

Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

APRIL 2003

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 4

A Request to the United Nations

The following position paper of the Nebraskans for Peace State Board appeared in the April 7, 2003 Omaha World-Herald under the title, "U.S. undertook war on dubious pretenses." UNL Professor and State Board member Paul Olson was the principal author.

We urge that at some point in the near future, the United Nations determine whether the United State's claim of a need to go to war was in fact accurate. We began the war despite U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's warning that it might violate international law, despite Pope John Paul II's claim that it is not a just war, despite a similar warning from our only living Nobel Prize-winning president and despite the condemnations of almost every mainline religious leader. We have done so in defiance of China, India, Russia, France, Germany, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, most of the Muslim world and many other countries.

The U.S. claim at the beginning turned on two points: (1) Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction; (2) he has the means to deliver these to injure the U.S.

The U.S. claims are in dispute. Hans Blix and the U.N. weapons inspectors were not able to verify them. The majority of the members of the U.N. Security Council did not find them sufficiently credible to vote with us. Certainly fabricated evidence was the basis of part of our initial claim. That is, we now know that the documents indicating Iraqi

importation of uranium from Niger were forged. Senator Jay Rockefeller, D-W. Va, has called for an investigation of the forgery, and, tellingly, the U.S. no longer claims that Iraq is making nuclear bombs.

The rest of our evidence for going to war is not above suspicion either (as it was not in the Spanish-American War, World War I, and the Vietnam War). The primary evidence that Iraq was manufacturing really dangerous weapons came from Hussein Kamel, Saddam's son-in-law who headed his weapons program. Kamel defected to the West, gave the U.S. his information, and then decided to back to Iraq to his family. On his return, he was killed by his father-in-law. He was not giving us disinformation, according to *Newsweek*.

Kamel's testimony is more complex than Washington has admitted. When it was cited by the United States to drum up support for the war, only part of his testimony was used. A transcript of his full UNSCOM testimony obtained by Glen Rangala of Cambridge University includes Kamel's indication that he headed the weapons program but later, during the inspections, ordered all biological, chemical, long-range missile, and nuclear weapons destroyed. He apparently did the same for all anthrax and VX production.

Rangala did not obtain this document until February 2003, after war fever was very high, even though UNSCOM had it a

year earlier (and the CIA and the British MI6 since 1995 <http://www.fair.org/press-releases/kamel.pdf>). The raising of war fever went on for months after we apparently had evidence that refuted our claims.

We now know, from a recent "Frontline" broadcast and from the *Wall Street Journal*, that central figures in the White House advisory group, especially Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, had the conquest of all Iraq in mind from the mid-'90s and, to a degree, from the time of the Gulf War. They needed the weapons of mass destruction claim. Yet it may not be true.

We believe it important that all sites claimed to be sites where weapons of mass destruction have been located or manufactured, and all vehicles said to be

capable of delivering them to hurt the United States, be reported to the United Nations as soon as they are found and before the site is disturbed.

We ask that U.N. inspectors undertake the examination of such sites immediately in cases where the location is not in harm's way. Where it is in harm's way, we ask that the sites be inspected after hostilities in the area have ceased, in order to determine any weapon's provenance, age, character and lethality.

Neither Iraqis nor Americans should have been asked to die on the basis of unverified allegation or forged evidence.

We therefore ask that the United Nations undertake such scrutiny, that the U.S. ambassador support it and that our Nebraska senators and representatives endorse it as well.

"We should not march into Baghdad... To occupy Iraq would instantly shatter our coalition, turning the whole Arab world against us, and make a broken tyrant into a latter-day Arab hero... assigning young soldiers to a fruitless hunt for a securely entrenched dictator and condemning them to fight in what would be an unwinnable urban guerrilla war. It could only plunge that part of the world into even greater instability."

— George Bush, Sr., 1998. *A World Transformed*

inside:

Blueprint for a New American Century	p. 3	The Chiapas Project & The Chiapas Media Project	p. 6
Noam Chomsky on the War on Iraq	p. 4	War as Addiction	p. 7
Colombia: A Broken Country	p. 5	The Case for Repealing LB 775	p. 8
		Think Globally, Eat Locally	p. 9
		A Letter to My Grandsons	p. 11
		From the Bottom by Sally Herrin	p. 12

Nebraskans for Peace Phone: 402-475-4620/Fax: 475-4624
941 'O' St., Ste. 1026 E-mail: nfpstate@redjellyfish.net
Lincoln, NE 68508 www.nebraskansforpeace.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 310
Lincoln, NE

Nebraska Report

The *Nebraska Report* is published nine times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

Newspaper Committee: Tim Rinne, Editor

Sarah Disbrow, Bud Narveson, Byron Peterson, Charlie Flowerday

Typesetting and Layout: Ben Knauss

Printing: Fremont Tribune

Circulation: 6,500

Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: *Nebraska Report*, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508. E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com

Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraskans for Peace is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

State Board of Directors

Sayre Andersen, Deb Brownyard, Henry D'Souza, Bob Epp (Treasurer), Marsha Fangmeyer, Michael Gordon, Donna Gould, Richard Hargesheimer, Leah Hunter, John Krejci (Secretary), Rich Maciejewski, Carol McShane (President), Frances Mendenhall, Tara Muir, Patrick Murray, Paul Olson, Byron Peterson, Del Roper, Deirdre Routt, Linda Ruchala, Jay Schmidt, Jeanette Sulzman (Vice President), Mark Vasina, Sue Ellen Wall, Virginia Walsh. Tim Rinne (State Coordinator), Ben Knauss (State Office Manager), Susan Alleman (Membership Coordinator), 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508, Phone: 402-475 4620, Fax: 402-475-4624, Email: nfpstate@redjellyfish.net; Daniel Lawse (Omaha Coordinator), P.O. Box 3682, Omaha, NE 68103, Phone: 402-453-0776.

Contact Congress & Capitol Contacts

President George W. Bush

The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Sen. Chuck Hagel

346 Senate Russell Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224

202-224-5213 (FAX)
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
402-758-8981 (Omaha)
308-632-6032 (Scottsbluff)

Sen. Ben Nelson

Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Room B40-5
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551

202-228-0012 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-441-4600 (Lincoln)

ben_nelson@bennelson.senate.gov

Rep. Doug Bereuter

1st Congressional District
2184 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4806
202-225-5686 (FAX)
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)

Rep. Lee Terry

1728 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4155
202-226-5452 (FAX)
402-397-9944 (Omaha)

Rep. Tom Osborne

507 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6435
202-226-1385 (FAX)
308-381-5555 (Grand Island)

Capitol Hill Switchboard

202-224-3121

State Capitol Switchboard

402-471-2311

State Senator, District

State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Governor Mike Johanns

PO Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
402-471-2244

Moving? Send us your new Address

Name (print) _____

Old Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Old Phone # _____

New Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

New Phone # _____

Nebraskans for Peace Membership...

I want to ___ BEGIN ___ RENEW MEMBERSHIP

\$35 Individual \$25 Introductory (new member only)

\$50 Household \$10 Student/Low income

Peacemaking Covenant pledge of \$_____ per:

month quarter year

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION ONLY: \$10/year

Payment method: check cash credit card

MasterCard/Visa # _____

Expires _____ Signature _____

Name (print) _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Blueprint for a New American Century

On War &
Iraq

by Bud Narveson

As the great American writer and anti-imperialist Mark Twain wrote in the early part of the last century, "When the only tool you have is a hammer, all your problems look like nails."

—from a commentary heard on the Canadian Broadcasting System

Since the elevation of George W. Bush to its presidency, the U.S. has withdrawn from world organizations one after another, and—in Iraq—has relied on the hammer of sheer military strength to achieve its international goals. The blueprint for American world hegemony is a document of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), self-described as “a non-profit educational organization supporting American military, diplomatic, and moral leadership.”

Among the founding members of the “Project,” listed along with the positions they now hold in the Bush Administration, were Vice-President Dick Cheney; Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; Paul Wolfowitz of the Defense Department; Richard Perle, member and former head of the defense advisory board; Louis Libby, Cheney’s chief of staff; John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control; and Elliot Cohen of the defense policy board.

In the PNAC document’s list of sources of world leadership, the military comes first.

To quote from the official summary of the PNAC (June 3, 1997), available on the project’s website:

- we need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;
- we need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
- we need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;
- we need to accept responsibility for America’s unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles.

The goals of “A Project for a New American Century,” the summary of which

the above quotation is part, were proposed by Cheney et. al. during the presidency of George Bush I, revised during the final years of President Clinton’s second term, and after September 11, 2001 became the guiding policy of George Bush II.

To what extent are the policies proposed by the PNAC being carried out? As summarized in an Canadian Broadcasting Corporation commentary, to a very great extent:

“They urged that the U.S. abandon the anti-ballistic missile treaty. It has.

They wanted establishment of more permanent U.S. military bases abroad. That is happening in the Philippines and in Georgia, and [will likely happen] in Iraq.

They urged regime change as a goal of foreign wars, and not just in Iraq.

They wanted the U.S. as a global ‘constabulary’—their word—unburdened by the United Nations or world opinion, preventing any challenge to U.S. dominance.

But, they wrote a year before Sept. 11, such aspirations are unlikely to be realized without ‘a catastrophic and catalyzing event... like a new Pearl Harbor.’”

Given what the CBC calls their “aspirations,” it would surprise no one aware of the PNAC document if the horrifying events of September 11 were welcomed as an opportunity by its signatories.

Though no evidence so far suggests that Bush and company engineered the September 11 attacks, some do suspect that they did less than they might have to prevent them—even that they went so far as to suspend standing orders for U.S. fighter planes to scramble as soon as an airliner hijacking was detected. (See the following excerpts from a Sunder Katwala interview with Gore Vidal published in the web edition of the English paper *The Observer* on Sunday October 27, 2002 and available at the following web address:

<http://www.observer.co.uk/worldview/story/0,11581,819941,00.html>)

Katwala writes:

“America’s most controversial writer Gore Vidal has launched the most scathing attack to date on George W. Bush’s presidency, calling for an investigation into the events of 9/11 to discover whether the Bush Administration deliberately chose not

to act on warnings of Al-Qaeda’s plans.

Vidal’s highly controversial 7000-word polemic titled ‘The Enemy Within’—published in the print edition of *The Observer* today—argues that what he calls a ‘Bush junta’ used the terrorist attacks as a pretext to enact a pre-existing agenda to invade Afghanistan and crack down on civil liberties at home.”

Katwala quotes Vidal:

“‘It is an article of faith that there are no conspiracies in American life. Yet, a year or so ago, who would have thought that most of corporate America had been conspiring with accountants to cook their books since—well, at least the bright dawn of the era of Reagan and deregulation.’”

Katwala continues:

“At the heart of [Vidal’s] essay are questions about the events of 9/11 itself and the two hours after the planes were hijacked. Vidal writes that ‘astonished military experts cannot fathom why the government’s ‘automatic standard order of procedure in the event of a hijacking’ was not followed.

These procedures, says Vidal, determine that fighter planes should automatically be sent aloft as soon as a plane has deviated from its flight plan. Presidential authority is not required until a plane is to be shot down. But, on 11 September, no decision to start launching planes was taken until 9.40 a.m., 80 minutes after air controllers first knew that Flight 11 had been hijacked and 50 minutes after the first plane had struck the North Tower.

‘By law, the fighters should have been up at around 8:15 a.m. If they had, all the hijacked planes might have been diverted and shot down.’

Vidal asks why Bush, as Commander-in-Chief, stayed in a Florida classroom as news of the attacks broke: ‘The behavior of President Bush on 11 September certainly gives rise to not unnatural suspicions.’ He also attacks the ‘nonchalance’ of General Richard B. Myers, acting Joint Chief of Staff, in failing to respond until the planes had crashed into the twin towers.

Vidal draws comparisons with another ‘day of infamy’ in American history, writing that, ‘The truth about Pearl Harbor is

obscured to this day. But it has been much studied. 11 September, it is plain, is never going to be investigated if Bush has anything to say about it.’ He quotes CNN reports that Bush personally asked Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle to limit congressional investigation of the day itself, ostensibly on grounds of not diverting resources from the anti-terror campaign.”

By so long delaying investigation, the Bush Administration has invited the kind of suspicions reflected in the CBC commentary and in the Vidal interview.

And is it not equally a cause for suspicion that a preemptive war on Iraq, long advocated by writers of the PNAC document, seems to have become a firm administration intention immediately after the September 11 attacks? U.S. rationale for such a war—Iraq’s supposed violation of UN resolutions, Iraq’s support of international terrorism, Saddam’s murderous rule over his own people—has shifted continually.

Indeed, Hans Blix, chief UN weapons inspector, reportedly said in an interview in Spain (April 9, 2003): “There is evidence that this war was planned well in advance. Sometimes this raises doubts about their [the U.S.’s] attitude to the (weapons) inspections,” Blix told Spanish daily *El Pais*. (Portions of this report excerpted below are from <http://truthout.org/imgs.site_01/2.ClrSpC.indent_2.gif>)

Blix said that he thought the U.S. might initially have believed Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (although its “fabrication” of evidence raised doubts about even that), but that Washington was now less convinced by its own claims.

“I think the Americans started the war thinking there were some. I think they now believe less in that possibility.”

“But I don’t know—you ask yourself a lot of questions when you see the things they did to try and demonstrate that the Iraqis had nuclear weapons, like the fake contract with Niger,” he explained.

Blix said the war was “a very high price to pay in terms of human lives and the destruction of a country,” when the threat of weapons proliferation could have been contained by UN inspections.



Noam Chomsky

on the War on Iraq

Noam Chomsky, University Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, founder of the modern science of linguistics and political activist, is a powerhouse of anti-imperialist activism in the United States today. On March 21, a crowded and typical—and uniquely Chomskian—day of political protest and scientific academic research, he spoke from his office for half an hour to V. K. Ramachandran on the current attack on Iraq. This interview was published on ZNet (www.zmag.org) on April 3, 2003 under the title, "Iraq Is A Trial Run."

V. K. Ramachandran: Does the present aggression on Iraq represent a continuation of United States' international policy in recent years or a qualitatively new stage in that policy?

Noam Chomsky: It represents a significantly new phase. It is not without precedent, but significantly new nevertheless.

This should be seen as a trial run. Iraq is seen as an extremely easy and totally defenceless target. It is assumed, probably correctly, that the society will collapse, that the soldiers will go in and that the U.S. will be in control, and will establish the regime of its choice and military bases. They will then go on to the harder cases that will follow. The next case could be the Andean region, it could be Iran, it could be others.

The trial run is to try and establish what the U.S. calls a "new norm" in international relations. The new norm is "preventive war." Notice that new norms are established only by the United States. So, for example, when India invaded East Pakistan to terminate horrendous massacres, it did not establish a new norm of humanitarian intervention, because India is the wrong country, and besides, the U.S. was strenuously opposed to that action.

This is not pre-emptive war; there is a crucial difference. Pre-emptive war has a meaning, it means that, for example, if planes are flying across the Atlantic to bomb the United States, the United States is permitted to shoot them down even before they bomb and may be permitted to attack the air bases from which they came. Pre-emptive war is a response to ongoing or imminent attack.

The doctrine of preventive war is totally different; it holds that the United States—alone, since nobody else has this right—has the right to attack any country that it claims to be a potential challenge to it. So if the United States claims, on whatever grounds, that someone may sometime threaten it, then it can attack them.

The doctrine of preventive war was announced explicitly in the National Security Strategy last September. It sent shudders around the world, including through the U.S. establishment, where, I might say, opposition to the war is unusually high. The Security Strategy said, in effect, that the U.S. will rule the world by force, which is the dimension—the only dimension—in which it is supreme. Furthermore, it will do so for the indefinite future, because if any potential challenge arises to U.S. domination, the U.S. will destroy it before it becomes a challenge.

This is the first exercise of that doctrine. If it succeeds on these terms, as it presumably will, because the target is so defenseless, then international lawyers and Western intellectuals and others will begin to talk about a new norm in international affairs. It is important to establish such a norm if you expect to rule the world by force for the foreseeable future.

This is not without precedent, but it is extremely unusual. I shall mention one precedent, just to show how narrow the spectrum is. In 1963, Dean Acheson, who was a much respected elder statesman and senior Adviser of the Kennedy Administration, gave an important talk to the American Society of International Law, in which he justified the U.S. attacks against Cuba. The attack by the Kennedy Administration on Cuba was large-scale

international terrorism and economic warfare. The timing was interesting—it was right after the Missile Crisis, when the world was very close to a terminal nuclear war. In his speech, Acheson said that no "legal issue" arises when the United States responds to a challenge to its "power, position, or prestige," or words approximating that.

That is also a statement of the Bush doctrine. Although Acheson was an important figure, what he said had not been official government policy in the post-War period. It now stands as official policy and this is the first illustration of it. It is intended to provide a precedent for the future.

Such "norms" are established only when a Western power does something, not when others do. That is part of the deep racism of Western culture, going back through centuries of imperialism and so deep that it is unconscious.

So I think this war is an important new step, and is intended to be.

Ramachandran: Is it also a new phase in that the U.S. has not been able to carry others with it?

Chomsky: That is not new. In the case of the Vietnam War, for example, the United States did not even try to get international support. Nevertheless, you are right in that this is unusual. This is a case in which the United States was compelled for political reasons to try to force the world to accept its position and was not able to, which is quite unusual. Usually, the world succumbs.

Ramachandran: So does it represent a "failure of diplomacy" or a redefinition of diplomacy itself?

Chomsky: I wouldn't call it diplomacy at all—it's a failure of coercion.

Compare it with the first Gulf War. In the first Gulf War, the U.S. coerced the Security Council into accepting its position, although much of the world opposed it. NATO went along, and the one country in the Security Council that did not—Yemen—was immediately and severely punished.

In any legal system that you take seriously, coerced judgments are considered invalid, but in the international affairs conducted by the powerful, coerced judgments are fine—they are called diplomacy.

What is interesting about this case is that the coercion did not work. There were countries—in fact, most of them—who stubbornly maintained the position of the vast majority of their populations.

The most dramatic case is Turkey. Turkey is a vulnerable country, vulnerable to U.S. punishment and inducements. Nevertheless, the new government, I think to everyone's surprise, did maintain the position of about 90 percent of its population. Turkey is bitterly condemned for that here, just as France and Germany are bitterly condemned because they took the position of the overwhelming majority of their populations. The countries that are praised are countries like Italy and Spain, whose leaders agreed to follow orders from Washington over the opposition of maybe 90 percent of their populations.

That is another new step. I cannot think of another case where hatred and contempt for democracy have so openly been proclaimed, not just by the government, but also by liberal commentators and others. There is now a whole literature trying to explain why France, Germany, the so-called "old Europe," and Turkey and others are trying to undermine the United States. It is inconceivable to the pundits that they are doing so because they take democracy seriously and they think that when the overwhelming majority of a population

COLOMBIA A BROKEN COUNTRY

The U.S. war on Iraq has eclipsed coverage of just about everything else on the planet. But Iraq is not the only nation currently engulfed in war—or the only nation where the heavy hand of U.S. foreign policy is making its presence felt. Our government has a long, disreputable history of military intervention in Latin America that continues to this day. As NFP member Steve Ratzlaff's article about his recent trip to Colombia demonstrates, both the Clinton and the Bush Administrations have directly fueled the fires of conflict here in our own hemisphere. Given what has just transpired in Iraq, we can sadly expect our interactions with the rest of the world to become even more belligerent in the foreseeable future.

*by Rev. Steve Ratzlaff
First Mennonite Church in Lincoln*

Angel Pinto, a resident of Puerto Asis, Colombia (Putumayo province near the Ecuadorian border), relates the story of the night he heard gunshots outside of his home. He looked out the window and saw that three men (members of the paramilitary group in the area) had shot another man in both his legs. One of the men left the scene and the other two walked a ways down the street. The man who had been shot dragged himself to the door of Angel's house and scratched on the door.

Angel knew that if he opened the door to help that both he and the man lying at his door would be killed. A few minutes later the two paramilitary men came to the door and dragged the wounded man into a taxi and drove away. A short time later the local police showed up at Angel's door and asked what had happened. Angel said that someone had been shot and taken away. After a few minutes the three paramilitary men arrived in a taxi and drove away with the police officer.

This story is only one of many that helps to describe the state of violence in the nation of Colombia. There are three main armed groups—the guerrillas, the paramilitaries, the state army—who end up terrorizing much of the population. They do it by intimidation, assassination, disappearances and by kidnapping. Colombia has 3,500 people who have been kidnapped—the largest number in the world. Only Russia has more journalists who have been assassinated. Only Sudan has a higher number of displaced people in the world. One thousand people flee from their homes every day in Colombia. 33,000 people were killed in Colombia last year. There is no country that has assassinated more labor union leaders than Colombia. Both the guerrillas and the paramilitaries use the production of coca to finance their

operations. The state army relies on government money and dollars that come from U.S. aid through "Plan Colombia." As a result of all this violent action, Colombia is a country that is broken. The social system has broken down... education is no longer a possibility for many children, hunger is rampant and health care almost nonexistent. Civilian populations and indigenous peoples are bearing the brunt of the violence as each armed group tries to secure territory and power. The drug trade is the pretext for



This young boy in Puerto Asis, Colombia in the Putumayo province is one of one thousand people who are displaced everyday by the civil war.

most U.S. aid to this country but most Colombians are convinced that oil is the ultimate aim. Colombia sits on large oil reserves... only a few of which have been developed because of the violence that exists there.

Our own government supplies \$1.3 million a day to the Colombian government, much of which is used for military support. Most of the rest is used for aerial spraying of coca fields. A small amount is actually used to ease the hunger and social suffering that Colombia is experiencing. The fumigation of coca fields is indiscriminate and often results in land that will not be usable for years. And not only are coca fields being sprayed but regular crops as well. One farmer said that the "U.S. seems intent on doing away with agriculture and farmers in the country." Many farmers say that the fumigations have been much more damaging to their way of life than the actual fighting.

Colombia is a nation of about 42 million people. It has a budget of \$25 billion. Forty-two percent of that budget is used to pay back debt that they owe to foreign banks. Nearly a third is used for the military and its

battle against the armed groups in the countryside. Seventeen percent is used for administration and eight percent for all other social programs—health, education, hunger, housing, etc. The rich in Colombia are getting richer and taking over more and more of the land. Less than one percent of the property owners in Colombia own 62 percent of the land. The rich own the press, the soft drink companies, the oil companies... almost any major enterprise. One Colombian congressman referred to

government is enabling this and even helping this to continue through "Plan Colombia." We, also, sow seeds of violence and despair through our military support and our desire for oil.

I recently returned from a two-week trip to this war-torn land. I admit that I found myself apologizing to Colombian congressmen, campesinos and widows for my government's part in the destruction of their nation. It is appalling to see how the tax dollars that we pay here in the U.S. are being used to lay waste another nation in Latin America. We are adding to the misery and suffering in Colombia through our military aid as well as in the aerial spraying of coca fields, which incidently are being carried out by U.S. pilots who are using chemicals provided by Monsanto. But perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of our "aid" to this Andean nation is our blatant interest in oil. The Arauca oil pipeline that is owned by Occidental Oil and is being protected by U.S. troops lies within a few miles of the Venezuelan border. It is not accidental that we are trying to establish a military presence here.

Venezuela is the fifth-largest producer of oil in the world and has been experiencing unrest and strikes recently. The U.S. wants to be close by in case there is opportunity to affect control of Venezuela's oil reserves. Plus, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador also have large oil reserves that the U.S. hopes its companies will be able to exploit as well. I'm afraid that the U.S. is really concerned about establishing a beachhead in Colombia from which they might be able to control much of the oil exploration and production in the region. So, expect more troops to end up in Colombia. This administration will insist it is in U.S. interest that we are there. And they are partially right—it is in the best interests of America's oil giants to be there. And we know already that that is of supreme importance to the Bush Administration.

Someday soon, our government will reap the results of what they sow in Colombia as well as throughout the world. Our reliance on military solutions throughout the world will bring violence to our own shores and cities. There will be more 9/11s if we continue to try to solve everything with war and military answers. Plus, I fear that our reliance on weapons and increasing budgets for the military will eventually bankrupt the most powerful nation in the world. We cannot continue to increase spending on the military and cut taxes. It will prove to be our economic ruin. Ultimately, we will reap what we sow.

his nation as "the Israel of South America." "Like Israel," he said, "we are near one of the greatest oil reserves in the world. Like Israel, Colombia receives a large amount of U.S. military aid. Most of the countries around Colombia are in opposition to U.S. policy. And Colombia, like Israel, is ready to support the U.S. in everything they do here."

As you can begin to see, Colombia is a war-torn country that is unable to care for its people at this time. It isn't a new thing in Colombia—there have only been five years of peace in the 200 years since it gained its independence. The seeds of violence have sprouted into disregard for human life and the use of its resources for the people. What has been sown there over the past 200 years is now being reaped in a lack of reverence for life and a total lack of concern for trying to make it better. The age-old story of the wealthy keeping most of the riches for themselves and the poor being the poorest of the poor seems to hold in this beautiful country. And one of the more disturbing aspects to all of this is just how our own

The Chiapas Project



photos by Richard Flamer

by Richard Flamer

The language of the gospels comes hard to those of us schooled in the middle class. My experiences over the last 14 years seem a simple progression, yet the attempt to try and frame that experience are, at best, pathetic.

Nebraska was my home for ten years, until I left for Central America to learn Spanish and take photos. Covering wars, refugees and mass graves in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Southern Mexico, I came to discover a new home amongst the poor of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas.

Twelve years of fighting and refugees forced me to the U.S. and a life in the Catholic Worker house of Des Moines, Iowa, trying to live a basic life in community, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Usual gospel stuff. In 1999, I went back to Chiapas with friends from the Des Moines Worker to explore living in Chiapas again. The people I had worked with in the Guatemalan Refugee Camps in '84 and '85 had returned to San Cristobal after the 1992 Guatemalan Peace Accords had cleared most of the camps. Sister Josefina de La Torre, Father Javier Ruiz, Bishop Samuel Ruiz and Sabas Cruz Garcia had begun working with Indians displaced by NAFTA (then, later, by the Zapatista conflict). Of the more than 80,000 displaced Indians (Los Expulsados), there are 30,000 living in slums around San Cristobal. Among these 30,000, my friends are working via a Civil Association called SYJAC (an acronym for "Service to Our People in Tzo Tzil)., Sister Josefina was called back to Mexico City, hence replaced by Sister Clo. Don Samuel was retired. Fr. Javier was sent to a distant parish some nine hours away, leaving Sabas and Sister Clo, to attend to finding money, getting a building

half-finished and the beginnings of a community center.

After that '99 trip, I returned to the Des Moines Catholic Worker and started fundraising. In January of 2001, I returned with two friends and began to finish the physical building at Syjac (which by that time housed the offices for Habitat for Humanity for Southern Mexico). We completed bathrooms, a kitchen, an office and a child care center. The child care now serves single mothers for 8 to 15 children each day. Working with Syjac and the only hospital among the communities in Resistance (Zapatistas), we have continued to work with potable water projects, building and alternative energy/construction. That second trip led to a third and in January I moved to Chiapas to live permanently.

Along with our treks to work, we have been hosting delegations to tour the region and to see the works of the people around us. People from all over the U.S. have come to see an ecumenical sharing of great hope and dire straits; of tuberculosis and yet, great faith. With the delegations we hope to share the great spirit we find all around us, bringing first world people to meet people of faith.

For more information about our work, send inquiries to the Des Moines Catholic Worker, Attn: Chiapas Project, P.O. Box 4953, Des Moines, Iowa 50306. Telephone of 515-243-0765.

The next delegation has been scheduled for June 14-23, 2003. The cost is \$700, which includes housing, meals, transportation in the region and translators. Airfare is not included. Special delegations for parties of three or more people can be arranged by contacting me by email at flamerichard@hotmail.com.

& the Chiapas Media Project

For centuries indigenous people and their cultures have been represented by people from the outside. Recently over the past few years there has been an effort to get new communication technology into the hands of indigenous people so that they can represent themselves, with their own words and images. This is what the Chiapas Media Project (CMP) is attempting to do in Southern Mexico. The CMP is a bi-national collaboration that provides video and computer equipment and training to indigenous communities in Chiapas and Guerrero, Mexico.

In February of 1998, the CMP began as a result of conversations with autonomous Zapatista communities who were requesting access to video and computer technology. The Zapatista's or Zapatista Army of National Liberation, are an indigenous movement made of up Tzotzil, Chol, Tojolabal, Mum and Tzeltal Mayan Indians. They became known to the world via the internet on January 1, 1994 when they staged an armed uprising over the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and took over six towns in Chiapas demanding that indigenous rights be recognized in the Mexican constitution. Another demand was the formation of indigenous controlled TV and radio throughout Mexico.

Today, the Zapatista's are the most documented

indigenous movement in the history of the world with hundreds of videos, films, web-sites, and books created by people from the outside. The CMP has provided these same indigenous communities with the technology and training to tell their own stories from their own perspectives.

In April, a representative of the CMP was in Lincoln to promote the project. The CMP plans to formally turn over the project to the indigenous communities in Chiapas at the beginning of 2003. The CMP is now working with the advanced video makers to create an economic infrastructure so that the project can continue when the staff is no longer there. The CMP is producing videos for NGO's and setting up a video archive where outside producers can purchase footage for their productions. This project is becoming incorporated into the autonomous process that these indigenous communities are constructing. This model of professional training and development of economic self-sufficiency will enable long term support of the project by the communities. It creates the possibility for on-going self-representation because these tools are now controlled by indigenous people.

For more information visit chiapasmediaproject.org.

War as Addiction

A Review of *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*
by former War Correspondent Chris Hedges

by John Krejci
NFP Board member and Emeritus
Professor of Sociology/Social Work
Nebraska Wesleyan University

Former war correspondent Chris Hedges, in his book, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, makes the case that war is an addiction. Our media and our country are addicted to war; it is the drug that gives meaning to empty lives. His experience stretches over 20 years from El Salvador and Nicaragua to Palestine, the 1991 Gulf War and particularly Bosnia.

The high of war is heady and intoxicating. Hedges gives accounts of correspondents, himself included, who rush from conflict to conflict, from one war to the next, looking for the high of danger, destruction and death. They become more insensitive to the death, the violence, the mayhem; some even become obsessed with death.

In the opening chapter, entitled, “The Myth of War” Hedges lays out, challenges and refutes the myth which is used to justify war.

“The myth of war is essential to justify the horrible sacrifices required in war, the destruction and the death of innocents. It can be formed only by denying the reality of war, by turning the lies, the manipulation, the inhumanity of war into the heroic ideal... The potency of myth is that it allows us to make sense of mayhem and violent death. It gives a justification to what is often nothing more than human cruelty and stupidity... It disguises our powerlessness. It hides from view our impotence.”

Nor does Hedges spare peace activists. He describes the addiction of a Witness for Peace group for the Sandanistas in Nicaragua, who idealize the revolutionaries as saintly liberators of the poor. Their naivete and addiction parallels that of the blind idealists who uncritically bought into Castro’s Cuba or North Vietnam. Sometimes radical politics can fill empty lives and provide a potent sense of meaning and purpose.

The myth of war, he argues, is a product of “the plague of nationalism.” He gives several example of judging people not for what they are but because of the group to

which they happen to belong. The Serbs, Croats and Muslims of Bosnia are a classic example. One would have thought that Americans learned their lesson in Vietnam, but Reagan, he says, resurrected nationalism. Hedges continues: “It became ascendent in the first Gulf War, when we embraced the mythic and unachievable goal of a ‘New World Order.’ The infection of nationalism now lies unchecked and blindly accepted in the march we make as a nation toward another war, one as ill-conceived as the war we lost in southeast Asia.”

His chapter on “The Destruction of Culture,” exposes the ironic methodology of runaway nationalism. “States at war silence their own authentic and humane culture. When this destruction is well advanced, they find the lack of critical and moral restraint useful in the campaign to exterminate the culture of their opponents. By destroying authentic culture—that which allow us to question and examine ourselves and our society—the state erodes the moral fabric. It is replaced with a warped version of reality. The enemy is dehumanized; the universe starkly divided between forces of light and the forces of darkness. The cause is celebrated, often in overt religious forms, as a manifestation of divine or historical will. All is dedicated to promoting and glorifying the myth, the nation, the cause.”

One can only shudder when reading this passage and reflecting on our actions in Iraq, particularly the reference to “manifestation of divine or historical will.”

Hedges next debunks the myth of heroism. No one who has experienced the chaos of battle, the smell of rotting flesh, the cries of agony or seen “blood and entrails seeping out of bodies” can extoll heroism or see war as a definition of manhood. Heroism is mostly a creation of the entertainment industry. War actually is mostly about perversion, power, oppression and killing. He writes: “War breaks down the long-established prohibitions against violence, destruction and murder. And with this often comes the crumbling of sexual, social and political norms as the domination and brutality of the battlefield is carried into personal life. Rape, mutilation, abuse and theft are the natural outcome of a world

in which human beings are objects... War produces a world with an inverted moral hierarchy. Even the victims feel guilt. They know it is not the best who survive war, but often the selfish, the brutal and the violent.”

I have always been bewildered by those who try to deny the Holocaust or any of the other atrocities of wars; however, in his chapter on “The Hijacking and Recovery of Memory,” Hedges explains the need for national amnesia. It is necessary to obliterate the evil that is war. He lays out the case for remembering, even the exhuming of graves to document the deaths so that reconciliation might begin. An historical consensus is necessary for reconciliation. “The effort to give a name to the victims and the killers begins a collective act of repentance, a national catharsis.”

The safe area given the Kurds after the first Gulf War allowed them to investigate Saddam Hussein’s crimes, to dig up the thousands he executed, then expose him for what he is (and “was,” when he was our ally). Unfortunately, we are now using those atrocities to demonize him and commit our own atrocities on Iraq in the name of freedom (our present myth). Hedges concludes: “The whole truth may finally be too hard to utter, but the process of healing only begins when we are able to at least acknowledge the tragedy and accept our share of the blame.”

In “The Cause,” Hedges returns to the theme of creating a cause to justify the myth of war. He blames the press for wanting to be used. He laments the lies of the media pools of the first Gulf War—the pools in which he refused to participate. Though he didn’t name names, I thought of Wolf Blitzer, the star that the Gulf War created and who is rising even higher today. Aaron Brown’s star is also rocketing, boosted by CNN’s 24-hour, all-war format. Even Ted Koppel, appearing now in flak jacket and helmet, rose to fame from his coverage of the Iran hostage crisis in 1979 on “Nightline.”

Hedges does not spare himself. “For we not only believe the myth of war and feed recklessly off the drug, but also embrace

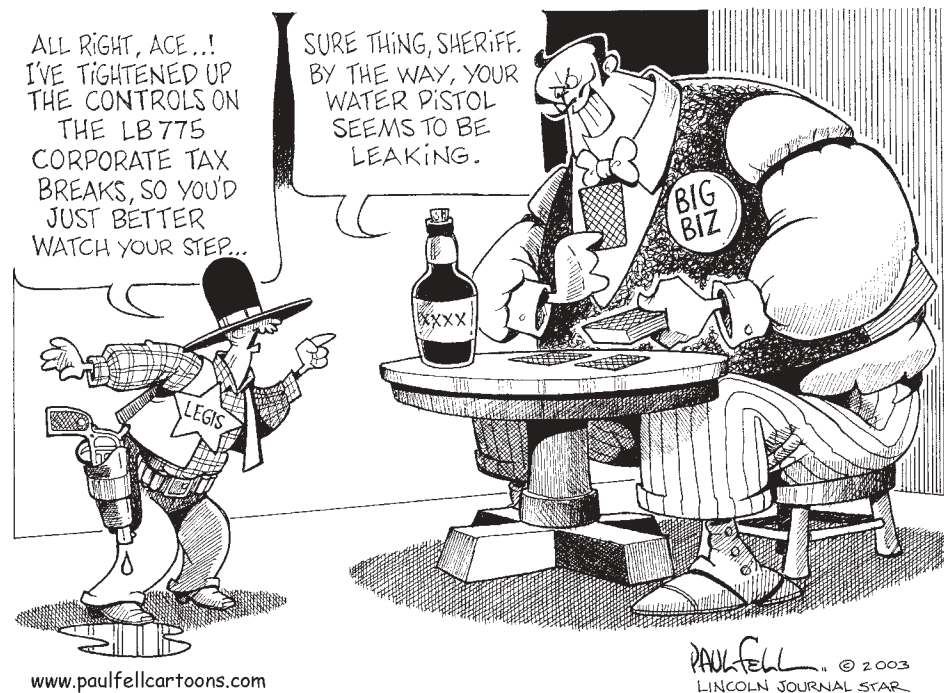
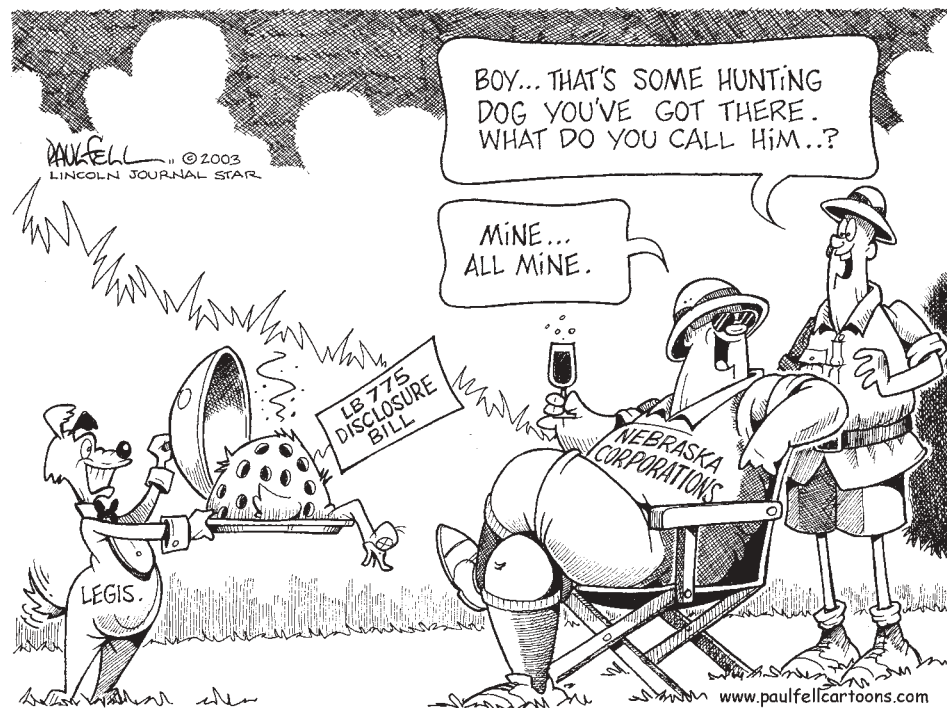
the cause. We may do so with skepticism. But we believe. We all believe. When you stop believing, you stop going to war.” Hedges himself has stopped going to war.

But what is even more frightening, he states, is when “the cause takes on a sanctity and the state and its institutions become for many the center for worship in wartime... The moral certitude of the state in wartime is a kind of fundamentalism, a messianic brand of religion,” a “Christian fascism,” as Harvard Professor James Luther Adams liked to say. Hedges warns of the danger of the growing fusion between those in the state who wage wars... and those who believe they understand and can act as agents of God.

The myth, the lies, the cause he warns cannot be questioned without dishonoring those who gave up their lives. The doubts of protestors are allotted as apostasy. Islamic radicals and American superpatriots (religious zealots?) begin to sound alike.

Despite the pessimistic theme of this book—addiction to war is a force that gives us meaning—Hedges ends on a hopeful note. The final chapter describes the struggle between “Eros and Thanatos” (Love and Death). From the outset, war can seem to give meaning, purpose, a calling, especially in an empty life. It mirrors love by asking self-sacrifice; it offers headiness and meaning. But the end of war is death. In contrast, a couple in love or a shared meal with family provide a sanctuary; even in war the community of people who care fill the loneliness. These acts offer life.

“To survive as a human being,” he writes, “is possible only through love. And when Thanatos (death) is ascendant, the instinct must be to reach out to those we love, to see in them all the divinity, pity, and pathos of the human. And to recognize love in the lives of others—even those with whom we’re in conflict—love that is like our own. It does not mean that we as distinct individuals will survive. But love, in its mystery, has its own power. It alone gives us meaning that endures. It alone allows us to embrace and cherish life... And love, as the poets remind us, is eternal.”



Lincoln Journal Star political cartoonist Paul Fell has pilloried the Nebraska Legislature twice in the past month over its “embedded” relationship with LB 775 beneficiaries. At Big Business’s behest, the state senators ‘shot down’ a disclosure provision that would have required a full public accounting of the costs and benefits of all future LB 775 projects. So thorough in fact was the Legislature in ‘watering down’ the reforms called for in the bill, that the bill’s sponsor—Sen. David Landis—threatened to withdraw the legislation entirely, rather than let it pass in its distorted form. Our thanks to Paul Fell Cartoons for permission to reprint these realistic portraits of the cartoon-like 2003 legislative session.

The Case for Repealing LB 775

This article by Nebraskans for Peace State Coordinator Tim Rinne originally appeared in the April 12, 2003 edition of the Lincoln Journal Star under the title, “Cut LB 775 instead of funds for Nebraska’s schools, public services, state employees.” The NFP State Board is already on record in support of an initiative petition to let the public vote on repealing LB 775 if the Unicameral refuses to act legislatively.

Why is it that the legislature and the governor can cut K-12 education, the university and the state college system, public services, rural programs, state employees, Medicaid and services for poor children, but can’t cut subsidies for Big Business?

In the last year and a half, the legislature has cut the budget four different times, and the university has taken a hit every time the senators have met (\$70 million in cuts so far—half of which UNL has to shoulder). State funding for K-12 education is bracing itself for its fourth whack from the axe. And Medicaid as well is targeted for yet another round of cuts. It’s been open season on just about everything...

Except LB 775. The biggest and most expensive of these Big Business subsidy programs, LB 775 stands alone as virtually the only program to have escaped the budget knife since this fiscal bloodbath began.

At an average cost of \$120 million annually over the past five years,

repealing LB 775 could go a long way toward addressing the state budget shortfall. Just one year’s worth could completely restore the university’s budget and redeem \$50 million of the cuts to K-12 education. LB 775’s a huge cash cow. So why aren’t we putting it (rather than our children) on the chopping block?

Well, the State Chamber of Commerce will tell you that that would be tantamount to killing the Golden Goose. LB 775, as the Chamber never tires of repeating, has “created” 78,000 jobs in the state since its adoption in 1987. Up until the last couple years when the economy went into the tank, the corporate tax incentive program was routinely credited with fueling the economic expansion in our state. In the midst of a recession, the last thing we dare do now, so the story goes, is choke off the engine of our economic recovery by repealing (or even scaling back) LB 775.

It’s a compelling explanation. And it would be hard to counter if it were true.

But it’s not.

According to the Nebraska Department of Revenue (the only agency in the state privileged to see the actual cost/benefit numbers on LB 775), 70 percent of the jobs claimed to have been “created” under the program would have been created anyway. Seven out of every ten jobs claimed under the program would have been created without any public subsidy whatsoever. And yet Nebraska taxpayers picked up the tab for all of them. To get

three, we paid for ten. Good work if you can get it.

So who got it?

Oh, corporate blackmailers like ConAgra, who threatened in 1987 to move their home office out of state if the Nebraska Legislature didn’t give it the tax breaks it wanted. Thieves like WorldCom, who were indicted for cooking their books in the wave of the corporate accounting scandals. Cheats like Goodyear, who collected their tax breaks and are now moving 480 jobs to Mexico. And of course the meatpacking industry, a quarter to a third of whose low-pay workforce is, on any given day, comprised of undocumented workers.

Stop for a moment, and think about the irony of all this. In the name of ‘job creation’, the legislature is bending over backwards to preserve a program that has no wage floor (other than the federal minimum wage) at the very moment—to save money—it’s downsizing a state government workforce that provides stable employment, benefits and living wages. Ironic? Try idiotic.

And how much, you’re probably wondering, have these LB 775 beneficiaries taken us for?

Ah, you’re not entitled to know that. Neither is your state senator, or the governor for that matter. That’s privileged information. We can get aggregate totals. We know, for example, that since the program began 16 years ago, LB 775 has cost state government \$1.3 billion in lost revenue (not including

city sales tax reimbursements and local property tax abatements). And we can get annual figures on benefits earned and used. But that’s it. No company-by-company information can be made public. That’s proprietary.

And it’s real clear, by the legislature’s toadying behavior so far this session that it has no intention of doing anything that would vex Big Business or disrupt this sweetheart arrangement one iota. Reforming (let alone repealing) LB 775 is the furthest thing from its mind.

So, the only real question remaining is how long are the people of Nebraska willing to put up with this?

The budget crisis, we need to know, is here to stay. This is not something that we just have to tough it through, and can then put behind us. We’re stuck. The drought is projected to continue for the foreseeable future, meaning our agricultural economy won’t recover any time soon. We can’t count on the federal government to bail us out. Between the record budget deficit, the war in Iraq and the sour national economy, Washington’s bleeding red ink.

No, if we’re going to get through this budget crisis with a state that even remotely resembles what we fondly call the “the good life”, we’re going to have to draw up some new rules. And top of the list ought to be: stop throwing away our tax dollars on corporate welfare. LB 775 should be repealed—and quick.

Otherwise the cuts will just keep coming and you’ll have never seen such carnage.

Think Globally, Eat Locally

by Andy Witkowski

Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
Sustainable Agriculture & Food Initiative
Coordinator Lincoln-Lancaster County

It is my pleasure to be able to address the readers of the *Nebraska Report* in such a crucial moment in our lives. These are indeed troubled times; amidst the war and all the pain I want to talk about food, I want to talk about Nebraska, your neighbors and neighborhood. I see the television and I see the newspapers yet I can't help but to think about the age-old credo; Think Globally, Act Locally. So it is in this spirit that I want to talk about the content of our refrigerators, the food on our dinner tables, or in your child's lunch box.

A recent report from the WorldWatch Institute stated that the average distance our food traveled, from farm to plate, was anywhere between 2,500 and 4,000 kilometers. In some places this is almost 50 percent farther than just 20 years ago. We as consumers are quickly losing touch with the farmers who grow our food, and for all the farmers reading this article it is often true that you are now selling into a long and complex marketing chain of which you are a tiny part—and are paid accordingly.

This is true even for many of us in the state of Nebraska, where we pride ourselves on our agricultural heritage. You might challenge yourself tonight at the dinner table: Do I know any of the farmers that produced this food; Do I know the land from which the animals or the plants came from? You may be eating beef from another country even though your neighbor raises cattle, or you maybe eating pickles from who knows where when your grandmother used to grow the cucumbers herself and pickle them. What about the popcorn you eat, the in-season vegetables, salad dressings and pork? If Nebraska is the agricultural beacon it claims to be, why is all my food being shipped to me? We seem to be caught up in the strangest of circumstances: our food is being shipped to us through an oil dependent transportation infrastructure, and at the same time money is leaving the state at an alarming rate due to the lack of localized buying habits.

The highly centralized food distribution system in the United States is not only a threat to our national security, but it is also hurting us—nutritionally, economically, environmentally and culturally.

More and more people are awakening to this dim picture. Rural America is emptying out because the game of 'agri-business' has superimposed itself onto the concept of 'agri-culture.' Agribusiness is about big

money and mono-cropping, and it is a one-way ticket that often preys on the honest and hard working families that simply want to stay on the land and be good stewards. If you failed to name one farmer that produced the food on your table, you are seeing the effects of the switch from agri-culture to agri-buisness.

This is as serious as it can be. In recent months, people have become increasingly aware of the vulnerability of our food supply to terrorism, or e-coli., *The New York Times* recently ran an article about Loup County being the poorest county in the United States. Everywhere is budget and program cuts, including the Rural Development Commission, a one-time state agency that worked hard to solve many problems that facing Nebraskans involved in agriculture—meaning all of us. But if we have replaced culture with business, where is the money?

The Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society (NSAS), in collaboration with the University of Nebraska and the Rural Development Commission, founded the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Initiative to address these problems—yet, more importantly, come up with some solutions.

know that farm workers were not exposed to potentially hazardous chemicals and that animals were treated humanely.

The rapid growth of farmers markets and CSA farms (Community Supported Agriculture) here in the United States are just two examples of some very positive changes; many are beginning to realize that farmers' interests are compatible with the interests of urban folk. In our desire, as urban dwellers, to eat locally grown food, we can give a farmer that economically sound opportunity to stay on the land. By buying directly from the farmer, he or she gets a bigger portion of the profit. The growth in internet on-line markets is fast becoming a valuable tool also: here in Nebraska we can buy directly from farmers all over the state at www.BuyNebraska.org.

This very simple change in our buying habits can potentially have enormous impacts on the quality of our lives. For one, if a farmer is secure in a fair price for his or her product, they can then make decisions about the land that are based on their knowledge of the land, as opposed to decisions forced upon them by the market. In general, farmers that

The point here is that no matter who you are or where you live, you have a vested interest in creating economically viable solutions to rural poverty and our farmers' increased alienation from the decisions about what to grow, or how to grow it. We all have a vested interest in supporting farmers who are trying to weaken their dependency on off-farm inputs—for example, chemical fertilizers. Let us all remember that rural Nebraska is close to 95 percent of the territory of our state, and that agriculture is one of the major interfaces between people and the environment. There is a direct connection between caring for the environment and buying your food directly from a farmer who you know is a good steward of the land. This is the basis of 'food security,' or what is called 'food shed policy.'

And it may be that it is the urban population, though, that is slow in getting the picture. Encouragingly, the 1999 Nebraska Rural Poll found that 80 percent of those polled prefer that in the future "none of the farms in the state be owned by non-family corporations." Yet for this laudable goal to be realized, it will take the combined imagination and education of urban and rural folks. NSAS has extended their work into Nebraska urban areas through the creation of community gardens. The first of the projects was with City Sprouts in Omaha. City Sprouts has turned abandoned city lots into beautiful gardens that allow low-income citizens to grow their own food in a healthy environment. This summer NSAS is supporting a community garden in Lincoln. The community gardens are one proven strategy for increasing food security, for beautifying neighborhoods, educating ourselves on methods of organic land stewardship and, at the very least, teaching ourselves that food does not come from the grocery store. Urban agriculture is becoming increasingly important for growing cities. It has been shown that as urban communities form ties with rural farmers through community garden projects those urban gardeners are more likely to buy locally.

If we are to build a more sustainable, safe and democratic state we need to put our money where our mouth is—this time, literally. We need to seek out those farmers in our own communities and purchase what you can directly from them. Doing this ensures a living wage for the farmer, better food for the consumer, a vibrant community and a promise that our children will inherit a better land.

APRIL 2003 NEBRASKA REPORT, P.9

Seven Ways You Can Change the World... by Eating!

1. Shop at a farmers' market.
2. Buy chicken, beef, pork, or eggs directly from a farmer.
3. Grow a garden.
4. Ask your grocer to carry locally-grown food.
5. Eat more "slow" food.
6. Join a Community Supported Agriculture farm.
7. Choose foods grown in a way that is good for people, the environment, communities, & your health.



Think Globally...Eat Locally!

Our goal is to create bonds between rural producers and urban consumers and institutions, and to educate Nebraska citizens on the concept of 'sustainable food sheds'. (A food shed "is that sphere of land, people, and business, that provides that community or region with its food.")

'Sustainable' means agricultural management practices such as crop rotations and intensive grazing to control pests, build soil and prevent disease in animals, as well as building on ideas of social justice and ecological literacy. When you buy organic or sustainably-raised foods, you are doing your part to keep our water clean, encourage wildlife and keep our soil healthy. You also

produce more for their respective food shed tend to diversify their operations so as to provide for a wider community; this is a major benefit for the land, for (as is commonly said) diversity is nature's insurance policy. Secondly, buying local circulates money within your community. By supporting local agriculture you protect your region's farmland from urban sprawl and development. Nearly 50 acres of some of this nation's most fertile farmland disappears every hour of every day. And finally, in addition to the benefits to farmers and our land, consumers who receive locally produced food are eating food that is at the peak of nutrition and taste.

Chomsky,

continued

has an opinion, a government ought to follow it.

That is real contempt for democracy, just as what has happened at the United Nations is total contempt for the international system. In fact there are now calls—from *The Wall Street Journal*, people in Government and others—to disband the United Nations.

Fear of the United States around the world is extraordinary. It is so extreme that it is even being discussed in the mainstream media. The cover story of the upcoming issue of *Newsweek* is about why the world is so afraid of the United States. *The Post* had a cover story about this a few weeks ago.

Of course this is considered to be the world's fault, that there is something wrong with the world with which we have to deal somehow, but also something that has to be recognised.

Ramachandran: The idea that Iraq represents any kind of clear and present danger is, of course, without any substance at all.

Chomsky: Nobody pays any attention to that accusation, except, interestingly, the population of the United States.

In the last few months, there has been a spectacular achievement of government-media propaganda, very visible in the polls. The international polls show that support for the war is higher in the United States than in other countries. That is, however, quite misleading, because if you look a little closer, you find that the United States is also different in another respect from the rest of the world. Since September 2002, the United States is the only country in the world where 60 percent of the population believes that Iraq is an imminent threat—something that people do not believe even in Kuwait or Iran.

Furthermore, about 50 percent of the population now believes that Iraq was responsible for the attack on the World Trade Centre. This has happened since September 2002. In fact, after the September 11 attack, the figure was about 3 percent. Government-media propaganda has managed to raise that to about 50 percent. Now if people genuinely believe that Iraq has carried out major terrorist attacks against the United States and is planning to do so again, well, in that case people will support the war.

This has happened, as I said, after September 2002. September 2002 is when the government-media campaign began and also when the mid-term election campaign began. The Bush Administration would have been smashed in the election if social and economic issues had been in the forefront, but it managed to suppress those issues in favour of security issues—and people huddle under the umbrella of power.

This is exactly the way the country was run in the 1980s. Remember that these are almost the same people as in the Reagan and the senior Bush Administrations. Right through the 1980s they carried out domestic policies that were harmful to the population and which, as we know from extensive polls, the people opposed. But they managed to maintain control by frightening the people. So the Nicaraguan Army was two days' march from Texas, and the airbase in Grenada was one from which the Russians would bomb us. It was one thing after another, every year, every one of them ludicrous. The Reagan Administration actually declared a National Emergency in 1985 because of the threat to the security of the United States posed by the Government of Nicaragua.

If somebody were watching this from Mars, they would not know whether to laugh or to cry.

They are doing exactly the same thing now, and will probably do something similar for the presidential campaign. There will have to be a new dragon to slay, because if the Administration lets domestic issues prevail, it is in deep trouble.

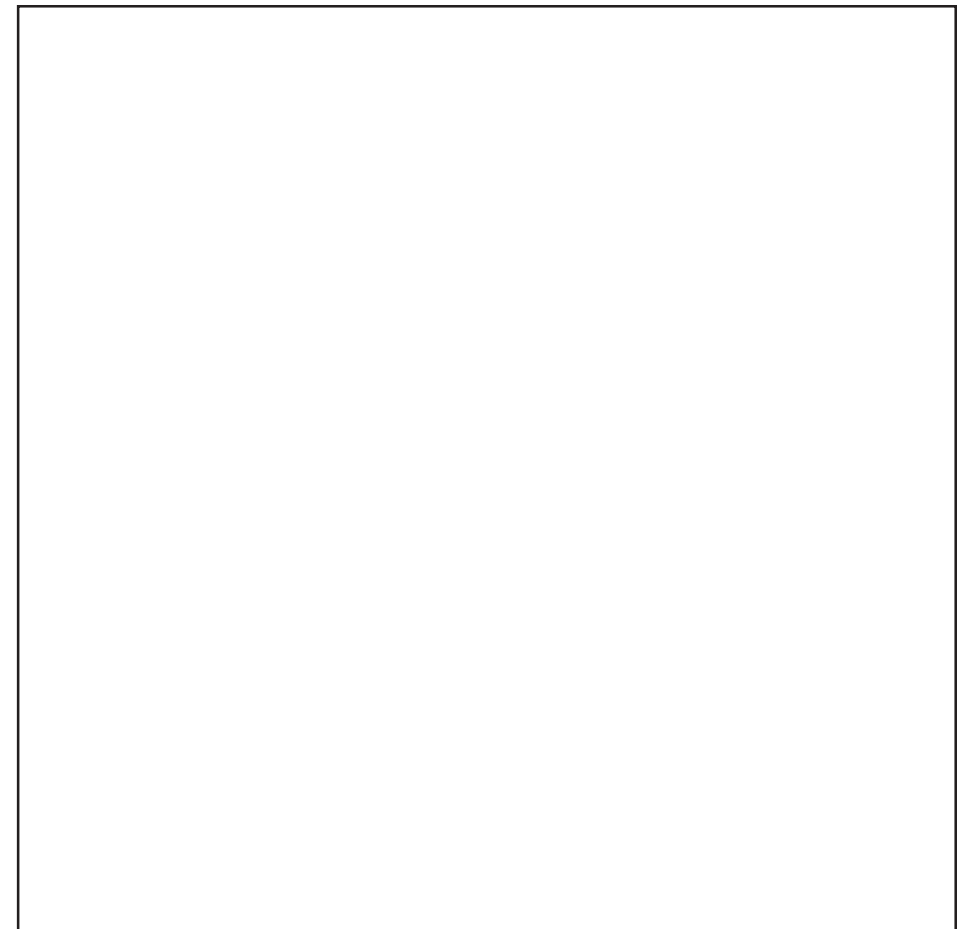
Ramachandran: You have written that this war of aggression has dangerous consequences with respect to international terrorism and the threat of nuclear war.

Chomsky: I cannot claim any originality for that opinion. I am just quoting the CIA and other intelligence agencies and virtually every specialist in international affairs and terrorism. Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the study by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the high-level Hart-Rudman Commission on terrorist threats to the United States all agree that it is likely to increase terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The reason is simple: partly for revenge, but partly just for self-defence.

There is no other way to protect oneself from U.S. attack. In fact, the United States is making the point very clearly, and is teaching the world an extremely ugly lesson.

Compare North Korea and Iraq. Iraq is defenceless and weak; in fact, the weakest re-



gime in the region. While there is a horrible monster running it, it does not pose a threat to anyone else. North Korea, on the other hand, does pose a threat. North Korea, however, is not attacked for a very simple reason: it has a deterrent. It has a massed artillery aimed at Seoul, and if the United States attacks it, it can wipe out a large part of South Korea.

So the United States is telling the countries of the world: if you are defenceless, we are going to attack you when we want, but if you have a deterrent, we will back off, because we only attack defenceless targets. In other words, it is telling countries that they had better develop a terrorist network and weapons of mass destruction or some other credible deterrent; if not, they are vulnerable to "preventive war."

For that reason alone, this war is likely to lead to the proliferation of both terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Ramachandran: How do you think the U.S. will manage the human—and humanitarian—consequences of the war?

Chomsky: No one knows, of course. That is why honest and decent people do not resort to violence—because one simply does not know.

The aid agencies and medical groups that work in Iraq have pointed out that the consequences can be very severe. Everyone hopes not, but it could affect up to millions of people. To undertake violence when there is even such a possibility is criminal.

There is already—that is, even before the war—a humanitarian catastrophe. By conservative estimates, ten years of sanctions have killed hundreds of thousands of people. If there were any honesty, the U.S. would pay reparations just for the sanctions.

The situation is similar to the bombing of Afghanistan, of which you and I spoke when the bombing there was in its early stages. It was obvious the United States was never going to investigate the consequences.

Ramachandran: Or invest the kind of money that was needed.

Chomsky: Oh no. First, the question is not asked, so no one has an idea of what the consequences of the bombing were for most of the country. Then almost nothing comes in. Finally, it is out of the news, and no one remembers it any more.

In Iraq, the United States will make a show of humanitarian reconstruction and will put in a regime that it will call democratic, which means that it follows Washington's orders. Then it will forget about what happens later, and will go on to the next one.

Ramachandran: How have the media lived up to their propaganda-model reputation this time?

Chomsky: Right now it is cheerleading for the home team. Look at CNN, which is disgusting—and it is the same everywhere. That is to be expected in wartime; the media are worshipful of power.

A Letter To My Grandsons

NFP member Robert Stoddard, a UNL Geography Professor, wrote the following letter to his grandsons, Micah and Aaron, last December during the holiday season. The subject matter is pretty morose. But it's even sadder when you consider what's transpired the intervening four months.

You will not comprehend all that I write here because you are too young (at 8 and 4 years) to have experienced most complex issues. Nevertheless, at this particular time, I feel strongly that I should express some of my worries about the world which you will "inherit" in coming years.

I am especially discouraged about the future because not only is the situation worsening but also because this trend is so unnecessary. I view the deterioration of conditions from the perspective of one who enjoyed many of the advantages of living in the United States during the last half of the 20th century. This is not to claim all was okay because our country was still facing the injustices of having taken land from the first Americans, of practicing racial discrimination and of polarizing countries during the Cold War. Nevertheless, our country did a fairly good job of educating everyone, making decisions through a representative democracy, adhering to the rules of law and providing basic services for everyone, even the poorest. The U.S.A. promoted a better world by helping to establish the United Nations, by upholding anti-colonial movements, by

supporting war-torn countries through the Marshall Plan and by assisting Third World countries through programs such as the Peace Corps and U.S.-A.I.D.

During my own travels to other lands, I observed the admiration that many people held for the U.S.A. True, some of the fascination was with the wealth that we had accumulated; but many talked about our leaders (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt) and the general opportunities for everyone to succeed. They favored our efforts to improve global conditions.

Until recently, I had assumed that these admirable characteristics would continue and that our rich and technologically advanced country would continue to work vigorously toward solving world problems. But, distressingly, I now see much evidence that we are going in the opposite direction, individually as we consume more and volunteer less, and collectively as our nation becomes more aggressive.

A major economic trend is our increasing over-consumption. Our economy seems to depend on consuming and wasting more and more, which is occurring at the same time that so many lack the basic necessities of life. This not only creates injustice with a few having lots and many having little but this squandering of resources also damages the environment and robs from future generations. This obsessive quest for material gain is occurring while the gap between the rich and poor—both domestically and among nations—is rapidly widening. Domestically, the

richest keep demanding a greater share of wealth while the poorest suffer from inadequate housing and medical services. Internationally, the already small portion of our GDP that we contribute to solving problems of inadequate food, drinking water, housing, education and health continues to decline.

Associated with this greediness seems to be a decline in participatory governance. Less time is volunteered in support of a civil society. And, the lack of voter participation means an increase in the influence of large corporations in our government. As the government becomes more of an oligarchy, its attempts to keep secrets and to misinform the public grows, but meanwhile the general public seems to be ignoring the dependency of a viable democracy upon citizen involvement.

In spite of being discouraged about these economic and political trends within United States, I am even more worried about our international relations. In recent years, some of our government leaders seem to be pushing for greater control over the world (such as expressed by the goal of Pax Americana). These persons seek to displace the United Nations and international organizations that work cooperatively toward conserving vital resources, diminishing pollution and environmental degradation, establishing international law, promoting justice and human rights, maintaining the freedom of seas and skies and controlling weapons of mass destruction. Instead

several political leaders are insisting on policies that ignore other nations, individually and collectively.

Accomplishing this goal of controlling the world, of course, requires increasing military spending. Even though the U.S. currently spends more than the combined total of the next 25 largest national amounts and more than a third of all global military expenditures, these leaders cry for increasing the military budget even more. Unbelievably, these militarists are actually advocating the use of nuclear weapons, militarizing space and starting wars with other countries.

Just as the actions of imperialist powers of the colonial days created resistance, these aggressive policies of our country are beginning to create more and more resentment against the United States. The goodwill that the United States created earlier, both as a country of freedom and opportunity and as a leader in the United Nations, is being squandered. It is painfully apparent that opposition to 'bullying' by the USA is growing around the world. What is so discouraging is that our increasing arrogance and degrading hubris is so unnecessary!

I am sorry, Micah and Aaron, to express these thoughts during this season which is associated with the message of Peace. But, I am truly worried about current trends that I believe will produce a less peaceful world for you in the future. I am so deeply sorry.

Love, Grandpa

More interesting is what happened in the build-up to war. The fact that government-media propaganda was able to convince the people that Iraq is an imminent threat and that Iraq was responsible for September 11 is a spectacular achievement and, as I said, was accomplished in about four months. If you ask people in the media about this, they will say, "Well, we never said that," and it is true, they did not. There was never a statement that Iraq is going to invade the United States or that it carried out the World Trade Centre attack. It was just insinuated, hint after hint, until they finally got people to believe it.

Ramachandran: Look at the resistance, though. Despite the propaganda, despite the denigration of the United Nations, they haven't quite carried the day.

Chomsky: You never know. The United Nations is in a very hazardous position.

The United States might move to dismantle it. I don't really expect that, but at least to diminish it, because when it isn't following orders, of what use is it?

Ramachandran: Noam, you have seen movements of resistance to imperialism over a long period—Vietnam, Central America, Gulf War I. What are your impressions of the character, sweep and depth of the present resistance to U.S. aggression? We take great heart in the extraordinary mobilisations all over the world.

Chomsky: Oh, that is correct; there is just nothing like it.

Opposition throughout the world is enormous and unprecedented, and the same is true of the United States. Yesterday, for example, I was in demonstrations in downtown Boston, right around the Boston Common. It is not the first time I have been there. The first time I

participated in a demonstration there at which I was to speak was in October 1965. That was four years after the United States had started bombing South Vietnam. Half of South Vietnam had been destroyed and the war had been extended to North Vietnam. We could not have a demonstration because it was physically attacked, mostly by students, with the support of the liberal press and radio, who denounced these people who were daring to protest against an American war.

On this occasion, however, there was a massive protest before the war was launched officially and once again on the day it was launched—with no counter-demonstrators. That is a radical difference. And if it were not for the fear factor that I mentioned, there would be much more opposition.

The government knows that it cannot carry out long-term aggression and destruction as in Vietnam because the population will not tolerate it.

There is only one way to fight a war now. First of all, pick a much weaker enemy, one that is defenceless. Then build it up in the propaganda system as either about to commit aggression or as an imminent threat. Next, you need a lightning victory. An important leaked document of the first Bush Administration in 1989 described how the U.S. would have to fight war. It said that the U.S. had to fight much weaker enemies, and that victory must be rapid and decisive, as public support will quickly erode. It is no longer like the 1960s, when a war could be fought for years with no opposition at all.

In many ways, the activism of the 1960s and subsequent years has simply made a lot of the world, including this country, much more civilised in many domains.



Attention taxpayers, and all who benefit from tax dollars. I know you've been wondering how much U.S. military action in Iraq is costing you. Here is your "bill." Initial estimates per American run at \$1,000.00. Be on the lookout for rising taxes (unless you're rich) and falling services.

created by NFP member Janine Copple

Selling the American Public on the War Soundbite by Soundbite

Hate the war, love the warrior, blow up your TV or take a virtual ride with Custer's old outfit, the Seventh Cavalry. The war to date has something for everyone, including Geraldo-haters like Dr. Herrin.

In fact, in its few weeks, the President's war in Iraq has been covered by live electronic media like no previous conflict. The effect is not unlike heavy metal music—a wall of sound rushing at you. Time for a primer, I think. Let us call it Dr. Herrin's Top Five Sound Bites for Bush II: Iraq.

Compassion: Handsome black spokesman Vincent Brooks nearly always works "compassion" into the CentCom show, a ludicrous U.S. tax-payer funded media circus effectively boycotted by most senior journalists. When children in their parents' arms get their heads shot off by terrified teenaged Marines who mistake families (fleeing for their lives) for suicide bombers, the military expresses its regrets and its compassion for "all civilian losses" and slips into something more comfortable—a commercial for smart bombs.

Terrorist organizations: Terror is as terror does, so the phrase is most chilling in the mouth of George W. Bush, whom many see as the greatest terrorist of all. He growls like a little terrier—all those "r-r-r" sounds—and he gets a narrow-eyed look, as of resolve* or a side-ways potato chip. Whatever the world may think, GWB knows who he means, and that's good enough for a Bush. Alone among the world's citizens, these bad guys (terrorist organizations) do not possess the inherent right of self-defense.

Allegations are evidence: Remember the alleged weapons of mass destruction? It was Saddam Hussein's alleged ongoing, eminent development of alleged weapons of mass destruction that made the President's resolve* so legitimate. These alleged weapons of mass destruction might be used against the U.S. at any moment, or the alleged relationship between the Iraqi regime and Al Qaeda might mean these alleged weapons might be used against the U.S. Colin Powell said so. (Remember this when he runs for President.) Colin Powell (take your pick) either lied or did not know what the heck he was talking about when he said the U.S. possessed credible evidence of the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

Secretary Powell, CentCom and Donald Rumsfeld are now relying on Iraqi citizens to help find these alleged weapons. To date, while U.S. troops have found protective gear against chemical/biological weapons, suggesting the Iraqis may have expected to be attacked, no actual weapons of mass destruction have been found.

Inherent right to self-defense: The one-size-fits-us justification for anything U.S. troops do. When U.S. troops fired a missile into the 15-floor balcony of the Palestine Hotel, killing or wounding a half-dozen journalists after allegedly hearing sniper fire from the lobby of the hotel, CentCom invoked the inherent right to self-defense. Ditto the shooting off of the little girls' heads at a roadblock. (See compassion, above.)

Air space for ethnic cleansing: Turkish troops are massed on Iraq's northern border to nip in the bud any hint of rising Kurdish nationalism. Nobody much is talking out loud about this trade-off, but Turkish cooperation for a free Turkish hand (and a blind U.S. eye) regarding the Kurds is and was always meant to be the Mother of All Deals. At this writing, the Kurds of Iraq seem to understand this better than anyone, and to

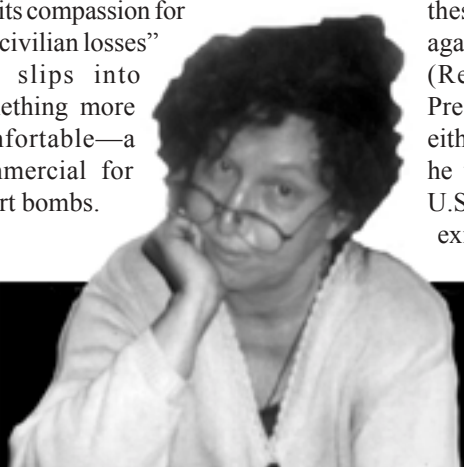
all appearances they are choosing the better part of valor—discretion.

One man on television yesterday was trying to discover the fate of a relative in a Baghdad prison. The man despaired to find any trace of his brother, and the looting and dismantling of the city enraged him. "My heart is broken," he said. An Egyptian intellectual said much the same thing last week. A lifelong admirer of western democracy, he no longer sees the U.S. as a beacon of liberty but as the bully on the block.

We know now that CNN held off reporting certain atrocities for the privilege of remaining in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, raising difficult ethical questions. We've seen disturbing reports sanitized by CentCom. For better and for worse, the fifth column (that is, journalists) now is embedded in real-time history, but it's all event and little reflection. There hasn't been time.

If your own heart is not yet broken by this war, just wait. It will be. This is only the beginning—of the new journalism and of the U.S. time in Iraq.

That sound you hear in the background? It's millions of breaking hearts. In time, without social and economic justice, many will "heal" themselves through martyrdom.



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin

The real political spectrum isn't right to left... it's top to bottom.