly that number today.

But the implications for public health are far more serious. The ongoing disintegration of the conventional medical theories about HIV-AIDS demonstrates that the National Institute of Health and the Food and Drug Administration have failed the public spectacularly yet again. It also means that thousands of patients are being erroneously treated with toxic, potentially deadly, AIDS drugs.

The entire HIV-AIDS paradigm must be re-evaluated.

Matt Sullivan is the managing editor of the Rock Creek Free Press in Washington, DC.

Bush and Rove Launch Legacy Project Attempt to Rewrite History

LEGACY from p. 1

how Bush whiffs on the revisionist script when he is supposed to second-guess the decision to invade:

CHARLIE GIBSON: You’ve always said there’s no do-overs as President. If you had one?

GEORGE BUSH: I don’t know — the biggest regret of all the presidency has to have been the intelligence failure in Iraq. A lot of people put their reputations on the line and said the weapons of mass destruction is a reason to remove Saddam Hussein. It wasn’t just people in my administration; a lot of members in Congress, prior to my arrival in Washington D.C., during the debate on Iraq, a lot of leaders of nations around the world were all looking at the same intelligence. And, you know, that’s not a do-over, but I wish the intelligence had been different, I guess.

GIBSON: If the intelligence had been right, would there have been an Iraq war?

BUSH: Yes, because Saddam Hussein was unwilling to let the inspectors go in to determine whether or not the U.N. resolutions were being upheld. In other words, if he had had weapons of mass destruction, would there have been a war? Absolutely.

GIBSON: No, if you had known he didn’t.

BUSH: Oh, I see what you’re saying. You know, that’s an interesting question. That is a do-over that I can’t do. It’s hard for me to speculate.

There he is caught in amber: Bush, the pathological dissembler, as presented by Mark Crispin Miller in his brilliant book published in 2002, *The Bush Dyslexicon*. When Gibson asks the money question — “If the intelligence had been right, would there have been an Iraq war?” Bush responds with a falsehood he’s told so many times that it is now too-often taken as the truth. “Yes,” Bush says brightly, “because Saddam Hussein was unwilling to let the inspectors go in to determine whether or not the U.N. resolutions were being upheld.”

In reality, Saddam Hussein allowed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors into Iraq in December 2002, four months before the war began. The inspectors destroyed Iraq’s remaining stockpiles of al Samoud missiles in early 2003, a move that independent analysts saw as a serious effort by Saddam to disarm in order to avoid war. On March 7, Hans Blix, the head of the IAEA inspection team, told the UN that “at this juncture we are able to perform professional, non-nocturnal inspections all over Iraq and to increase aerial surveys.” Immediately after Blix’ report, however, Bush warned the inspectors to prepare to leave Iraq. Ten days later, he ordered them out of the country. The invasion began three days later, on March 20.

Of course, Gibson makes no effort to

challenge Bush on these facts, in part because Bush immediately changes the subject, commandeering the interview by asking himself a question he’d prefer to answer: “In other words,” Bush says, by way of introducing his self-interrogation, “if [Saddam] had had weapons of mass destruction, would there have been a war? Absolutely.”

But when Gibson asks the correct question a second time, Bush responds with utter guile, “Oh, I see what you’re saying,” and then dismisses it with, “That is a do-over that I can’t do” [because it would mean admitting I was wrong]. He finally shuffles away from the subject, muttering, “It’s hard for me to speculate,” even though he’d been speculating quite easily five seconds earlier when he wished “the intelligence had been different, I guess.”

In the debate in Manhattan the next night, Karl Rove sticks to the revisionist script:

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: The question is for Mr Rove. Had the intelligence been accurate prior to the invasion of Iraq, would the invasion have still taken place, in your view?

KARL ROVE: No. In the aftermath of 9/11 the concern was about a tyrant guilty of enormous human rights abuses, but possessed with weapons of mass destruction and an intention to use them as a state sponsor of terror. Absent that, I suspect the administration’s course would have been to work to find more creative ways to constrain him than he’d been constrained in the 1990s. The president did have an enormous concern about the human rights abuses under Saddam Hussein. He also had a concern about the deterioration of the credibility of the United Nations, which had passed sixteen resolutions calling upon him to abide by the outcome and the agreements that he made in the aftermath of the ‘91, of the first Gulf War, that he’d not lived up to. But absent weapons of mass destruction, no, I don’t think there would have been an invasion.

The newly revised version of Bush’s role in ordering the invasion stands in stark contrast with what Bush told Brit Hume of Fox “News” two years ago this month:

BRIT HUME: Can you say today that if you had known then what you know now about the weapons, that you would have made the same decision.

BUSH: I said it today, and I said it at the last speech I gave. And I’ve said it throughout the [2004 presidential] campaign to the American people. I said I made the right decision. Knowing what I know today, I would have still made that decision.

HUME: Now if you had this — if the weapons had been out of the equation, because the intelligence did not conclude that he had them, it was still the right call?

BUSH: Absolutely.

In fact, there were indications a year prior the invasion that Bush was already “absolutely” determined to invade Iraq at all costs, and that the intelligence on Iraq’s weapons was being rewritten to support this objective. According to the Downing Street Memo (DSM), a secret document prepared for the British government by their security officials in Washington, in the spring of 2002, “Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.”

Bush’s long-standing determination to invade Iraq has been confirmed by former Bush staffers, including Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill, national security team member Richard Clarke and, most recently, Press Secretary Scott McClellan.

The rollout of the legacy project this week is likely a preview of what’s to come as Bush, Rove and the other dead-enders spend the rest of his retirement years falsifying and re-arguing Bush’s record until the truth is upended and facts are blurred beyond recognition.

Unfortunately, this strategy is likely to work. American memories are famously short, for one thing, and, for another, propagandizing is something Bush actually does well. But mainly Bush will succeed in reframing his presidency because no serious efforts are in the works to investigate, much less litigate, his record of misdeeds and misjudgments.

With no official investigative findings or verdict hanging over his head, and using his \$500 million “freedom institute” in Dallas as a platform, Bush is free to spend the rest of his life reinventing his record and recasting his role in its disasters as Victim-in-Chief. In fact, the only thing that stands in the way of the Bush legacy project is the same force that hobbled his administration in its second term: the legions of ever-vigilant truth-squadders out there, armed with the facts

Jon Ponder lives in south Florida. Jon founded Pensito Review, an internet review of politics and media, in 2005.



Official Warnings Issued: Eli Lilly’s ADHD Drug Strattera Causes Psychosis

By JANNE LARSSON/TRANSWORLDNEWS Stockholm, Sweden - Preventive Psychiatry E-Newsletter # 346

Official Warnings Issued: Eli Lilly’s ADHD drug Strattera Causes Psychosis, Hallucinations, Mania and Agitation.

BigPharma’s latest psychostimulant drug is Strattera. Its manufacturer, Eli Lilly, has now changed the label for the drug in Europe to include warnings that Strattera CAUSES “hallucinations, delusional thinking, mania or agitation in children and adolescents without a prior history of psychotic illness or mania ... at usual doses.”

Please note that Strattera is CAUSING these symptoms – that these “symptoms” seen in children are drug induced, that they in actual fact are signs of drug induced brain dysfunction.

It took almost THREE years of foot dragging before the medical authorities in Europe finally decided that Eli Lilly should issue warnings about psychotic reactions in the label for Strattera. But now the warnings are finally out.

The story leading up to these warnings and links to background data can be found in the article “The ADHD drug Strattera – actions needed now”, from January 2008

at the website: JANNEL.SE. You may also read an article about death due to Strattera at the same website.

The new warnings about the causal role for Strattera in inducing mania, agitation and psychosis with hallucinations, can be read at <http://emc.medicines.org.uk/emc/assets/c/html/displaydoc.asp?documentid=14482>.

In the US, famous psychiatrists like Dr. Joseph Biederman have convinced doctors that the manic states seen in children receiving ADHD drugs (like Concerta, Adderall and Strattera) are signs of “bipolar disorder” – not signs of drug induced brain dysfunction. This has meant that children in the US, instead of being taken off the dangerous drugs are given the most toxic substances available in psychiatry – neuroleptics (so called antipsychotics like Risperdal, Zyprexa and Abilify).

These new warnings in Europe for Strattera, together with all exposures of the fraudulent affairs of Biederman and colleagues, should finally convince doctors about the facts and what needs to be done – that the harmed children need to be taken off the drugs under careful supervision.

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A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Bush Regime Declares Itself Above the Law

By PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS

The US government does not have a monopoly on hypocrisy, but no other government can match the hypocrisy of the US government.

It is now well documented and known all over the world that the US government tortured detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo and that the US government has had people kidnapped and “renditioned” — that is, transported to Third World countries, such as Egypt, to be tortured.

Also documented and well known is the fact that the US Department of Justice provided written memos justifying the torture of detainees. One torture advocate who wrote the DOJ memos that gave the green light to the Bush regime’s use of torture is John Yoo, a Vietnamese immigrant who somehow secured a US Justice Department appointment and a tenured professorship at the University of California-Berkeley’s Boalt Hall School of Law. Yoo is the best case against immigration that I know.

Members of Berkeley’s city council believe that Yoo should be charged with war crimes. The US government has charged lesser offenders than Yoo with war crimes. Yoo helped the DOJ achieve the Bush regime’s goal of finding a way around the torture prohibitions of both US statutory law and the Geneva Conventions.

The way around the law that Yoo provided for the sadistic Bush regime was closed down by the US Supreme Court, which voided Yoo’s arguments, and Yoo’s torture memo was rescinded by the Department of Justice. Nevertheless, Yoo’s obvious constitutional incompetence, which in Yoo’s case is total, has not affected his position as professor of constitutional law at Berkeley. Can you imagine the harm Yoo is doing by teaching future cadres of lawyers and government officials that torture is consistent with the Constitution and the law of the land? How many of us will suffer from this ignorant man’s teachings?

But I digress. Even as the US government was torturing people, the US government was prosecuting the son of Charles Taylor, the former ruler of Liberia, for torturing political opponents of his father’s government. The US government did not employ the Yoo torture memo to justify Liberia’s use of torture against those who wished to overthrow the Liberian government or commit terror against it. The US government’s position is that Liberia’s government had no right to use torture to defend itself. Only an “indispensable nation” such as the United States has the right to torture people who are imagined to threaten it.

I use the word “imagined” because approximately 99 percent of the detainees tortured by America were totally innocent people picked up at random or sold to the stupid Americans by warlords as “terrorists.” (The US government offered rewards for terrorists, like the bounty offered for outlaws in the “wild west.” The result was that warlords in Afghanistan and Pakistan grabbed whoever was not one of them and sold their captives to Americans as “terrorists.”)

According to Carrie Johnson, a *Washington Post* staff writer, on Oct. 30, 2008, a federal jury in Miami convicted Charles Taylor’s son, Chuckie, of torture. Chuckie will be sentenced by the indispensable Americans in January for torture, conspiracy, and firearms violations. He may spend the rest of his life in an American prison.

While Chuckie’s trial was underway, the Bush regime was torturing people.

The *Washington Post* writes that Chuckie’s conviction is “the first test of an American law that gives prosecutors the power to bring charges for acts of torture committed in foreign lands.” In other words, US law against torture applies to the entire world, to every other country, except the United States. The hubris is unimaginable — no country can torture except the United States.

Anyone else who tortures gets life, or in the case of Saddam Hussein, gets hung by the neck until dead.

Isn’t it great to be an American? Our laws don’t apply to us, only to every other nation. This is what it means to be the moral light of the world, the unipower, the salt of the earth.

Neither poor Carrie Johnson nor her editors at *The Washington Post* see the irony or the paradox. Johnson writes in *The Washington Post* that the US prosecutors “accused Taylor of taking part in atrocities and directing subordinates to torture victims using ... electrical devices from 1999 to 2002.” That charge practically overlaps in time with George W. Bush’s, or Dick Cheney’s, or Yoo’s, or the DOJ’s, or Donald Rumsfeld’s, or whoever’s direction to subordinates to torture people detained by Americans at Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, and in various CIA rendition sites. By now, everyone in the world has seen the photograph of the hooded Iraqi with electrical wires attached, standing on that box in Abu Ghraib.

If only American laws applied to the American government. Then, the criminals who have been in charge for eight years could be prosecuted for their extreme violation of US laws. But, of course, the great moral American government is far above the law. American law only applies to dispensable nations. America is not answerable to law, not to its own law, and not to international law. US Attorney General Michael Mukasey affirmed that the US government is above all law when he told the Senate Judiciary Committee that there would be no investigation or prosecution of those Bush regime officials who authorized torture and those who carried out the sadistic acts.

The American government, the government of the great indispensable nation, has a free pass. The strong do what they will. The weak suffer what they must.

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.

Slavery, American Style Must Go!

By SHERWOOD ROSS

Who says there are no slaves in America? The greatest domestic issue facing President-elect Obama is not the bailout of the bankers and insurers but the task of lifting tens of millions of hard-working American wage-slaves out of dire poverty. These are the folks who hold one- and sometimes two or even three low-paying jobs, work their tails off 60 hours or more a week, and are still stuck in poverty on payday with no hope of climbing out.

Indeed, if enough workers were getting paid a living wage Wall Street and Detroit would not find themselves begging Washington for billions. Homeowners would have enough money to pay their mortgages and buy new cars. Today’s crisis is the bitter payback for decades of corporate greed. As former Labor Secretary Robert Reich has written, “Most of what’s been earned in America” in the past 35 years “has gone to the richest 5 percent.” Result: 37 million Americans are said officially to live in poverty but Catholic Charities of Saint Paul-Minneapolis notes a more realistic accounting puts the poor at 50 million.

During the Bush regime, five million more Americans slid into poverty, and the unemployment figure, charitably put at 6.5% (but actually much higher counting discouraged workers,) hit a 14-year high in October. And at least five million people are working part-time because they can’t find full-time jobs. What’s more, those fully employed have seen their overtime pay disappear and their working hours shrink as demand tanks for their goods and services. Each day, thousands of pink slips are being handed out.

Poverty is so virulent, there are 18,000 children sleeping in homeless shelters in New York City every night and 1.7-million New Yorkers are eligible for food stamps. “Twenty-five percent of all families with children in New York City — that’s 1.5 million New Yorkers — are trying to make it on incomes that are below the poverty threshold established by the federal government,” writes Bob Herbert of *The New York Times*. Nationally, 21 percent of US Hispanics and 24 percent of African-Americans subsist in poverty.

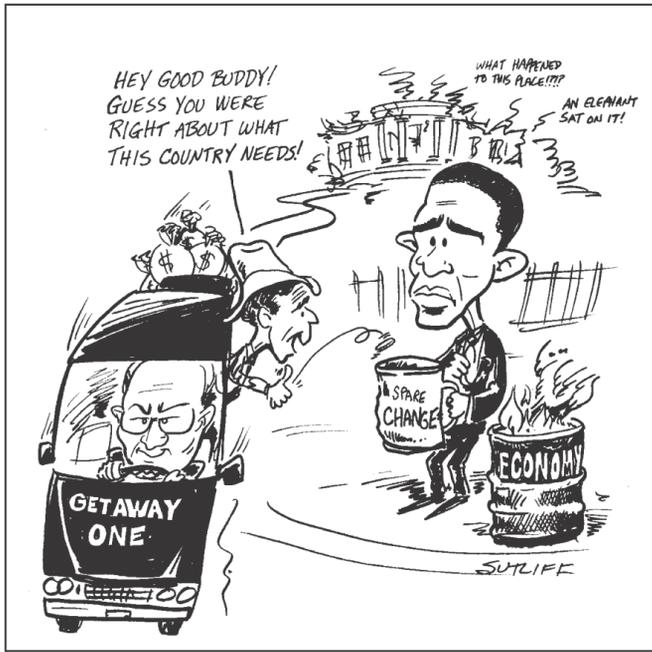
The great slide into poverty and ruin has long been underway. “The underlying problem has been building for decades,” Reich says. “America’s median hourly wage is barely higher than it was 35 years ago, adjusted for inflation. The income of a man in his 30s is now 12 percent below that of a man his age three decades ago.”

Indeed, USA employs millions of wage slaves, whether illegal immigrants in the vegetable fields of Florida or native-born serfs in the needle trades of Los Angeles (currently reviving as their substandard wages are now comparable to what coolies earn in Chinese factories.) Few alien toilers, who are blatantly exploited and work under the sword of deportation, dare to protest their plight to Labor Department authorities that, under the Bush regime, are deliberately understaffed and commonly indifferent to workers’ complaints.

As the *New York Times* editorialized, the Labor Department “has tilted toward employers and failed to properly enforce labor laws.” The Government Accounting Office found Labor’s Wage and Hour Division “failed to adequately investigate complaints that workers were not paid the minimum wage, were denied mandatory overtime or were not paid their last paychecks,” the editorial said. Labor unions today can claim only 10 million members, a tiny fraction of the work force, and multitudes of workers have swallowed corporate propaganda that unions are bad for them even though union workers typically get paid 30 percent more!

Ever more Americans — as mounting credit card debt figures reveal — are unable to make ends meet at their minimum-wage jobs, and are, in fact, wage slaves drowning in a rising sea of red ink, with no prospect of good union jobs to rescue them. Organized labor has been trampled nearly to death on a rigged playing field that denies unions a fair chance to organize. The quickest way to get fired is to ask one of your co-workers to vote in a union. Tens of thousands have enlisted for the military sign-up bonus and job training because it’s the only job and training package they can find. Military recruiters know of their plight

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Unlimited Pardon Power and Five Other Impossible Things Before Breakfast

By DAVID SWANSON

Alice squinted as she peered up through the rabbit hole at sunlight wondering how many books she might have to stand on to be able to climb back out. She hadn’t even begun to make up her mind when she was completely distracted by a large elephant on a motor scooter who grabbed her with his trunk and stuck her on the back seat as he sped off down a dark gravel path.

The strange thing about the motor scooter was that it was a rental, and the elephant explained that he had rented it in a deal involving “unlimited mileage.” That was written down very legally in a signed contract, so naturally the elephant had decided to drive backwards in time in order to put on as many miles as possible before next Tuesday. This meant both that Alice was getting younger every mile they progressed and that the tires had long since worn off, and the scooter was riding on bare wheels now.

Alice was unable to say anything back to the elephant as they rode and he chatted, but before long he stopped in front of an all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant, and they both got out. Alice didn’t know how they’d gotten there, since her kidnapping by the elephant would be happening in the future, but she knew that she was hungry. Alice intended to take full advantage of the

all-you-can-eat arrangement. She filled up three plates with food before she was full, but the elephant out did her. He ate most of the available food without bothering about a plate, and then ate the stack of plates too, before starting on the chairs and tables. Tragically, the elephant also ate the cooks and waiters, so the food stopped coming.

After that, the elephant was arrested and put on trial, but acquitted of cannibalism on the grounds that the restaurant had advertised “All You Can Eat” in three-foot letters. Alice didn’t stick around for the trial, but bought an unlimited travel ticket with which she rode around on busses for the next four years until she was back to her previous age.

When Alice emerged from the rabbit hole, she found that her family and all of the townspeople she’d known had been slaughtered by White House staffers following the instructions of the president. The murderers didn’t face a trial as the elephant had, because the president simply pardoned them before anyone even had a chance to suggest it.

“But wait,” said Alice, “how can he pardon people for crimes he told them to commit? Once he’s done that, there are no more crimes and no more laws. So there must, then, be no more pardons.”

Alice was overheard making this

exclamation by a creature stranger than any she’d ever before encountered, a creature called a lawyer. The lawyer explained that the president’s pardon power was unlimited. The lawyer knew this to be so because no court had ever limited the president’s pardon power.

Alice asked the lawyer his name five times before understanding that it was John Yoo, and that he wasn’t insisting on knowing her name first. Yoo told Alice that she had much to be thankful for. “First of all,” said Yoo, “we killed everyone while you were away. Second of all, we’ve united the land, or what’s left of it — all the lawyers agree about unlimited pardon powers. And third of all, you should be very pleased that you have no testicles.”

This last remark confused Alice, but the chainsaw didn’t. She turned and ran as fast as she could, and out of the corner of her eye she caught an image of George W. Bush in a priest’s robes chasing after her and Yoo and shouting: “I’m gonna pardon you, Yoo! I’m gonna pardon you, Yoo, but you have to let me watch her suffer!”

David Swanson is a Washington peace activist and founder of After Downing Street, a nonpartisan coalition working to expose the lies that create and sustain wars and occupations and to hold accountable those responsible.

The Grinches of Wall Street

By ROSEMARIE JACKOWSKI

‘Twas the night before Christmas
And through the Senate and House
The money was flowing
To each Wall Street louse

The hedge fund managers and CEOs
Had told their tales of financial woes
Their stories were naughty - not very nice
They told of private jets and gluttonous vice

Meanwhile on Main Street the people were sad
No one could explain why things had gotten so bad

Some said the cause was market speculation
Others said Capitalism was the right explanation

Santa’s elves should create a People’s State
End all war, poverty, and hate
A Single Payer System would keep us healthy
Enough food for all - no need to be wealthy

At the shelter, the children were snuggled in their beds
As nightmares of foreclosure danced through their heads
A holiday miracle is what we need -
On second thought - we just might have to secede

Rosemarie Jackowski is an advocacy journalist living in Vermont.

Do We Still Need the Bill of Rights?

By JACOB G. HORNBERGER

There are two important points to remember about the Bill of Rights. First, the Bill of Rights does not give any rights to the American people, and, second, the Bill of Rights was intended to protect us from our own federal government.

Those two points often shock ordinary Americans. Throughout their schooling, especially in public schools, they gradually come to believe that their rights come from the Constitution and, more specifically, from the Bill of Rights. Why else would the police read us our “constitutional rights”? Why would the Bill of Rights be called that if it did not actually give us our rights?

I experienced this mind set during a speech I once delivered to about 150 students in a public high school. I began my speech by declaring that the Bill of Rights does not give anyone freedom of speech, and I asked whether anyone disagreed. Immediately, I was met by loud challenges. “Haven’t you ever heard of the First Amendment?” they asked. I stood my ground until finally one student declared, “Mr. Hornberger is right. The Bill of Rights does not give anyone rights. Instead it protects the exercise of our rights.”

Even more shocking to many

Americans is the notion that the Bill of Rights is intended to protect our rights from officials and personnel of the federal government. The federal government, after all, is considered our provider and protector, is it not? Why in the world would we need protection from our provider and protector? Moreover, in America everyone knows that we are the government, right? Why would we need protection from ourselves?

I experienced this mind set soon after 9/11. A woman came up to me after a speech I delivered and told me how grateful we should be that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights protect us from the terrorists. She was referring to al Qaeda.

The Bill of Rights should actually have been called a Bill of Prohibitions because that is what it is; a list of actions that federal officials are prohibited from undertaking and a list of guarantees that federal officials are required to honor.

Keep in mind that while we, the people, are expected to obey laws enacted by the federal government, federal officials are expected to obey our law — the law of the Constitution — the law that the citizenry imposed on them as a necessary condition to bringing the federal government into existence. That’s why the Constitution is called the highest law in the land — it is a law that

federal officials are supposed to obey.

This principle is often confusing to Americans because in their minds the federal government and the American people are one and the same. Thus, it befuddles them when someone treats the federal government and the private sector as two completely separate and distinct entities, as our ancestors did in the Bill of Rights.

We witness this phenomenon often with respect to foreign policy. After the 9/11 attacks, for example, many Americans simply could not process the thought that foreigners could retaliate for the policies of the US government while simultaneously carrying the utmost respect for the American people’s traditions, customs, and values. For such Americans, the federal government and the American people are one and the same. For them, hatred for the federal government automatically constitutes hatred of America.

Ironically, many foreigners do not conflate the federal government and the American people. Many years ago, while I was traveling in Cuba, one of the things that amazed me about the Cuban people was how nice, courteous, and genuine they are. I asked a cab driver, “Why is everyone so nice to me, given what my government has done to them with its

see BILL OF RIGHTS p. 8

Biggest Bailout Payouts to Contributors : AIG, Ford, Freddie Mac, Citigroup

BAILOUT from p. 1

vice president. Considered a lingering form of "soft money," convention contributions allow those who are otherwise prohibited from giving to federal campaigns to show their support through unlimited donations and in-kind contributions (Corporations, labor unions and other organizations are prohibited from contributing directly from their treasuries to federal candidates and political parties. Individuals may contribute, but in limited amounts).

The largest of the convention donors provided the bulk of the funds. As Campaign Finance Institute finds in its report, the host committee for the GOP convention raised 87 percent of its money from organizations and individuals that gave \$250,000 or more, and just 15 donors accounted for 44 percent of the funding, each contributing between \$1 million and \$3 million. The Democrats' host committee collected 72 percent of its funds from donors giving at least \$250,000, and nearly a quarter came from a dozen donors giving at least \$1 million.

Despite, or perhaps because of, signs that the nation's economy and their businesses were on the decline, companies in the finance, insurance and real estate sector gave a total of \$24.6 million toward the two conventions, the Center for Responsive Politics found. That was more than any other sector. The finance sector slightly favored the Republicans' event, giving \$12.7 million, compared to the \$11.9 million it gave to the Democrats' host committee.

Companies in the news now were convention sponsors

Embattled insurance giant American International Group (AIG), which received an \$85 billion loan from the government just weeks after the GOP convention, gave \$750,000 to each gathering. And AIG isn't the only high-profile company that sought a handout from taxpayers after writing a big check toward the summer's political gatherings. Others included Citigroup (which spent a total of \$600,000 on the conventions), Goldman Sachs (which spent \$505,000), Ford Motor Co. (\$100,000 to each convention) and Bank of America (which spent \$100,000 entirely on the Democratic convention). The federal government took over Freddie Mac just weeks after the mortgage buyer split one half of a million dollars between the two conventions.

"If the executives who have come to Washington, hat in hand, looked familiar to members of Congress, maybe it's because they met over the summer at the conventions," said Sheila Krumholz, executive director of the Center for Responsive Politics. "The conventions provided representatives of major corporations and industries with many opportunities to interact with Washington's decision-makers. Those conversations may have paid off just weeks later, when the government started handing out money

to those companies and industries that are struggling."

Joining the finance sector, pharmaceutical manufacturers, computer and internet companies, and labor unions also helped produce the conventions. The drug industry spent more than any other industry, giving \$9.8 million, split nearly evenly between the two parties. While pharma seemed to hedge its bets, computer and Internet companies, along with individuals in the industry, favored Republicans, giving their convention \$4.1 million compared to \$3.1 million to Democrats. This bucked the trend of the industry's contributions directly to the candidates, where Barack Obama out-raised John McCain among high-tech donors seven to one. Unions, representing government employees, which ranked among the top 15 industries underwriting the conventions, were the most partisan, giving all of their \$2.7 million to the Democrats' gathering in Denver.

"By taking advantage of the false distinction between a political party and the committee hosting the party's convention, unions were able to support the Democratic Party in a way that hasn't been allowed since the days of soft money, when labor was among the biggest givers," Krumholz said.

Challenging convention organizers' insistence that contributions were merely a form of non-partisan civic boosterism is this finding by the Campaign Finance Institute: Most of the money came from organizations and individuals based outside of the convention city or state. Only 15 percent of the Denver host committee's fundraising from donors of \$100,000 or more and 36 percent of those supporting the Minneapolis-St. Paul event came from in-state. Furthermore, as CFI's previous reports demonstrated, those who actually solicit their contributions are partisan federal and state elected officials, donors and fundraisers, who promise larger donors privileged access to leading federal elected officials before, during and after the convention.

Wealthy individuals use foundations, living trusts to contribute

Nonprofit organizations, which, in this case, mostly entailed the charitable foundations of wealthy individuals, were also big convention sponsors, contributing a total of \$8.4 million — more than any industry except for pharmaceuticals and securities and investment. The biggest giver among nonprofits was the Lincy Foundation, controlled by billionaire casino and auto investor Kirk Kerkorian, which gave a total of \$3.5 million to the two conventions.

Six-figure donations from individual donors were common, and the donors tended to also be active campaign contributors, giving directly to their preferred political party and its candidates. In total, donors who paid more than \$100,000 to underwrite the conventions

have given an additional \$15 million since 2005 to all federal candidates, parties and PACs, with Democrats collecting a sixty-nine percent share.

Similarly, the employees and PACs at the companies that paid for the conventions have given a total of \$273 million in federal contributions since 2005, with 54 percent of that going to Democrats. The companies, organizations and unions that funded the conventions have also spent \$1.6 billion in the last four years on federal lobbying.

Celebrating its 25th year in 2008, the Center for Responsive Politics is the nation's premier research group tracking money in US politics and its effect on elections and public policy. The nonpartisan, nonprofit Center aims to create a more educated voter, an involved citizenry and a more responsive government. CRP's award-winning website, OpenSecrets.org, is the most comprehensive resource for campaign contributions, lobbying data and analysis available anywhere. For other organizations and news media, CRP's exclusive data powers their online features tracking money in politics. CRP relies on support from a combination of foundation grants and individual contributions. The Center accepts no contributions from businesses, labor unions or trade associations.



“Oops, We Meant \$7 TRILLION!” What Hank and Ben Are Up to and How They Plan to Pay for It All

OOPS from p. 1

On top of the \$700 billion initially extorted from Congress, an additional \$2 trillion in loans and commitments has already been made by the Federal Reserve and the Treasury. Yet that wall of money has not kept the imperiled banks from collapsing. Citigroup was one of the nine lucky recipients of Paulson's largesse in October, when he set out to recapitalize the banks by trading dollars for shares. The bank received \$25 billion from the Treasury; yet this handout was insufficient to keep its stock from dropping below \$4 a share. Citigroup was then bailed out by the Treasury to the tune of another \$20 billion, along with a commitment to guarantee \$306 billion in toxic assets on its books. That equals half of the \$700 billion bailout, just for one bank; yet Citigroup's books, which sport derivative bets of \$37 trillion, won't look much better than before.

Meanwhile, commentators are scratching their heads over where the money is supposed to come from to pay for all this. Congress has not approved these multi-trillion dollar sums, and the Federal Reserve does not show them on its books. Some clues to this mystery came on November 25, when according to *The New York Times*:

"In the first of two new actions ..., the Treasury and the Fed said they would create a \$200 billion program to lend money against securities backed by car loans, student loans, credit card debt, and even small-business loans. The Treasury would contribute \$20 billion to the so-called Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility and assume responsibility for any losses up to \$20 billion. The Federal Reserve would lend the new entity as much as \$180 billion. The new facility would then lend money at low rates to companies that post collateral based on securities backed by consumer debt or business loans."

It appears that the \$20 billion in Treasury money will be serving as the "reserves" to create \$200 billion in credit on the books of the Fed and its network of banks. Ten to one is the reserve requirement established by the Federal Reserve for private bank lending under the "fractional reserve" system. The New York Fed has now deleted its earlier discussion of this process from its website, but as it explained the money-creating process in 2004:

"Reserve requirements ... are computed as percentages of deposits that banks must hold as vault cash or on deposit at a Federal Reserve Bank. ... As of June 2004, the reserve requirement was 10% on transaction deposits [deposits immediately available to depositors]. ... If the reserve requirement is 10%, for example, a bank that receives a \$100 deposit may lend out \$90 of that deposit. If the borrower then writes a check to someone who deposits the \$90, the bank receiving that deposit can lend out \$81. As the process continues, the banking system can expand the initial deposit of \$100 into a maximum of

\$1,000 of money (\$100+\$90+\$81+\$72.90+ ... = \$1,000)."

In a revealing booklet called "Modern Money Mechanics," the Chicago Federal Reserve detailed how fractional reserve lending allows money to "expand." The booklet is now out of print, perhaps because it revealed too much; but it is still available on the Internet. On page 11 of the booklet is a helpful chart showing that the original deposit is not actually "lent" but remains in the bank throughout the expansion process. What is lent is an additional sum created on the bank's books valued at 90 percent of the original deposit. Then another sum is lent that is 90 percent of the second deposit, and so forth, until the total sum generated is 10 times the original deposit, with tidy sums collected in interest at each step along the way.

The November 25 *New York Times* article continued:

"The Treasury secretary, Henry M. Paulson Jr., made it clear that the new lending facility was just a 'starting point' and could be expanded to many other kinds of debt, like commercial mortgage-backed securities. ... It was the first time that the Fed and the Treasury have stepped in to finance consumer debt. The \$200 billion program comes close to being a government bank."

A government bank that makes credit available to all qualified borrowers is not a bad idea. It would seem to be a more useful idea than manipulating interest rates, the conventional tool used by the Federal Reserve to regulate the money supply. When Paul Volcker raised interest rates to 20% in 1980, he bankrupted much of the Third World; and when Alan Greenspan lowered the short-term interest rate to 1% in 2001, he precipitated the housing and derivatives bubbles that are bankrupting the US today. A government-owned bank that put credit into the economy in an open, accountable and impartial way could be just what the doctor ordered. The problem is, the Federal Reserve isn't government-owned (it is owned by a consortium of private banks); and it is not distributing the public credit openly and impartially. The Fed has kept the recipients of its largesse largely secret (information *Bloomberg News* is currently seeking through litigation under the Freedom of Information Act). However, it is clearly favoring its banking cronies over consumers.

Note that the "consumer debt" the Fed is now supposedly financing does not consist of loans directly to consumers. The loans are to lenders holding consumer debt ("companies that post collateral based on securities backed by consumer debt or business loans"). Like with subprime mortgages, lenders have pushed credit cards and student loans onto anyone who would take them, because the lenders had no intention of keeping those risky loans on their books. They intended to package them up as "securities" and sell them to investors. But the investors are catching

onto this scam and are no longer buying; so the Fed is stepping in to underwrite the debt, advancing "credit" created on its books with accounting entries. When these loans are not paid back, we the taxpayers pick up the tab, either directly or through the "hidden tax" of inflation. The benefit goes to the lenders, who get off scot-free for their risky ventures, while the people bear the risk and pick up the losses.

If these investments are too risky for investors, they should also be too risky for the "government bank." We do not need more consumer debt to keep the economy going. We need more wages and salaries, and that means more jobs. Rather than propping up the "finance" industry (the business of money making money), the Fed should be furnishing low-interest loans directly to businesses, state and local governments, and other qualified members of the producing economy.

Watching the Paulson/Bernanke bailout scenario unfold is a bit like watching the end of the Charlton Heston movie "El Cid," where the Spaniards prop up their dead general on his horse and charge the Moors, giving the illusion that the champion is still alive and leading them. In this case, what they are propping up are not national heroes but banking pranksters who are not only unnecessary but have also established their incompetence at managing the banking business. Congress could avoid this costly masquerade by either nationalizing the Federal Reserve or setting up its own publicly-owned lending facility, one that created credit on its books just as private banks do now and made it available openly, impartially, and at modest interest rates to all qualified borrowers. Unqualified borrowers should be denied, and that includes insolvent private banks, which should be put into FDIC receivership, their books washed clean in bankruptcy, and reorganized as truly "national" banks advancing the "full faith and credit of the United States" for the benefit of the people of the United States.

1. Mark Pittman, Bob Irvy, "US Pledges \$7.7 Trillion to Ease Frozen Credit," *Bloomberg.com* (November 25, 2008).
2. See Ellen Brown, "It's the Derivatives, Stupid! Why Fannie, Freddie and AIG All Had to Be Bailed Out," www.webofdebt.com (September 18, 2008).
3. Edmund Andrews, "US Details \$800 Billion Loan Plans," *New York Times* (November 26, 2008).
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5. See Ellen Brown, "The Fed Now Owns the World's Largest Insurance Company - But Who Owns the Fed?," www.webofdebt.com (October 7, 2008).
6. Mark Pittman, et al., "Fed Denies Transparency Aim in Refusal to Disclose," *Bloomberg.com* (November 10, 2008).

Ellen Brown, J.D., developed her research skills as an attorney practicing civil litigation in Los Angeles. In Web of Debt, her latest book, she turns those skills to an analysis of the Federal Reserve and "the money trust." She shows how this private cartel has usurped the power to create money from the people themselves and how we the people can get it back. Her eleven books include the bestselling Nature's Pharmacy, co-authored with Dr. Lynne Walker, and Forbidden Medicine. Her websites are webofdebt.com and ellenbrown.com.

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Will You Continue to Ignore Gaza's Suffering, Mr. Obama?

By KATHLEEN AND BILL CHRISTISON

Palestine and Palestinian suffering have always taken a back seat in the world's attention while the United States starts this war, finishes off that war, or expands it; while the world deals with wars and economic crises; while the attention of the compassionate is taken up by starvation and pestilence and war in Sudan or in Congo or Rwanda or Somalia. Throughout these crises – quite legitimate crises all – Palestine is always left to molder, sometimes at a more rapid pace in more inhumane circumstances than at other times.

Right now, the circumstances could not be more inhumane. Right now, the paramount Palestinian crisis is in Gaza, where Israel – with active political and ongoing financial backing from the United States – is blockading a tiny, horribly overcrowded piece of land and consciously depriving its 1.5 million people of all of the essentials of life: of food, of medicines, of equipment to keep hospitals running, of fuel for cooking, of fuel for producing electricity, of fuel for running generators, of fuel for automobiles, of spare parts for sewage treatment plants (so that plants break down and sewage pours into the streets and, in quantities in the millions of liters, into the Mediterranean), and of clean fresh water.

You might want to believe, Mr. Obama, that this is the Palestinians' own fault because they have been firing rockets into civilian areas of Israel and they deserve all of the punishment they are receiving. But, in fact, Mr. Obama, if you were paying attention, and if you really cared, you would know that Israel started this latest round. Israel broke the four-month-old cease-fire on November 4, when an Israeli unit entered the Gaza Strip and attacked an area in the central Strip, claiming that Palestinians were digging a tunnel and intended to "kidnap" an Israeli soldier. When Hamas responded to this cease-fire violation with rockets, Israel imposed a total blockade on the already besieged territory and closed all entry and exit points.

That was over four weeks ago. Four weeks, in which Gaza's inhabitants have lived with dwindling food supplies, virtually no electricity, little heat as winter approaches, no medicines, and no life. In those weeks, Israel has opened the border to one or two small food shipments, but this is like a drop in the ocean for a million and a half people already living in poverty. Within ten days of the Israeli closure, UNRWA, the United Nations refugee relief organization that provides food to Gaza's huge refugee population, had run out of food for the 750,000 people it regularly feeds. Two-thirds of Gaza's population are refugees who have already been living a miserable life in camps for over 60 years. Well over half of the total Gaza population are children.

The who-struck-John in this latest round is not what matters, Mr. Obama – not that it was Israel that broke the cease-fire, and not that you and your Israel-supporting advisers might believe that the Palestinian response to the Israeli incursion should be counted, bullet for bullet, an "overreaction": multiple rockets in retaliation for one tiny little incursion. What matters is that this is collective punishment – punishing an entire civilian population for the actions of a few militants. What matters is that this is punishing people simply because they are Palestinians, non-Jews, intruding on Zionism's desire for exclusive Jewishness in

Palestine. What matters is the scale of the oppression under which Palestinians live, thanks to Israel and to us, its US enabler.

For this latest blockade is not the first, and it is not a new phenomenon in the long history of the Palestinian attempt to survive Israel's domination. The international embargo of Gaza, demanded by Israel and led by the United States, has been in effect for almost three years, since Hamas was democratically elected in January 2006 to head the Palestinian legislature and government. The blockade was further tightened in June 2007, when Hamas thwarted a US-inspired coup attempt by its Palestinian rival Fatah and took over control of Gaza. But even these last three years in Gaza's troubled history are only a more severe version of the misery Gaza has been enduring for decades.

American economist Sara Roy, a student of Gaza's sufferings through the last several decades, long ago concluded that Israel's strategy throughout the occupation has been simply not to let Gaza's economy drift, but rather to pursue a strategy of what she calls "de-development," ensuring that Gaza can develop no economic base at all, by actively depriving it of economic resources and the institutional development capabilities needed to create and sustain a thriving economy. Israeli journalist Amira Hass, another student of Gaza who lived there for several years in the 1990s, has written that even the Oslo peace process proved so oppressive in Gaza that it became synonymous "with mass internment and suffocating constriction."

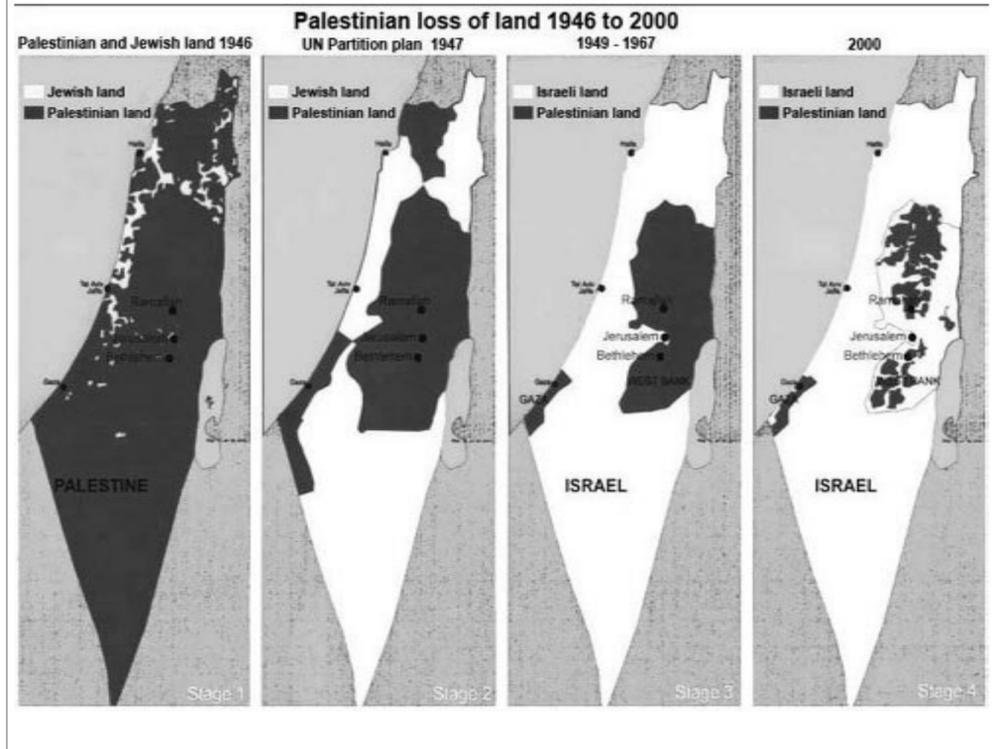
It is worthy of note, Mr. Obama, that both of these experts on Gaza are women, both are Jewish, and both are the daughters of Holocaust survivors. Both know far better whereof they speak and are far richer in compassion than all of the pro-Israel lobbyists among your advisers who have succeeded in tying your tongue.

The result of these years and these various stages of enforced misery comes as no surprise. According to a recent report by the International Red Cross, there has been progressive deterioration in "food security," meaning the assured supply of enough nutritious food for a healthy life, for seventy percent of Gaza's population. The dramatic fall in living standards caused by the international embargo has resulted in a widespread shift in diet from meats, fruit, and vegetables to foods, including cereals and sugar, that are "alarmingly" deficient in iron and Vitamins A and D. What the Red Cross terms chronic malnutrition is steadily rising and will have long-term consequences. Forty percent of the population is classified as "very poor," living on considerably less than \$1 per day.

For God's sake, Mr. Obama, this is intolerable. Yet you remain silent.

Several years ago, a woman in Norway wrote us in response to an article about some other Israeli atrocity against the Palestinians, and we have had her plea posted on a bulletin board over a computer ever since. "What is the worth of a civilization," she wondered, "that has no eyes and ears for the suffering and agony of the people under Israel's bombs?"

"What is the worth of a civilization" that can look away from these horrors? This is a hard, hard judgment. But it fits. It fits your behavior, and your silence, Mr. Obama. In fact, much of the rest



of civilization has finally begun to notice what is happening in Gaza – much too late, but anything is better than perpetual silence. The U.N. secretary general called for an end to the blockade of Gaza last week; the president of the U.N. General Assembly has advocated a boycott and sanctions against Israel for its behavior; the EU parliament has taken note; various other international organizations – including the International Red Cross, the World Bank, the U.N. Human Rights Commission, and a large coalition of mostly British charitable organizations, among others – have expressed deep concern at the state of utter collapse in Gaza that is the direct result of the long-running embargo imposed on Gaza by the United States and Israel. Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, recently condemned the blockade after a visit to Gaza, calling the situation there ten times worse than when she last visited in 2001. Gazans have no hope, she said.

This is a US-created, US-supported humanitarian disaster, Mr. Obama. For God's sake, why can't you – why won't you – stop it? All it would take is a call by you for an immediate end to the blockade and embargo. The symbolic value of such a call, which would put meat on the bones of your "talk" about compassion and on your "call" for tearing down the walls between peoples, would be immense. The impact on Gazans would go beyond comprehension.

-Kathleen and Bill Christison have been writing on Palestine and traveling there for several years. Kathleen is the author of two books on the Palestinian situation and US policy on the issue, while Bill has written numerous articles on US foreign policies. They have co-authored a book, forthcoming in mid-2009 from Pluto Press, on the Israeli occupation and its impact on Palestinians, with over 50 of their photographs. Thirty years ago, they were analysts for the CIA, but this is a part of their past that they would now prefer to forget. They contributed this article to PalestineChronicle.com. Contact them at: kb.christison@earthlink.net. (A version of this article was published in CounterPunch Print Edition, Vol. 15, No. 20, Nov. 16-30, 2008, pages 5 – 6.)

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights: Indict Israeli Leaders for War Crimes

IMAGEGAZA / PNN

On Wednesday, December 10, the United Nations said the possibility should be discussed of indicting Israeli leaders for war crimes in the International Criminal Court.

On the occasion of the UN Human Rights Day, the Special Rapporteur on the issue, Richard Falk, said that the blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip is a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

Falk said that Israel does not allow the introduction of enough food to avoid starvation and the outbreak of disease. He called for immediate action to alleviate the humanitarian disaster in the Strip while noting that "such collective punishment is tantamount to a crime against humanity and an indictment in the International Criminal Court of the leaders of Israel must be discussed."

During 35 days of complete closure after 18 months of siege, the Israeli administration has lifted the ban on a limited amount of aid just five times. The United Nations Relief Works Agency told PNN that the situation is a disaster and that its operations are severely stunted, if not halted. Due to conditions of the siege, 80 percent of the Gaza Strip's population now relies on some type of aid.

The UN Secretary General has appealed to the Israeli administration but to little effect. When being criticized, Israel routinely comments that the United Nations is "unbalanced."

Palestinian Legislative Council member and Chairman of the Popular Committee against the Siege, Jamal Al Khudari, welcomed Falk's comments.

Damascus Conference on Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Denial of Right of Return for Palestinians

Cynthia McKinney, 2008 Green presidential candidate and former six-term Congress member, was slated to speak at a conference in Damascus, Syria on November 23rd, in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the denial of the Right of Return for Palestinians, in violation of the Universal Declaration. Ms. McKinney was unable to deliver the speech, because she was detained at the Atlanta airport under circumstances that have not yet been made clear.

An excerpt of Ms. McKinney's speech follows below:

"Thank you to our hosts for inviting me to participate in this most important and timely First Arab-International Congregation for the Right of Return. Words are an insufficient expression of my appreciation for being remembered as one willing to stand for justice in Washington, D.C., even in the face of tremendously difficult pressures.

Former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir, thank you for including me in the Malaysian Peace Organisation's monumental effort to criminalize war, to show the horrors of the treatment of innocent individuals during the war against and occupation of Iraq by the militaries and their corporate contractors of Britain, Israel, and the United States. Thank you for standing up to huge international economic forces trying to dominate your country and showing an impressionable woman like me that it is possible to stand up to "the big boys" and win. And thank you for your efforts to bring war criminal, torturer, decimator of the United States Constitution, the George W. Bush Administration, to justice in international litigation...

In the same year as Palestinians endured a series of massacres and expulsions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights became international law. And while the United Nations is proud that the Declaration was flown into Outer Space just a few days

ago on the Space Shuttle, if one were to read it and then land in the Middle East, I think it would be clear that Palestine is the place that the Universal Declaration forgot.

Sadly, both the spirit of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and the noblest ideals of the United Nations are broken. This has occurred in large measure due to policies that emanate from Washington, D.C. If we want to change those policies, and I do believe that we can, then we have to change the underlying values of those who become Washington's policy makers. In other words, we must launch the necessary movement that puts people in office who share our values.

We need to do this now more than ever because, sadly, Palestine is not Washington's only victim. Enshrined in the Universal Declaration is the dignity of humankind and the responsibility of states to protect that dignity. Yet, the underlying contradictions between its words and what has become standard international practice lay exposed to the world this year when then-United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour proclaimed:

"In the course of this year, unprecedented efforts must be made to ensure that every person in the world can rely on just laws for his or her protection. In advancing all human rights for all, we will move towards the greatest fulfillment of human potential, a promise which is at the heart of the Universal Declaration."

How insulting it was to hear those words coming from her, for those of us who know, because it was she who, as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, willfully participated in the cover-up of an act of terror that resulted in the assassination of two democratically elected Presidents and that unleashed a torrent of murder and bloodletting in which one million souls were vanquished. That sad episode in human history has become known as the Rwanda Genocide. And

shockingly, after the cover-up, Louise Arbour was rewarded with the highest position on the planet, in charge of Human Rights.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said that justice delayed is justice denied. And 60 years is too long to wait for justice. The Palestinian people deserve respected self-determination, protected human rights, justice, and above all, peace.

On the night before his murder, Dr. King announced that he was happy to be living at the end of the 20th Century where, all over the world, men and women were struggling to be free.

Today, we can touch and feel the results of those cries, on the African Continent where apartheid no longer exists as a fact of law. A concerted, uncompromising domestic and international effort led to its demise.

And in Latin America, the shackles of US domination have been broken. In a series of unprecedented peaceful, people-powered revolutions, voters in Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and most recently Paraguay used the power of the political process to materially change their countries' leadership and policy orientation toward the United States. Americans, accustomed to the Monroe Doctrine which proclaimed US suzerainty over all politics in the Western Hemisphere, must now think the unthinkable given what has occurred in the last decade.

Voters in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Spain, and India also took matters clearly in their hands to make "a clean break" from policies that were an affront to the interests of the majority of the people in those countries.

In country after country, against tremendous odds, people stood up and took their fates in their hands. They did what Mario Savio, in the 1960s, asked people in the United States to do. These people-powered, peaceful revolutions saw individuals put their bodies against the levers and the gears and the wheels of the US

imperial machine and they said to the owners if you don't stop it, we will. And I know that people of conscience inside my country can do it, too: especially now that the engines of imperial oppression are running out of gas...

Inside the United States, millions who are not of Arab descent, disagree vehemently with the policy of our government to provide the military and civilian hardware that snuffs out innocent human life that is also Arab.

Millions of Americans do not pray to Allah, but recognize that it is an inalienable right of those who do to live and pray in peace wherever they are, including inside the United States.

Even though their opportunities are severely limited, there are millions of people inside the United States struggling to express themselves on all of these issues, but whose efforts are stymied by a political process that robs them of any opportunity to be heard...

Clearly, not only the faces of US politicians must change; we must change their values, too. We, in the United States, must utilize our votes to effect the same kind of people-powered change in the United States as has been done in all those other countries. And now, with more people than ever inside the United States actually paying attention to politics, this is our moment; we must seize this time. We must become the leaders we are looking for and get people who share our values elected to Congress and the White House.

Now, I hope you believe me when I say to you that this is not rocket science. I have learned politics from its best players. And I say to you that even with the fallibilities of the US system, it is possible for us to do more than vote for a slogan of change, we can actually have it. But if we fail to seize this moment, we will continue to get what we've always been given: handpicked leaders who don't truly represent us.

With the kind of US weapons that are being used in this part of the world, from white phosphorus to depleted uranium, from cluster bombs to bunker busting bombs, nothing less than the soul of my country is at stake. But for the world, it is the fate of humankind that is at stake.

The people in my country just invested

their hopes for a better world and a better government in their votes for President-elect Obama. However, during an unprecedented two year Presidential campaign, the exact kind of change we are to get was never fully defined. Therefore, we the people of the United States must act now with boldness and confidence. We can set the stage for the kind of change that reflects our values.

Now is not the time for timidity. The US economy is in shambles, unemployment and health insecurity are soaring, half of our young people do not even graduate from high school; college is unaffordable. The middle class that was invested in the stock market is seeing their life savings stripped from them by the hour. What we are witnessing is the pauperization of a country, in much the same way that Russia was pauperized after the fall of the Soviet Union. There are clear winners and the losers all know who they are. The attentive public in the United States is growing because of these conditions. Now is the time for our values to rise because people in the United States are now willing to listen.

So the question really is, "Which way, America?"

Today we uplift the humanity of the Palestinian people. And what I am recommending is the creation of a political movement inside my country that will constitute a surgical strike for global justice. This gathering is the equivalent of us stepping to the microphone to be heard.

We don't have to lose because we have commitment to the people.

And we don't have to lose because we refuse to compromise our core values.

We don't have to lose because we seek peace with justice and diplomacy over war.

We don't have to lose.

By committing to do some things we've never done before, I'm certain that we can also have some things we've never had before.

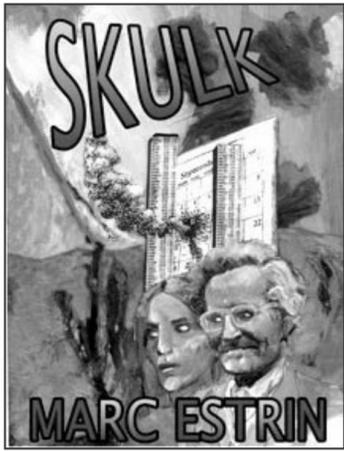
I return to the US committed to do my part to make our dream come true.

Thank you."

For more information on Cynthia McKinney visit <http://www.alldthingscynthiamckinney.com>

Book Review

Fighting Fiction with Fiction



BY THE AUTHOR, MARC ESTRIN

After seven years, the resistance to 9/11 truth studies continues to astound. Many very smart people, lefties, political activists, and people who do not believe one word of what anyone in the Bush administration says — for some reason believe every word of the preposterous official version of 9/11. Unlike any other blather from Washington, this seems to be the story they want to believe. In any case, when I have tried to raise the subject, they will “not go there.” “Not going there” always involves the same hand gestures — both arms raised from the elbows, palms out, slightly in front of the face, blocking passage to the ears.

What is going on? It's not as if these people have no political analysis, or hold world views which won't tolerate 9/11 truth investigation. A standard explanation is that some truths are so destructive the most common defense is total denial. When I tried to bring up the subject, one woman actually said to me, “I don't want to live in a world where such things could happen.” Well, if openness to thinking about 9/11 necessitates suicide, I can understand her reaction.

But there are many kinds of suicide. In my case, there is the suicide envisioned for me as an author by my usual publisher, and a possible secondary suicide of his publishing house for associating themselves with an author who might be perceived as a tin-hatted conspiracy wacko. In the case of normal, mainstream, journalism, it seems again to be the editor protecting the writer from suicide, and, more importantly, keeping the publication safe from assault — as the owners protect the public from the need to think. In any case, fiction or non-fiction which explores alternative stories and explanations of 9/11 seems to be firmly censored in the womb with little protest from the pro-life crowd.

I first started thinking about 9/11 fiction after writing an early review of David Ray Griffin's first book, *The New Pearl Harbor*. In 2004, there were still so many unanswered questions and so little evidence with which to construct answers. As in any investigation, the first step is speculation: who might have done it, how might it have happened? Forensic investigation is well left to experts, but speculation itself is often best done by creative writers. So while Griffin and other investigators pursued their work, why not ask my fellow fiction writers to think about clues?

I put out a call to the small circle of writers I happen to know, angling for 9/11 short stories for a possible anthology. I was surprised to see so few come in, and of those few there were even fewer that were likely to be publishable. So I abandoned the anthology project, and thought, “I'll just do it myself.” Out came my novel, *Skulk*.

Skulk was a pleasure to write. It was fun actually having fun writing about 9/11! The book contained many of the playful/serious elements common in my writing:

- inventing an Ann Coulter-ish heroine
- a political attack on the concept of Santa Claus
- the difficulties of making a quill pen in contemporary America
- how to smuggle pot past Homeland Security
- a short history of Bleeding Kansas
- Jesus and political weirdness in Mullinville, KA
- instructions on trailing, evading and bugging 101
- a Kansan Indian anthropologist on PC towards Indians, Kansas Indians, and a Norwegian story of the devil
- a middle east address attacked by yarmulka-ed clowns, and descending into melee, with lab experiments in the latest methods of crowd control
- some advanced writing on learning skydiving, based on AUTHOR EXPERIENCE!
- flight training software from Sadosoft, a pedagogical breakthrough.
- ...and I thought such a book might

actually make an end run around the censorship on the topic.

I submitted it enthusiastically for publication and submitted it again, and again: no one would touch it except for John Leonard at Progressive Press (at the kind suggestion of Webster Tarpley). As John had not really worked with fiction before, and because the fiction market is quite different from his usual one, we decided it was not a match. But after a year of further, unsuccessful submissions, I embarrassedly turned to him again, and we both decided to take the gamble together.

We shall see. There remains the question of how to reach beyond the initiates who are already looking for the kind of books Progressive Press puts out. This is a general problem beyond that of publishing 9/11 fiction. As activists, we all have to spend time and find ways to speak and educate beyond the choir. 9/11 truth? As Dick Cheney so pithily observed, “So?”. So the government is tricking the people? What's new? So the American government has murdered its own citizens in pursuit of its goal of world domination? “I don't have a dog in that fight.”

“As my publisher, John Leonard, sees it, it is the old problem of the Big Lie. They got plausible deniability by doing something so unbelievably outrageous that it really can't be believed by most people. But a lot of us who could see through it hitched our wagon to 9/11, figuring that it was dynamite, the highest powered door opener around. After seven years, it looks like it's no silver bullet after all. We have to start a bit further back with people — maybe all the way back with learning how conditioning works? I'm reprinting one classic on that subject, but mainly I am branching out from 9/11 and trying to cover the whole conspiracy, bit by bit, to build up the background information. Marc Estrin's approach is a very creative one on these lines — to look for side doors that may be open, instead of trying to drive another truck through the front gate. Maybe that's why he called it *Skulk* — it's a stealth approach to 9/11 Truth.”

The problem seems to be that so many of us — most of us — are “embedded.” We are embedded in a culture whose frame has expanded to include anything that happens. There is no longer anything “beyond the pale.” Everything is normal, bipartisan, omnipartisan, cloaked in the magic power of “whatever.”

I had thought that the one thing that the American public would not put up with would be the idea that our own government had attacked its people on 9/11. That is still probably the case today. But between that idea and its consequences stands The Great Wall of Denial. It seems one cannot simply argue people beyond the wall, or hand them a factual triptych to get there. So, in *Skulk* I have used another strategy: to simply assume the truths of 9/11 truth and incorporate them, without argumentation, into the underlying structure of the novel. As the would-be activists, Gronsky & Skulk, pursue their goal — our goal — of public enlightenment, they are frustrated as we are. But the websites they publish in their Calls to the People are real: any reader who decides to check them — as many readers will now do, having grown used to hyperlinks — will find him or herself bathing in the wealth of facts and ideas that real 9/11 researchers have dug up. In this way, I hope to have brought the 9/11 material to a new type of cohort — that of readers of fiction who may not have otherwise come in to contact with it.

Since September 13, 2001, I have been standing every weekday from 5-5:30 at a busy Burlington intersection with a group of villagers, each with his or her own sign, protesting the many things there are to protest. I have thought it best to use my own signs to simply inject an idea into public discourse. For several years before the word became common, my sign simply said IMPEACH. Impeach who? That was up to the reader. Once the word “impeachment” became common in public discussion, I changed my sign to read “GOT FASCISM?”, a concept we are not yet commonly talking about. I often get questions from passersby — “what is that — fascism?” Sometimes the pronunciation is comical. It amazes me, but there are many people who have forgotten — or never knew.

In the same way, I would like *Skulk* to simply put the materials of the 9/11 truth movement into circulation. *Skulk* does not argue, it does not prove, it assumes the reader knows all about it. And on some level, I do think that many denying Americans do know. It needs only to be brought into legitimate discussion. 9/11 fiction may be another, possibly successful, doorway to that discussion.

BY ROBERT PARRY / CONSORTIUM NEWS

You might have thought that when audiotapes were released of President Lyndon Johnson accusing Richard Nixon's 1968 campaign of “treason” for sabotaging Vietnam peace talks — as 500,000 US troops sat in a war zone — the major US news media would be all over it, providing insight and context.

If you thought that, of course, you would be wrong.

Instead the story last month out of Johnson's presidential library received only cursory attention in the big newspapers and TV outlets, mostly references to a brief Associated Press wire story that treated the disclosure more as a curiosity than a clue to a dark historical mystery.

The US news media's blasé reaction may be almost as revealing as the tapes themselves in that it reflects an institutionalized disinterest — even hostility — to sharing with the American people some ugly realities about their democracy when national security intersects with politics.

In effect, the 1968 case in which Nixon's operatives undermined President Johnson's desperate bid to end the Vietnam War — and thus helped ensure Nixon's electoral victory over Vice President Hubert Humphrey — may have been the original “October Surprise.”

A dozen years later, some of the veterans of Nixon's 1968 campaign were linked to a similar operation by the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign to interfere with President Jimmy Carter's negotiations to free 52 Americans held hostage in Iran, another Democratic failure that paved the way to a Republican victory.

Regarding both cases, the Washington press corps mostly has looked the other way. Weaving through both historical mysteries is a common thread of the Washington Establishment's professed fear that revealing too much about how the Republicans won those pivotal elections would harm the country.

Speaking to that point in 1968 was a pillar of the Establishment, then-Defense Secretary Clark Clifford. He joined with Secretary of State Dean Rusk in urging President Johnson not to go public with his evidence of Republican treachery.

“Some elements of the story are so shocking in their nature that I'm wondering whether it would be good for the country to disclose the story and then possibly have a certain individual [Nixon] elected,” Clifford said in a November 4, 1968, conference call. “It could cast his whole administration under such doubt that I think it would be inimical to our country's interests.”

Clifford's remark came in the context of Johnson learning that *Christian Science Monitor* reporter Saville Davis was working on a story about how Nixon's entourage had undermined the peace talks by sending its own messages to South Vietnamese officials.

History's Lessons

The Significance of Nixon's ‘Treason’



Richard Nixon and his replacement, Gerald Ford

Instead of helping Davis confirm his information, Clifford and Rusk argued that the Johnson administration should make no comment, advice that Johnson accepted. He maintained his public silence on what he regarded as the Nixon campaign's “treason,” going into retirement privately embittered about the Republican sabotage.

A DRAMATIC TALE

The newly released audiotapes offer a dramatic story of an embattled President angered over intelligence intercepts revealing that emissaries from Nixon's campaign, including right-wing China Lobby figure Anna Chennault, were carrying messages to the South Vietnamese government urging them to boycott planned peace talks in Paris.

The Republican message was that South Vietnamese leaders could expect a better deal from Nixon than from the Democrats. According to the evidence, President Nguyen van Thieu accepted these private assurances and backed away from a commitment to attend the peace talks.

Beginning in late October 1968, Johnson can be heard on the tapes complaining about this Republican political maneuver. However, his frustration builds as he learns more from intercepts about the back-channel contacts between Nixon operatives and South Vietnamese officials.

On November 2 — just three days before the election — Johnson telephones Senate Republican leader Everett Dirksen, lays out some of the evidence, and asks Dirksen to intervene with the Nixon campaign.

“The agent [Chennault] says she's just talked to the boss in New Mexico and that he said that you must hold out, just hold on until after the election,” Johnson said in an apparent reference to a Nixon campaign plane that carried some of his top aides to New Mexico. “We know what Thieu is saying to them out there. We're pretty well informed at both ends.”

Johnson then made a thinly veiled threat about going public with the information.

“I don't want to get this in the campaign,”

Johnson said, adding: “They oughtn't be doing this. This is treason.”

Dirksen responded, “I know.”

Johnson continued: “I think it would shock America if a principal candidate was playing with a source like this on a matter of this importance. I don't want to do that [go public]. They ought to know that we know what they're doing. I know who they're talking to. I know what they're saying.”

The President also stressed the stakes involved, noting that the movement toward negotiations in Paris had contributed to a lull in the violence.

“We've had 24 hours of relative peace,” Johnson said. “If Nixon keeps the South Vietnamese away from the [peace] conference, well, that's going to be his responsibility. Up to this point, that's why they're not there. I had them signed onboard until this happened.”

Dirksen: “I better get in touch with him, I think.”

“They're contacting a foreign power in the middle of a war,” Johnson said. “It's a damn bad mistake. And I don't want to say so. ...”

“You just tell them that their people are messing around in this thing, and if they don't want it on the front pages, they better quit it.”

Nixon's Protestation

The next day, Nixon spoke directly to Johnson and professed his innocence.

“I didn't say with your knowledge,” Johnson responded. “I hope it wasn't.”

“Huh, no,” Nixon responded. “My God, I would never do anything to encourage ... Saigon not to come to the table. ... Good God, we want them over to Paris, we got to get them to Paris or you can't have a peace.”

Nixon also insisted that he would do whatever President Johnson and Secretary Rusk wanted.

“I'm not trying to interfere with your conduct of it. I'll only do what you and Rusk want me to do. We've got to get this goddamn war off the plate,” Nixon said. “The war apparently now is about where it could be brought to an end. ... The quicker the better. To hell with the political credit, believe me.”

However, the South Vietnamese boycott continued.

On November 4, Johnson told Rusk and Clifford that *Christian Science Monitor* reporter Saville Davis was working on a story about the Republican sabotage. Both Rusk and Clifford opposed going public with the sensitive information in Johnson's possession, which was derived partly from electronic intercepts.

The next day, with Johnson still unable to cite any clear progress toward ending the war, Nixon narrowly prevailed over Humphrey by about 500,000 votes or less than one percent of the ballots cast.

see NIXON p. 7

False Flag Attacks Common But Rarely Reported in Corporate Media

BY WAYNE MADSEN / WAYNE MADSEN REPORT

Revelations about a shadowy right-wing group called Ergenekon participating with Turkish military and intelligence elements in “false flag” terrorist attacks in order to bring down the Turkish government are nothing new and are, in fact, a normal tactic used by intelligence services. However, the term “false flag” has been irresponsibly relegated to the arena of “conspiracy theories” by a corporate media answering to their own hidden agendas.

In 1996, then-South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki told the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission that the apartheid government carried out “false flag” terrorist attacks that were then attributed to the African National Congress (ANC), which had a policy of not targeting civilians in its battle with the apartheid regime. The horrible execution method of “necklacing,” putting a burning tire over the necks of victims that would burn them to death, was carried out by apartheid agents provocateurs to damage the reputation of the ANC, Mbeki told the commission.

Some of the gruesome videotaped beheadings carried out on Westerners in Iraq may also have been carried out by agents provocateurs on the payroll of US and other intelligence services to generate sympathy for the US-led occupation of the country and pin blame on the Iraqi insurgents.

Many observers point out that Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish national who tried to assassinate Pope John Paul II in 1981, may have been unwittingly being used by Western intelligence in order to foment a Polish insurrection against the Soviet Union. Agca thought at various times he was working

for the Soviets, Bulgaria, or Iran but may have actually been handled by the CIA. Turkish Interior Minister Hussan Gunes, who investigated Agca, said he thought Agca was involved in an attempt to provoke an uprising in Poland and cut it off from the Warsaw Pact.

The most infamous and documented US false flag operation was Operation Northwoods, a plan hatched by the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Kennedy administration in 1962 that included terrorist attacks against ships and passenger planes, claiming Cuba was behind them and providing a pretext for a US invasion of Cuba. In 1967, Israel attacked the National Security Agency intelligence ship, the *USS Liberty*, hoping the Americans would believe Egypt carried out the attack, prompting a US military strike on Egypt, with which Israel was fighting the Six Day War. The Israeli operation was reportedly code-named Operation Cyanide.

More recently, Ikram Yabukov, a former Uzbek National Security Service (SNB) major, said the government of President Islam Karimov carried out a number of false flag terrorist attacks and then blamed them on Islamist extremists to win support at home and abroad. Former British ambassador to Uzbekistan Craig Murray validated Yabukov's claims. Uzbekistan was an early US coalition partner in the so-called “Global War on Terrorism” following the 9/11 attacks.

Yabukov also claimed that many Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) leaders, designated terrorists by the US State Department, were nurtured by the Uzbek government, which supported

their bombings in Tashkent and the 2005 Andijon uprising, which killed more than 1500 people. In another false flag, Yabukov said the SNB engineered a 2004 passenger plane crash in Tashkent that killed senior UN official in Uzbekistan Richard Conroy. Conroy apparently had information linking Karimov to trafficking of drugs and women forced abroad into prostitution.

Last month, three German BND intelligence agents were arrested by Kosovo authorities after they were accused of throwing a bomb at the European Union office in Pristina, the Kosovo capital. The previously unheard of Army of the Republic of Kosovo claimed responsibility for the attack. The BND believes that their agents were fingered by corrupt Kosovo politicians who were the actual perpetrators of the attack on the EU building. The Germans are aware that the Kosovo government, which is riddled with criminals of every stripe, takes its orders from the United States.

What is certain is that “false flags” run throughout history. There is new evidence that Ergenekon key players are supported by certain elements in Utah. Ironically, One of the most dastardly uses of the false flag attack was by Mormon settlers in Utah who preyed upon California-bound wagon trains. One such attack, the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857, saw 120 California-bound men, women, and children massacred by Mormon militiamen who left Indian artifacts at the crime scene to make authorities believe the wagon train had been set upon by Indians.

Wayne Madsen is a Washington based investigative journalist. www.WayneMadsenReport.com

The Significance of Nixon's 'Treason'

NIXON from p. 6

In the aftermath of the election, Johnson continued to confront Nixon with the evidence of Republican treachery, trying to get him to pressure the South Vietnamese leaders to reverse themselves and join the Paris peace talks.

On Nov. 8, Johnson recounted the evidence to Nixon and described the Republican motivation to disrupt the talks, speaking of himself in the third person.

"Johnson was going to have a bombing pause to try to elect Humphrey. They [the South Vietnamese] ought to hold out because Nixon will not sell you out like the Democrats sold out China," Johnson said.

"I think they've been talking to [Vice President-elect Spiro] Agnew," Johnson continued. "They've been quoting you [Nixon] indirectly, that the thing they ought to do is to just not show up at any [peace] conference and wait until you come into office.

"Now they've started that [boycott] and that's bad. They're killing Americans every day. I have that [story of the sabotage] documented. There's not any question but that's happening. ... That's the story, Dick, and it's a sordid story. ... I don't want to say that to the country, because that's not good."

Faced with Johnson's implied threat, Nixon promised to tell the South Vietnamese officials to reverse themselves and join the peace talks. However, the die was cast. Johnson was unable to achieve the breakthrough he had hoped for before leaving office.

MORE DEAD

The US participation in the Vietnam War continued for more than four years at a horrendous cost to both the United States and the people of Vietnam. Before the conflict was finally brought to an end, a million or more Vietnamese were estimated to have died along with an additional 20,763 US dead and 111,230 wounded.

The war divided the United States, turning parents against their own children. The bitterness over the war also led to more abuses by President Nixon, who routinely cited national security to justify a massive political spying operation against his enemies.

Ironically, Nixon cited Johnson's eavesdropping on the Republican messages to the South Vietnamese as justification for his own Watergate spying on the Democratic National Committee in spring 1972.

After the Watergate operation blew up on June 17, 1972, with the arrest of five White House burglars inside the DNC offices, Nixon immediately took charge of the cover-up: issuing orders, brainstorming PR strategies and trying to blackmail Democrats with threats of embarrassing disclosures.

One of Nixon's recurring threats was to reveal that President Johnson had ordered the bugging of the Nixon campaign in 1968. According to his own White House tapes, Nixon referred back to the Vietnam peace talk gambit, claiming that he was told by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover that Johnson had ordered the bugging of a Nixon campaign plane to ascertain who was undermining the Paris talks.

On July 1, 1972, White House aide Charles Colson touched off Nixon's musings by noting that a newspaper column claimed that the Democrats had bugged Chennault's telephones in 1968. Nixon pounced on Colson's remark.

"Oh," Nixon responded, "in '68, they bugged our phones too."

Colson: "And that this was ordered by Johnson."

Nixon: "That's right"

Colson: "And done through the FBI. My God, if we ever did anything like that, you'd have the ..."

Nixon: "Yes. For example, why didn't we bug McGovern, because after all he's affecting the peace negotiations?"

Colson: "Sure."

Nixon: "That would be exactly the same thing."

A Nixon Leak

Nixon's complaint about Johnson bugging "our phones" in 1968 became a refrain as the Watergate scandal unfolded. Nixon wanted to use that information to pressure Johnson and Humphrey into twisting Democratic arms so the Watergate investigations would be stopped.

On January 8, 1973, Nixon urged Haldeman to plant a story about the 1968 bugging in the *Washington Star*.

"You don't really have to have hard evidence, Bob," Nixon told Haldeman. "You're not trying to take this to court. All you have to do is to have it out, just put it out as authority, and the press will write the Goddamn story, and the *Star* will run it now."

Haldeman, however, insisted on checking the facts. In *The Haldeman Diaries*, published in 1994, Haldeman included an entry dated January 12, 1973, which contains his book's only deletion for national security.

"I talked to [former Attorney General John] Mitchell on the phone," Haldeman wrote, "and he said [FBI official Cartha] DeLoach had told him he was up to date on the thing. ... A *Star* reporter was making an inquiry in the last week or so, and LBJ got very hot and called Deke [DeLoach's nickname], and said to him that if the Nixon people are going to play with this, that he would release [deleted material -- national security], saying that our side was asking that certain things be done. ..."

"DeLoach took this as a direct threat from Johnson. ... As he [DeLoach] recalls it, bugging was requested on the planes, but was turned down, and all they did was check the phone calls, and put a tap on the Dragon Lady [Anna Chennault]."

Ten days later, on January 22, 1973, Johnson died of a heart attack. Haldeman apparently shelved the 1968 bugging ruse as a non-starter. After 18 more months of writhing and wriggling about Watergate, Nixon was forced by the courts to relinquish a few tapes containing damning evidence against him. He resigned on August 9, 1974.

[For more on how the Paris peace-talk story emerged gradually though the work of investigative reporters — and the parallel to the 1980 October Surprise case — see Robert Parry's *Secrecy & Privilege*.]

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His latest book, Neck Deep: The Disastrous Presidency of George W. Bush, was written with two of his sons, Sam and Nat, and can be ordered at neckdeepbook.com. His two previous books, Secrecy & Privilege: The Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq and Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth' are also available there. Or go to Amazon.com.

Shocking Revelations CNN Refused to Air:

Ex-ISI Chief Says Mumbai and 9/11 Were Inside Jobs

MUMBAI from p. 1

Gul said that he first went public on who he thought was behind 9/11 two weeks after the attacks, but that the report was blocked by the western news media.

The UPI interview with Gul remains online and in it he questions the delayed response to the hijackings by the US Air Force.

"9/11 took place on American soil, not a single person has been caught inside America even though for doing such a job I think a huge amount of logistic support is required in the area where such an operation is carried out," Gul told the Alex Jones Show, adding that fighter jets were scrambled in the opposite direction to where the hijacked planes were heading as the attack unfolded.

"It is quite amazing that for a very long period of time the air traffic control did not report this nor did the US Air Force act in time," said Gul, noting that fighters were not scrambled from nearby bases, but instead were scrambled from bases that were farther away from the hijacked planes.

"The time that it took was enormous, it was 120 minutes, a very long time in which to act - was the US Air Force sleeping and if it was sleeping which heads were rolled?" asked Gul, adding that if the botched response was a mere intelligence failure then why was nobody disciplined or taken to task and why had nobody resigned.

"The air traffic control should have been re-hashed, it should have been turned inside out, but nothing of the sort happened," said Gul.

Gul then questioned why standard operating procedure was not followed, stating, "In the past within minutes the US aircraft has been on the wing of the hijacked aircraft, in this case it did not happen, the US alert system is so high and it is so

sophisticated that if a missile was to take off from Moscow and was to head towards New York, the US Air Force and the missile system is supposed to intercept it within nine minutes...the system is in place but it did not work and nobody tried to question this."

Gul then highlighted the implausible proficiency of alleged Flight 77 lead hijacker Hani Hanjour, who according to his flight instructors could barely fly a Cessna yet supposedly pulled off maneuvers that crack military pilots would have difficulty achieving in order to hit the Pentagon.

"The height (of the plane) was 9,000 (feet) and it came within seconds to a height of 1,000 and then went straight into its target, this is not possible for a person who has been trained on a light aircraft to be able to do this," said Gul.

Gul said that he routinely confronts American journalists about why they do not probe into 9/11, and that they respond by telling Gul that the Patriot Act gets in the way and they are "not supposed to ask such questions".

Gul said that as a result of 9/11 "everything has gone wrong with the world" and the motive behind the events being staged were largely geopolitical, and were used to exploit a window of opportunity for the US to go into strategic areas where there was no US presence before, as well as beating China in dominating the energy tap of the world: the middle east and south Asia.

Gul joins a raft of former government officials and intelligence heads in questioning 9/11, the most recent of which was former Italian President Francesco Cossiga, who last December said that the attacks were carried out by elements of the CIA and Mossad.

Paul Watson is an investigative journalist at www.PrisonPlanet.com. He is the author of Order Out of Chaos published in 2003.

Slavery, American Style Must Go!

SLAVERY from p. 3

and unashamedly concentrate their activities on the children of the poor.

Far from evincing a drop of "compassion," the AFL-CIO said the Bush 2008 fiscal budget "cuts more than one billion (\$) in job training and employment programs," this "just a week after he (Bush) talked about the need for better training and assistance to help America's workers compete in a global economy." It noted, too, the Bush budget "eliminates current job training for unemployed adults and at-risk youths."

This has had particularly tragic consequences for African-American youth, pushing their jobless rate up in some cities up to about 50 percent. And let's not kid ourselves: a disproportionate number of the 2.3 million souls in America's expanding prisons are African-American precisely because when people can't earn income they'll steal. As Barbara Ehrenreich wrote in *The Progressive* magazine, "We

are fast reaching the point, if we have not passed it already, where the largest public housing program in America will be our penitentiary system." Over two thousand years ago Aristotle said "Poverty is the parent of crime and revolution" and that's still true today.

In 1962, the National Urban League's Whitney Young called for a "Domestic Marshall Plan." It was a very good idea then but needs to be expanded to meet today's national emergency. Last January, economist Joseph Stiglitz said the downturn could be stopped in part by strengthening the unemployment insurance system, and that surely needs to be done. The focus must not be on bailing out the fat cats at the top but on making jobs and providing income for those whom FDR called the forgotten men and women at the base of the economic pyramid. And a good place to begin is to slash Pentagon spending for its morbid weapons system development and its endless wars. Imagine what might have been achieved here at home

with the trillion bucks lavished on the illegal war in Iraq! (And the total bill may yet be \$3 trillion!)

Urgently needed is a public-private sector partnership to refurbish our infrastructure, expand our moderate- and low-income housing supply, (renewing our inner cities, old-line suburbs and failing small towns,) to reinvigorate our mass transit, to retrain the unskilled, to tutor the unlettered, and to make college or vocational training available to every citizen. Let's put an end to wage slavery once and for all. If the Obama administration will only concentrate on nurturing the grass roots, every aspect of American life might one day bloom as a garden.

Sherwood Ross, formerly a reporter for the Chicago Daily News and talk show host at WOL Radio, Washington, currently directs a public relations firm for non-profit organizations. Reach him at sherwoodr1@yahoo.com

Obama to Escalate Afghan War

ESCALATE from p. 1

move back in.... If the Europeans decided to go they wouldn't that much missed, frankly. Some of them are in the way."

Britain, on the other hand, will remain a key partner, though battles in Helmand Province (where British troops are deployed) will increasingly be fought by US combat troops and led by US commanders.

According to *The Sunday Telegraph*, Obama is going to ask Britain to send 3,000 more troops — especially elite forces — to Afghanistan when the remaining British front-line forces are pulled out of Iraq next summer.

A "US military intelligence official who was aware of discussions among Mr. Obama's foreign policy team" said: "There won't be any excuse to be anti-American any more.... Allies will be expected to pull their weight. That's a fair assessment."

A senior British diplomat told *The Sunday Telegraph*: "Obama will be very tough on Afghanistan.

The major PR headache next year is how we sell the withdrawal of troops from Iraq to the Americans." Obama "will publicly say it's fine, but in return he will want them sent to Afghanistan."

British qualms

For its part, the British military appears to be divided on this question. Previously, we reported statements by the new head of the British army that 5,000 more British troops should be sent to Afghanistan.

Since then, one of Britain's most senior military officers, Lieutenant General Sir Peter Wall has warned that there is no point in sending reinforcements to Afghanistan until the Afghans themselves are able to control the ground captured by foreign troops. The idea that "flooding" Afghanistan with a "whole load" more troops is not a good solution, says Wall.

The chief of the defense staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, has also "given a clear warning to ministers that troops should not be

transferred from Iraq to Afghanistan when Britain's military commitment there is scaled down next year."

We've been here before. British military qualms did not stop Tony Blair joining George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq, and there seems little reason to believe that similar qualms today will prevent Gordon Brown from being equally subservient.

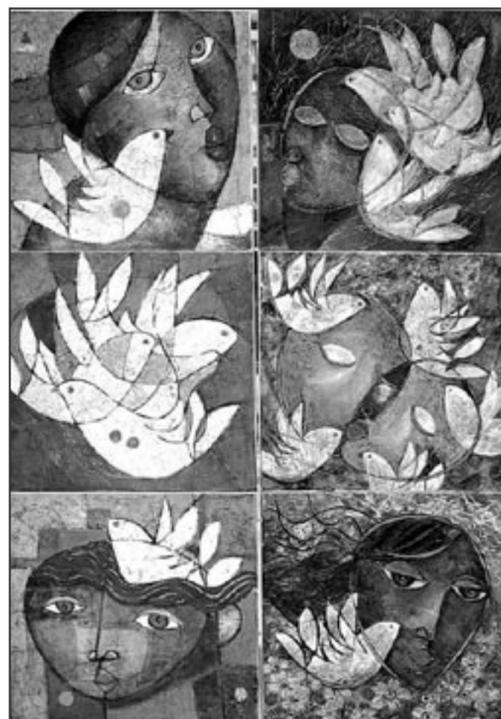
A senior British official told the *Financial Times* a few days after the US presidential election: "When president Obama phones Gordon Brown and says: 'Gordon... you need to send more forces to Afghanistan', that's something that the Prime Minister won't be able to resist. Brown will want to get alongside him. So we need to start planning for that possibility."

Gabriel Carlyle writes on matters of war and peace from his home in London. He is an anti-war activist with Voices in the Wilderness UK. He is currently the Reviews Editor at PeaceNews in London.

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The Bill of Rights

The Conventions of a number of the States having, at the time of adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added, and as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government will best insure the beneficent ends of its institution; Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two-thirds of both Houses concurring, that the following articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States; all or any of which articles, when ratified by three-fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the said Constitution, namely:

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

Do We Still Need the Bill of Rights?

BILL OF RIGHTS from p. 3

embargo?" His answer: "What responsibility do you have for what your government does?"

Our American ancestors were easily able to avoid conflating the federal government and the private sector. They had learned an important lesson from history and from personal experience, a lesson that unfortunately has been lost on many modern-day Americans: the greatest threat to the freedom and well-being of a citizenry lies not with foreigners but rather with their own government, especially a government with a large standing military force.

Limited-governmental powers

So why did our ancestors bring the federal government into existence? The answer lies in what Thomas Jefferson explained in the Declaration of Independence: they believed that while people's rights exist independently of government, government is necessary to protect the exercise of such rights from those who would prevent that exercise, such as foreign invaders.

The problem, however, was obvious. Since government is the greatest threat of all to people's lives, liberty, property, and well-being but, at the same time, necessary to protect such rights from others, how do the people reach a proper balance? After all, what good would it do to call government into existence to protect people's rights if the result was the violation of such rights by the government?

The answer our ancestors came up with was the Constitution and, specifically, divided government (i.e., federalism) and the enumerated-powers doctrine. Calling the federal government into existence, the Constitution, at the same time, made a startling declaration: the federal government's powers would be limited — and limited to those powers enumerated in the document itself.

In other words, one option would have been to call a government into existence that had general powers to do whatever federal officials believed was in the best interests of the nation. There was no way that our American ancestors would ever have done that, given their conviction that the federal government would constitute the greatest threat to their freedom and their rights.

So they did something else. Using the Constitution to call the federal government into existence, they created a document to enumerate a relatively small list of powers that each branch of the federal government would be permitted to exercise. They then essentially declared that no other powers could be exercised. That is, if a power wasn't enumerated, it simply couldn't be employed by federal officials.

One of the most remarkable aspects of all this is that people were limiting the powers of their own government in a formal, structured way. People all over the world, whose families had lived under omnipotent government for centuries, were stunned by such an audacious experiment.

Ordinarily, that would have been the end of it. But it wasn't. Because our American ancestors, suspicious people that they were, were still not satisfied. As a condition of accepting the existence of the federal government, they demanded that the document be amended soon after ratification. The purpose of the amendments was to expressly prohibit federal officials from trampling on the fundamental and procedural rights of the people,

rights that would be expressly named in the amendments.

There were those who said that no such amendments were necessary. After all, the enumerated-powers doctrine meant that if a power wasn't enumerated, it couldn't be exercised. Thus, since the Constitution did not delegate to Congress the power to suspend freedom of speech or freedom of religion, for example, Congress simply could not do so.

Why a Bill of Rights?

That wasn't good enough for the American people. They demanded express prohibitions and express guarantees of rights. Why? The answer is obvious. They believed that federal power would inevitably attract people with pro-tyranny mind sets, including people with good intentions and zeal.

There were those who pointed out the obvious risk involved with a bill of rights. If the bill enumerates some rights, government officials down the ages might conclude that unlisted rights were not worthy of protection. To solve that problem, the Ninth Amendment was included. It says that the list of enumerated rights should not be construed to be all-inclusive.

An important question arises: Is the Bill of Rights still necessary? After all, many Americans do not view the federal government with the same suspicion and distrust that their American ancestors did. As pointed out earlier, in the minds of many present-day Americans "we are the government." Moreover, in modern times the federal government has become our provider, especially with respect to our retirement, health care, education, food stamps, business subsidies, protection from competition, and other forms of government welfare.

So why not simply abolish the Bill of Rights and give federal officials, once and for all, the full power to enact any measures that they believe are in the best interests of the nation and the nation's security. Surely, when we give our provider and protector full powers, we can count on it to do the right thing and not infringe our rights and liberties, right? In fact, why do we even need a Congress? Why not simply let the president rule by decree? We can count on our (democratically elected) president to do the correct thing, right? After all, he is an American and we did elect him, right?

Unrestrained government

Well, let's examine how US federal officials operate when not constrained by the Constitution to get a hint of what life would be like here in the United States without the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Let's examine the conduct of US federal officials in Cuba, where US officials built the Guantanamo Bay prison camp and a special judicial system in the expectation that the US Constitution would not apply.

It is easy to recognize one important thing about Gitmo — how different its judicial system is from the one that our American ancestors established. When federal officials had the unrestrained power to construct an independent judicial system for the world to marvel at, here is what they came up with in Cuba:

- No trial by jury. Trial by jury is a fundamental precept of America's federal criminal-justice system. If the government accuses a person of a crime, he doesn't have to accept a trial in which the judge, who might well

be as crooked as a dog's hind leg, is deciding his guilt or innocence. He can choose to have ordinary people in the community judge his guilt or innocence. We know how federal officials feel about the right of trial by jury by the fact that it is one of the rights that the accused are denied at Gitmo. The last thing that Pentagon officials are going to permit at Gitmo is a trial by a jury of one's peers. Instead, the deciders of guilt or innocence are military officials, all of whom are ultimately answerable to their superiors in the Pentagon.

- No right to counsel. While it's true that the Guantanamo prisoners now have access to lawyers, it wasn't always that way. In the beginning, US officials took the position that prisoners in their system accused of terrorism did not have the right to an attorney. It was only after the federal judiciary ordered otherwise that federal officials gave in.

- No right to confront witnesses. Convictions at Guantanamo can be based on hearsay evidence. If Person A tells Person B that Person A saw the accused commit a crime, the Gitmo system, unlike the American system, permits Person B to testify about the statement. The defendant and his attorney are denied the right to confront and cross-examine Person A, the actual person who is making the accusation.

- No right to be free from cruel and unusual punishments and no right to be free from self-incrimination. At Guantanamo Bay, military officials have tortured and sexually abused prisoners, with the intent of using their statements at trial. The use of such statements is now in doubt only because of US judicial intervention, not because the Pentagon changed its view of what it considers to be a model judicial system.

- No right to freedom of speech. Criminal defendants at Gitmo are not permitted to speak to the press or to their families, not even to voice complaints about mistreatment. At Gitmo, government power is omnipotent.

The list, of course, goes on. It would be even worse if we were to consider US actions in Iraq, where US officials have, by and large, been able to operate without constitutional constraints. We also shouldn't forget the suspension by Congress, at the request of the president, of the centuries-old privilege known as habeas corpus for foreigners at Gitmo. Habeas corpus is the linchpin of a free society, which is perhaps why Congress suspended it. Our American ancestors who demanded the enactment of the Bill of Rights would not have been surprised, especially given that the First Amendment, by specifically mentioning Congress, implies that that political body is the greatest threat to such fundamental rights as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion.

What US officials have done in Cuba confirms the wisdom of our American ancestors. They knew that in the absence of the Bill of Rights, US officials would do the things that the Bill of Rights prohibits. They were right. We need the Bill of Rights as much as they did, if not more so. Thank God for their wisdom, courage, and foresight.

Jacob Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.

IRAQ War Spending Hammers Economy

RECESSION from p. 1

Dating Committee met, via conference call, on November 28, 2008; the committee determined that the US economy had peaked in December 2007, marking the end of an expansion that began November 2001.

The NBER defines a recession as "...a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in production, employment, real income, and other indicators. A recession begins when the economy reaches a peak of activity and ends when the economy reaches its trough. Between trough and peak, the economy is in an expansion."

Since many factors are involved in an economic recession the NBER uses domestic production and employment as the primary

measurements of economic activity. Using the payroll employment measure, which is based on a large survey of employers, as the most dependable comprehensive estimate of employment; the NBER determined that employment peaked in December 2007 and has declined every month since.

CNNmoney.com reports, that "employers have trimmed payrolls by 1.2 million jobs in the first 10 months of this year. On [November 28,] economists are predicting the government will report a loss of another 325,000 jobs for November." (Chris Isidore, "It's Official Recession since Dec. '07", December 1, 2008, CNNMoney.com)

NBER also considered other economic factors such as, real personal income, real manufacturing and wholesale-retail trade

sales, industrial production and employment estimates. According to NBER all of these sectors reached peaks between November 2007 and June 2008. The report concludes that although the indicators that the NBER uses are considered by NBER to be the most important measures in determining economic activity, "...there is no fixed rule about which other measures may; contribute information to the process in any particular episode."

Timothy Homan and Steve Matthews of Bloomberg.com report that at the last meeting of the Federal Reserve policy makers they predicted the economy would continue to contract through the middle of 2009, in line with private economists' forecasts. If correct, the recession would be the longest since the Great Depression. (Timothy R. Homan and Steve Matthews, "Recession in US Started in December 2007, NBER Says; Update2," Bloomberg.com, Dec. 1, 2008). The Homan article goes on to quote Jeffrey Frankel, a

member of the NBER committee as saying: "It is clearly not going to end in a few months. We would be lucky to get done with it in the middle of next year."

Stiglitz and Bilmes concluded in their March 2008 article, "Others will have to work out the geopolitics, but the economics here are clear. Ending the war, or at least moving rapidly to wind it down, would yield major economic dividends."

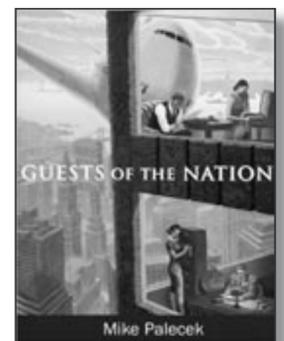
Meanwhile, the US auto industry is at the brink of collapse, unemployment is at 6.7 percent, a lack of credit, and falling property and stock values will push Americans to be even more frugal.

This is the second confirmed recession under President George W. Bush's watch, making him the first US president since Richard Nixon to preside over two recessions.

Elaine Sullivan is Health Editor for the Rock Creek Free Press in Washington, DC.

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