

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy

April
2006

"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare;
it is because we do not dare that things are difficult."

---Seneca the Elder (c. 54 BC - c. 39 AD)

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on Page 8)

* * Venezuela Report-Back * *

The Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, April 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Cambridge Friends Meeting**, 5 Longfellow Park (9-minute walk from Harvard Square west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

"Another World Is Possible!" Civil society is getting it together through a series of world and regional social forums. Come, hear and discuss what happened at the World Social Forum in Caracas last January, and where we go from here. Special guests recently returned from there:

- * **Christina Brinkley**, Africana Studies, Simmons College
- * **Suren Moodliar**, N. American Alliance for Fair Employment
- * **Charlie Welsh**, art photographer, computers, TecsChange

— Refreshments —

Vermont Loses Its Virginity Swift-Boat: Authoritarian for Bernie's Seat?

by Joyce Marcel, *commondreams.org*, 29 March 2006

There's no doubt that a grassroots impeachment movement is brewing in Vermont. Dan DeWalt's Newfane town meeting impeachment resolution—passed also by Dummerston, Putney, Marlboro, Brookfield and, in modified form, by Brattleboro—attracted international attention. The state's Democratic Party is now considering a call for impeachment. So you might think that Vermont is once again ahead of the pack.

But don't believe for a moment that we can be smug about our outrage, our good common sense, and our progressive values.

True, we were the first state to outlaw slavery. True, we were the first state to debate gay marriage and grant civil rights to gays and lesbians. True, our beloved Sen. James Jeffords switched out of the Republican Party to help balance the power in the early days of the Bush Administration. True, our former governor, Howard Dean, almost swept the last presidential sweepstakes and is now chief fund-raiser and grassroots hell-raiser for the Democratic Party. True, we have a group working hard for Vermont's secession from the Union. True, we voted loud and clear that we want Bush out of office as soon as possible. But let's look at reality.

First of all, Vermont lost its progressive virginity a long, long time ago. Our image may be one of (Continued on page 5 >>)

STRATEGIC NONVIOLENCE



Sarojini Naidu, Indian poet and member of the Congress working committee, who led the nonviolent raid on the Dharasana salt works, May 1930.

Credit: ©CORBIS/Bettmann

Police Brutality That Shook the World 16 Days: Truth-Force Clubbed but Held Fast

by Webb Miller, *United Press*, 21 May 1930

Dungri consisted of a little huddle of native huts on the dusty plain. There were no means of transportation. I could find nobody who spoke English. By repeatedly pronouncing the word 'Dharsana' and pointing questioningly around the horizon, I got directions and set off across country on foot through cactus hedges, millet fields, and inch-deep dust, inquiring my way by signs.

After plodding about six miles across country lugging a pack of sandwiches and two quart bottles of water under a sun which was already blazing hot, inquiring from every native I met, I reached the assembling place of the Gandhi followers. Several long, open, thatched sheds were surrounded by high cactus thickets. The sheds were literally swarming and buzzed like a beehive with some 2500 Congress or Gandhi men dressed in the regulation uniform of rough homespun cotton dhotis and triangular Gandhi caps, somewhat like American overseas soldiers' hats. They chattered excitedly and when I arrived hundreds surrounded me, with evidences of hostility at first. After they learned my identity, I was warmly welcomed by young college-educated, English-speaking men and escorted to Mme Naidu. The famous Indian poetess, stocky, swarthy, strong-featured, bare-legged, dressed in rough, dark homespun robe

and sandals, welcomed me. She explained that she was busy marshaling her forces for the demonstration against the salt pans and would talk with me more at length later. She was educated in England and spoke English fluently.

Mme Naidu called for prayer before the march started and the entire assemblage knelt. She exhorted them, 'Gandhi's body is in gaol but his soul is with you. India's prestige is in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist; you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows.' Wild, shrill cheers terminated her speech.

Slowly and in silence the throng commenced the half-mile march to the salt deposits. A few carried ropes for lassoing the barbed-wire stockade around the salt pans. About a score who were assigned to act as stretcher-bearers wore crude, hand-painted red crosses pinned to their breasts; their stretchers consisted of blankets. Manilal Gandhi, second son of Gandhi, walked among the foremost of the marchers. As the throng drew near the salt pans they commenced chanting the revolutionary slogan, '*Inquilab zindabad*' [Long live revolution!], intoning the two words over and over.

The salt deposits were surrounded by ditches filled with water and guarded by 400 native Surat police in khaki shorts and brown turbans. Half-a-dozen British officials commanded them. The police carried *lathis*—five-foot clubs tipped with steel. Inside the stockade twenty-five native riflemen were drawn up.

In complete silence the Gandhi men drew up and halted a hundred yards from the stockade. A picked column advanced from the crowd, waded the ditches, and approached the barbed-wire stockade, which the Surat police surrounded, holding their clubs at the ready. Police officials ordered the marchers to disperse under a recently imposed regulation which prohibited gatherings of more than five persons in any one place. The column silently ignored the warning and slowly walked forward. I stayed with the main body about a hundred yards from the stockade.

Suddenly, at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads with their steel-shod lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ten-pins. From where I stood I heard the sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls. The waiting crowd of watchers groaned and sucked in their breaths in sympathetic pain at every blow.

Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes. The survivors without breaking ranks silently and doggedly marched on until struck down. When every one of the first column had been knocked down stretcher-bearers rushed up unmolested by the police and carried off the injured to a thatched hut which had been arranged as a temporary hospital.

Then another column formed while the leaders pleaded with them to retain their self-control. They marched slowly toward the police. Although every one knew that within a few minutes he

would be beaten down, perhaps killed, I could detect no signs of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up, without the encouragement of music or cheering or any possibility that they might escape serious injury or death. The police rushed out and methodically and mechanically beat down the second column. There was no fight, no struggle; the marchers simply walked forward until struck down. There were no outcries, only groans after they fell. There were not enough stretcher-bearers to carry off the wounded; I saw eighteen

No, It Was Not Police Conscience It Was International Reporting

...Thomas Weber* analyzed the campaign to see if suffering by *satyagrahis* converted the *lathi*-wielding police. Quite the contrary: despite extensive injuries to protestors, with hundreds taken to hospitals, the beatings became worse. The British colonial government brazenly denied any police brutality, claiming that protestors had faked being injured.

The campaign was a success not due to direct conversion, as postulated by Gandhi, but because of *indirect* conversion. United Press journalist Webb Miller reported on the campaign to an international audience, telling about the gallant and disciplined Indian protestors and challenging British government disinformation. This reporting helped turn international opinion against British colonial rule in India. Webb Miller and the international press served as vital links in a great chain of nonviolence** between Indians and British rulers.

—Brian Martin & Wendy Varney. *Nonviolence Speaks: Communicating against repression* (2003), p.140.

* "Nonviolent suffering and conversion" in *Peace & Change*, 1993, vol 18, pp 267-289.

** Johan Galtung, "Principles of nonviolent action", University of Hawaii Institute for Peace, 1989.

injured being carried off simultaneously, while forty-two still lay bleeding on the ground awaiting stretcher-bearers. The blankets used as stretchers were sodden with blood

In the middle of the morning V. J. Patel arrived. He had been leading the Swaraj movement since Gandhi's arrest, and had just resigned as President of the Indian Legislative Assembly in protest against the British. Scores surrounded him, knelt, and kissed his feet. He was a venerable gentleman of about sixty with white flowing beard and moustache, dressed in the usual undyed, coarse homespun smock. Sitting on the ground under a mango tree, Patel said, 'All hope of reconciling India with the British Empire is lost for ever. I can understand any government's taking people into custody and punishing them for breaches of the law, but I cannot understand how any government that calls itself civilized could deal as savagely and brutally with non-violent, unresisting men as the British have this morning.'

By eleven the heat reached 116 (Continued on page 4 >>)

EDITORIAL

Peace, Truth, and Nonviolence

by Dave Lewit, *Alliance for Democracy*, 31 Mar 2006

On the 11th of September, 2001, two airliners crashed into New York's world trade towers, followed by their collapse and the collapse of a third building in the complex, with the death of about 3000 occupants. The Bush administration did nothing to prevent this. Ninety-five years earlier, in a theater in Johannesburg, South Africa, also on September 11th, 3000 angry Indian settlers heard a young Indian lawyer named Mohandas Gandhi call for nonviolent resistance to an impending colonial law that would further strip Indians of their rights to immigrate, freely marry, conduct businesses, get schooling, receive pensions, and move freely about the country. Though it was dangerous, all pledged to live by Gandhi's "truth-force" and nonviolently resist this racist injustice.

Gandhi's truth-force (*satyagraha*) deals with *life and truth*, while Bush & Co's adventures deal with *mendacity and death*. (In all fairness, we must say that Bush and the neoconservatives in the government are only the latest, though perhaps the most critical, of power-grasping US administrations beginning with John Adams and running through Jackson, Polk, McKinley, Nixon, and Lyndon Johnson among others.) Truth and falsity has to do with such deniable realities as colonial selfishness—whether imperial or corporate—and disrespect for people of the wrong gender, color, wealth, or residence. It also has to do with the value of sharing, honorable work, simplicity, protection of nature, inclusiveness, community, and self-rule.

Years later Gandhi proposed the formation of a "truth army" (*shanti sena*) to overcome violence and promote truth values like community. Gandhi's concept of peace was far from passive nonviolence. Peace was not the quiet condition of indentured servants, nor the satisfaction of masters, but a mindful, social struggle for honesty, compassion, and conviviality. Thus *conflict resolution* is only one step in the quest for truth. In practice, peace teams such as Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) teams, probably do foster truth in Gandhi's larger sense. But the rules of engagement, at least of NP, require *nonpartisanship* and *mediation* in order to make room for local groups to make peace in some nonviolent way. It would be counterproductive to take sides, and blame one or both or all parties in a given conflict.

But herein lies a problem. Does the intervention of CPT or NP teams depend on ongoing or threatened physical violence, or are they prepared to weigh into situations which are structurally explosive though superficially calm—such as an Israeli or Palestinian community which has never experienced a bombing? The answer seems to be ongoing physical violence. Gandhi, on the other hand, recognized the *structural violence* of classism, the caste system, and colonial rule. His famous 1930 "salt march" in the Gujarat region of India was contemplated and carried out, with thousands of followers, to challenge the salt tax law—a structural feature of colonialism representing all laws which subjugated the

population of British India.

The truth of 9/11 is not the quiescent half-truth but patent falsity of the government's account. It is not the account which stirs up the least controversy, scorn, or prosecution. Like all truths it is not a thing, but a concept—an attribution—supported by patterns of evidence from all quarters eagerly sought in the most open of forums including the open mind. Those of us who spend hours on the web each day, alert to such evidence, and who read stories and see videos from a wide variety of sources, are at least skeptical of the official account as rendered by the 9/11 Commission.



Gandhi in S. Africa

But skepticism is not enough for truth-seekers. *Satyagraha* literally means "truth-grasping" or "truth-dedication". Like the dedicated prosecutor or defender, we must actively pursue the truth, since the consequences of languishing in public falsity or half-truths are dire for all but our oligarchs—our corporate would-be masters—and for the earth and its nurturant ecosystems. When you think about the mechanics of bringing down the World Trade towers you are in the same weaponized, aerial realm as the currently accelerating US project to command space and dominate the earth from space. We may not need more nuclear bombs to end human life. The burn-up of a plutonium-powered space vehicle may just as surely poison us all.

Less drastic, but perhaps more humiliating, would be the realization of the dream of the US Space Command—to be able to pinpoint individuals on the street from space, and zap them in an instant, or to disable our internet and telephone systems with calculated radiation. No doubt this can also be done on the ground, bureaucratically. Less esoteric, the perpetuation of presidential or ducal (e.g., corporate media) falsity may cause so much degradation of ecosystems and societies that—out of control—a nightmare of flood, fire, disease, and thirst may take most of us away.

Truth is not to be diddled or proclaimed. Truth is not to "face reality". It cannot be established by guns or propaganda. It must be actively sought by many of us—the many who are at least a bit respected and listened to by our communities. Only by actively seeking—"experimenting" (Gandhi), with the necessary sacrifice, enduring the slings and arrows of believers and aspirants, will we survive in this most dangerous of ages.

References:

Sanderson Beck. "Gandhi's nonviolent revolution" www.san.beck.org/GPJ20-Gandhi.html

George Pattery. "An inquiry into the origins of satyagraha and its contemporary relevance" www.crvp.org/book/Series03/IIIB-5/chapter_ii.htm

Damon Lynch. "Three Peace Forces: The Khudai Khidmitgars, Shanti Sena and Nonviolent Peaceforce" www.asianreflection.com/npskk.pdf

degrees in the shade and the activities of the Gandhi volunteers subsided. I went back to the temporary hospital to examine the wounded. They lay in rows on the bare ground in the shade of an open, palm-thatched shed. I counted 320 injured, many still insensible with fractured skulls, others writhing in agony from kicks in the testicles and stomach. The Gandhi men had been able to gather only a few native doctors, who were doing the best they could with the inadequate facilities. Scores of the injured had received no treatment for hours and two had died. The demonstration was finished for the day on account of the heat.

I was the only foreign correspondent who had witnessed the amazing scene—a classic example of satyagraha or non-violent civil disobedience.

Peace Teams Why They Risk Their Lives

by Lyn Adamson, *Toronto Star*, 29 March 2006 (adapted)

[Ed. note: Mahatma Gandhi launched Satyagraha—nonviolent resistance—when the South African colonial government planned to strip Indian settlers of their British citizenship and restrict their options and movements. That was exactly 100 years ago, ironically, on 9/11. On 9/11/2001 3000 New Yorkers fell to their death in attacks on the World Trade Center. On 9/11/1906 3000 Indians pledged to adopt satyagraha, and many were jailed or beaten in the aftermath. This centennial will be remembered in Boston and elsewhere this September, and may launch a worldwide movement of strategic nonviolence—to confront the neoliberal and neoconservative and nativist assaults on democracy and the earth.]

The rescue of James Loney, Harmeet Singh Sooden, and Norman Kember in Iraq, and the death of Tom Fox, has focused attention on the Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Not all the attention has been flattering. There have been questions raised about the role of nonviolent peacemakers in a conflict zone. Critics have suggested that peacemakers are naive and cannot make a contribution. It is important to understand the benefits of the presence of nonviolent peace teams in order to understand why they are there.

In his lifetime, Gandhi developed the concept of the *shanti sena* or peace army. This vision has contributed to the formation of many peace team organizations based on nonviolence. At any one time there may be hundreds of peace team members placed in a dozen or more conflict zones, each person working within this framework of making space for peace through their presence.

Each organization has its own safety protocols, its own criteria for selecting volunteers and for choosing deployments. Each provides training and support for its team members, and although there are many commonalities among these peace teams, there are also features unique to each group.

Many of us passionately believe in the power of nonviolent presence. This passion has led to the formation of the newest peace team organization, the Nonviolent Peaceforce, which has placed 25 team members in Sri Lanka. NP has plans to expand this unarmed presence to many other conflict zones where there

is a need.

Like CPT in Iraq, Nonviolent Peaceforce teams live and work in Sri Lankan communities most threatened by violence stemming from Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war. Without international presence, people in conflict zones like Iraq and Sri Lanka will be left to suffer the ill effects of the occupation and the armed chaos alone.

The most important aspect of international peace teams' presence in conflict zones is its message: there are internationals, including Americans, Britons, and many others, who care about what is happening to you, who are working to get the word out about what you are suffering and to put pressure on for due process and respect for international human rights. They are doing this through nonviolent presence, and are willing to take some risks to do this.

We can never know how many Iraqis have been moved in a positive way by CPT's presence, although we do know that their work has encouraged the formation of a Muslim Peacemakers Team, which is working at bridging the Shia-Sunni divide.

This is a role that cannot be played by the military or police; that is, working with civil society organizations to develop the social infrastructure so needed to rebuild a war torn country, and showing international support for threatened individuals, organizations and communities.

In Sri Lanka, Nonviolent Peaceforce is seeing the beginnings of a re-emergence of civil society in communities where fear of violence had driven it underground. Dialogues between different groups caught up in the conflict have begun to replace communal violence.

Nonviolent Peaceforce has reviewed its work in the field many times and will continue to do so. Other peace teams go through the same process. Is the benefit worth the risk? Do we believe that the only ones who should take risks for peace are armed men and women in uniforms?

We know that active nonviolence has transformed violent conflict in many parts of the world: in India, in the U.S. civil rights movement, in the campaign against apartheid. Lives have been lost in these struggles. These must be measured against the gains that have been achieved. Ultimately society must put an end to war. To do so we must build a culture of peace and respect for human rights. We cannot attain this by staying inside a bubble of safety. Taking risks will be necessary.

Gandhi challenged us to 'be the change you wish to see in the world'. Gandhi also said: 'Nonviolence in my lifetime is at the same stage as electricity was in Edison's time: to be refined'. We all know too well the devastation of war. We would do well to support the development of nonviolent alternatives, and to see what can be accomplished by them.

Lyn Adamson is a Nonviolent Peaceforce international governing council member and secretary. She served with the International Women's Peace Service in the West Bank (2004) and as executive of Peace Brigades International Indonesia Project (1999-2002). She is a Quaker who lives in Toronto, Canada. Visit www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org.

VERMONT LOSES VIRGINITY (Continued from page 1)

fresh air, green rolling hills, cows dotting the pastures, towns with church spires, inns and general stores, woods full of artists. That's what we sell the tourists. The image does not include the reality of an aging nuclear power plant with new owners who plan to rev it up way past its design limitations - and for way longer than it was designed to go - without considering a serious, full-scale inspection or having a place to put radioactive waste.

Then, too, remember the old adage that a fish rots from the head? Well, with his arrogance, lies, torture, evasion of responsibility, incompetence, sexual repression and corruption, President George W. Bush is certainly as rotten as you can get. The rot has now seeped down into almost every part of American life, from the war-mongering, to the greed of big business, to the arrogance of the Supreme Court, to the South Dakota anti-abortion law, to the pharmacists who feel safe refusing to fill birth control prescriptions, to the lobbyists to the Bush family itself, which has shamelessly and personally profited from Hurricane Katrina and the war in Iraq.

With such a vast seep creeping, how could it not be creeping into Vermont, too?

Well, it is. There's our Republican governor, for instance. James Douglas has worked hard to be perceived as a "nice man," but he has worked even harder to block the Legislature —and remember, we sent a majority of Democrats to the Statehouse to make some progress on important things like universal health care—from doing anything at all. On more than one occasion, Douglas has slept in the White House as the personal guest of George and Laura Bush. He has supported the president's illegal and immoral war in Iraq at every turn.

Then we have the "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth." Their campaign of lies and insinuations sank John Kerry. (And yes, he should have been able to swim, but he didn't.) Well, today the advertising firm that produced those ads is hard at work in Vermont. It is working for "nice woman" and "Douglas Republican" Martha Rainville, the former Adjutant General of the Vermont National Guard, who is running for Rep. Bernie Sanders' seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. And it is working for right-winger Greg Parke, who is trying to get the Republican nomination for the seat in the U.S. Senate vacated by Jeffords.

What are the Swifties up to? Most of all, they are trying to smear Sanders, who is also running for Jefford's seat. This isn't the first time the Republicans have come after Sanders. A few years ago, Vermonters were disgusted when opposition candidates tried to dig up dirt on Sanders's marriages. It didn't work then, but with the ground softened by seepage it might work now.

And wasn't it just a few weeks ago that talk radio right-wingers were going all crazy in the head about Judge Cashman and his efforts to get a sex offender some treatment? Bill O'Reilly, the bully to end all bullies, called Vermonters soft on baby rape. Then he called for a boycott of Vermont products. (Then someone pointed out to him that the Vermont Teddy Bear Co. is one of his biggest sponsors and he backed down.) Still, the anti-Vermont invective flowed for weeks.

And then the former bureau chief of the Associated Press, Chris Graff, wrote a story pointing out the lies in O'Reilly's bluster. He also put on the AP wire a column written by Sen. Patrick Leahy about the importance of freedom of the press. And then he was fired after nearly three decades of respected service. No reason was given. Every newspaper in the state howled, and Douglas and the entire Congressional delegation—which agree on nothing, ever—joined together to protest. We have heard nothing but silence from the AP ever since.

Blocking real health care reform, firing people for speaking the truth, slandering our politicians... what's coming next? The upcoming election is going to be a long and dirty haul. The seepage has started already, and we're only in March.

I've been on the fence about Vermont secession. It appeals to the infant in me who wants to take her toys and go home if the other kids won't behave. It appeals to the punisher in me, too. It even appeals to the adult in me who wants to live in a sane, caring society. But the more I watch what is happening in Vermont, the madder I get.

Vermont is under attack. We will see many attempts to undermine our independent thinking in the next eight months. All those who treasure Vermont's strong values need to be at the barricades for this one.

joycemarcel@yahoo.com. A collection of Marcel's columns, "A Thousand Words or Less," will be out in May.

Forums Bustin' Out All Over!

by Sergio Reyes, WSF Bulletin, 31Mar 2006

Summary (see details at www.sreyes.org)

1. Around 30,000 people participated in the WSF 2006 in **Karachi**
2. WSF 2007 in **Nairobi**, Kenya, will take place 20-25 January
3. **II Brazilian Social Forum**: registration is still open
4. **IV European Social Forum**: more than 800 activities registered

5. **Forums around the world**

- VII Free Software Workshop, 19-22 April 2006, Centro de Eventos FIERGS, **Porto Alegre**, Brazil
- 2nd Brazilian Social Forum, 20-23 April 2006, **Recife** (PE), Brazil
- Border Social Forum, 3-5 May 2006, **Ciudad Juarez**, Mexico
- 4th European Social Forum, 4-7 May 2006, **Athens**, Greece
- Dutch Social Forum, 19-21 May 2006, **Nijmegen**, Netherlands
- Quebec Social Forum, 14-18 June 2006, **Quebec**, Canada
- Austria Social Forum, 15-18 June 2006, **Graz**, Austria
- 2nd Migrations World Social Forum, 22-24 June 2006, Rivas Vaciamadrid, **Madrid**, Spain
- **Caribe Social Forum** (date and venue: to be set)
- Midwest Social Forum, 6-9 July 2006, **Milwaukee**, Wisconsin
- 2nd Triple Frontier Social Forum, 21-23 July 2006, Ciudad del **Paraguay**
- 3rd Parana Medio Social Forum, 8-10 September 2006, **Argentina**
- India Social Forum, November 2006, **Delhi** (to be set)

US Navy Threatens Venezuela, Cuba Possibly to Aid Secession of Oil-Rich Area

by Jorge Martin, handsoffvenezuela.org, 30 March 2006

According to a press release by the US Southern Command on 27 March: "A U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group will deploy from the U.S. east coast to the Caribbean Sea to conduct Operation Partnership of the Americas from early April through late May 2006." The strike group will be composed of "aircraft carrier USS George Washington with embarked air wing, Cruiser USS Monterey, Destroyer USS Stout, and Frigate USS Underwood". This means that the US Navy will be sending 4 ships, one of them carrying 60 fighter planes, and a total of 6,500 soldiers on a major military exercise in the Caribbean starting in the next few weeks...

"The presence of a U.S. carrier task force in the Caribbean will definitely be interpreted as some sort of signal by the governments of Cuba and Venezuela," said Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute, a pro-defense think tank in Washington, who added: "the fact we are doing it now will be interpreted by Castro and Chavez as indicative of some sort of U.S. plan or initiative..." (*Virginian Pilot*, 28 March 2006)...

The US Southcom already has a number of military bases within reach of Venezuelan territory. These include smaller "Cooperative Security Locations" based in Aruba and Curaçao off the coast of Venezuela, in Manta in Ecuador and in El Salvador, together with larger bases in Soto Cano in Honduras, Guantánamo in Cuba and in several locations in Colombia. Southcom has just issued a new "theater command strategy", part of which has been declassified. Objective number one is to guarantee that "regional energy supplies will flow freely into international markets and will not be targets of aggression." Essential to meeting this security objective, says Southcom, is improving the ability of "partner nation security forces to protect critical infrastructure" of the energy industry in the region. This clearly affects Venezuela, which is the 3rd largest supplier of oil to the United States.

A number of objectives have not been declassified, but then number six is to "prevent rogue states from supporting terrorist organizations". Considering there are no "rogue" states in Latin America, this can only be a reference to Venezuela, which Washington has accused, without presenting any proof, of supporting the Farc guerrillas in Colombia (described by Gen Braddock as "narco-terrorists").

Usually the corporate media dismisses president Chavez's warnings of the danger of a US military intervention against the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela. But information publicly available shows that this is a very real danger. Washington is not likely to start an open war in Venezuela at this particular time, when they are bogged down in a war they cannot win in Iraq, but they are certainly making preparations.

One way in which military intervention can take place is by artificially fostering autonomist demands in Zulia, the oil-rich Venezuelan state on the border with Colombia. Local politicians

in this region (one of only two with an opposition governor) have been busy demanding a referendum on autonomy. A scenario could be envisaged in which they declare independence unilaterally and ask for foreign intervention to guarantee their "democratic rights". Such an intervention would be easier to justify and could even take place under the guise of "peace-keeping" (as is currently the case with the imperialist intervention in Haiti).

This would obviously not be an easy task. Chavez has already pointed out, correctly, that the day after military intervention by the US against Venezuela, the whole continent would be in flames. Latin America is witnessing a shift to the left with mass movements, general strikes, insurrections, elections of governments which are seen as being left wing by the masses, etc.

The United States is seriously worried about the impact the Venezuelan revolution is having in the rest of Latin America. They are accusing Chavez of interfering in the election campaigns in Peru and Mexico, as they accused him of interfering in the elections in December in Bolivia in which Evo Morales won a landslide victory. The accusation that the Venezuelan government is directly financing candidates in other countries is obviously wrong. But what is certainly true is that the Bolivarian revolution has raised the hopes of the masses of workers and peasants throughout the continent and beyond. It has provided an example that it is possible to challenge the policies imposed by Washington.

In previous decades a familiar pattern would take place in Latin America. The masses of workers and peasants went on the move and elected a progressive government which would soon be overthrown by a military coup engineered from the US. This had a demoralizing effect on the mass movement in the continent.

The Bolivarian revolution has also changed that with the defeat of the military coup against Chavez in April 2002 by the mass movement of the people in the streets. And the effect is not only in Latin America but also in the United States where millions of Latinos live and work, many of them keeping links with their countries of origin. The enormous hundreds of thousands of Latin American immigrants in the United States who have been demonstrating and going on strike for their rights in the last few weeks, would not remain idle if the US staged a military provocation against Venezuela...

Wild Birds Unfairly Blamed Corp Factory Farms Breed Avian Flu

by Nicholas von Hoffman, *Nation online*, 28 Mar 2006

A few days ago the Union of Concerned Scientists sent out an e-mail saying, "A study by the international non-governmental organization GRAIN suggests that avian influenza is spread primarily by the global poultry trade, not migratory birds or free-range poultry operations as has been suggested, and that confined factory farm production contributed to its mutation into

its current deadly form.

A few days ago the Union of Concerned Scientists sent out an e-mail saying, "A study by the international non-governmental organization GRAIN suggests that avian influenza is spread primarily by the global poultry trade, not migratory birds or free-range poultry operations as has been suggested, and that confined factory farm production contributed to its mutation into its current deadly form. The organization tracked the movements of the disease over time and found that they were correlated, not with migratory bird routes or the locations of free-range farms, but with integrated trade networks involving poultry, eggs, meat, feathers, manure and animal feed. US Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns warned that bird flu will almost certainly come to the United States."

An article on the website of the biodiversity agency Grain titled "Fowl Play: The Poultry Industry's Central Role in the Bird Flu Crisis" is yet one more reminder that things are not always as they tell us they are. Maybe the migrating swallows and arctic terns are not carrying the H5N1 flu virus after all, and why do we have to wait for the Union of Concerned Scientists to hip us to the knowledge that the disease rarely occurs in small family flocks but rather mostly in farm factories where chickens are raised by the tens of thousands inside, under unsanitary and debilitating conditions that make them soft prey for the virus. Overly large, unregulated agribusiness is at it again.

All of this is but a new version of an old truth: There is no money, or not enough money, in health. From a business point of view prevention of disease or disability is a chump's game, whether you are talking about Canadian geese, a Rhode Island red hen or a person. The big bucks are in sickness. You can make money getting people sick by selling them bad food and make more money selling them remedies for what you did to them.

So the same Grain article also brings the startling news that "one of the standard ingredients in industrial chicken feed, and most industrial animal feed, is 'poultry litter.' This is a euphemism for whatever is found on the floor of the factory farms: fecal matter, feathers, bedding, etc. Chicken meat, under the label 'animal byproduct meal,' also goes into industrial chicken feed. The WHO (World Health Organization) says that bird flu can survive in bird feces for up to 35 days and, in a recent update to its bird flu fact sheet, it mentions feed as a possible medium for the spread of bird flu between farms. Russian authorities pointed to feed as one of the main suspected sources of an H5N1 outbreak at a large-scale factory farm in Kurgan province, where 460,000 birds were killed. Yet globally, nothing is being done to tighten regulations or monitoring of the feed industry. Instead it often seems that the industry, not governments, is calling the shots."

Thus the don't-fence-me-in, don't-regulate-me cowboys of the food business may kill us by breeding sick chickens and may kill the chickens by feeding them contaminated food--which, of course, they sell. Yippeee-ay-yea, bring on the pandemic! But

there is yet another way of wringing legitimate profits out of this disease, which, if the most pessimistic predictions turn out to be true, may cause one out of five of us to turn up our toes and head for the great chicken factory in the sky.

That other way is selling us expensive medicine that does not work in case we come down with avian flu. The medicine in question is Tamiflu, which may cure Tamiflu but doesn't cure avian flu. Nevertheless, they can't make the stuff fast enough. They are back-ordered into the next century.

If that were not fun enough, Grain has also discovered that Donald Rumsfeld is a major stockholder in Gilead Sciences, which licenses Tamiflu. Whether or not Tamiflu is of the slightest use to avian flu sufferers, it is of great profitability to the secretary of defense, since Gilead is expected to make \$118 million from Tamiflu sales this year. Somebody has laid a big, fat egg here.

LETTERS

Cause to Rejoice

Nearly 60 people came out Sunday afternoon, joining Friends Meeting members in protesting the Iraq war as it goes into its fourth year. The largest and several smaller signs read "Not One More DEATH Not One More DOLLAR." New slogans included "It's 1984, What War?" and "Peace is Natural, War is a Decision."

The two hours ended with a brief circle of commemoration and celebration. Honored were not only the victims, including Tom Fox and Rachel Corrie, killed in Iraq and Palestine respectively, but also the international movement for nonviolent peaceful intervention and peacekeeping. Mel Duncan, whose tribute to Fox was read, points out that casualties among nonviolent peace activists and the civilian population are much less than with a military deployment. Nonviolence calls forth the human best in both sides. Duncan heads the nascent Nonviolent Peaceforce, a professionally trained unarmed non-partisan [mini-]army.

Two handouts highlighted the nonviolent movement, one an overview, below, and also a report on the Nonviolent Peaceforce from YES! Magazine [Spring 2006, p.20] "Greater Than the Tread of Mighty Armies: Nonviolent Peacekeeping"

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Upcoming dates on which to foster non-violence include Hiroshima Day, Aug. 6, and Sept. 11, 2006, which marks the 100th anniversary of Gandhi's proclamation of satyagraha, (nonviolent action based on "soul force".) Supported by the Muslim community, a Sri Lanka group will sponsor a massive pledge of nonviolence on 9/11/06. Other groups---in Boston, for example, led by Dave Lewit of the Alliance for Democracy and Sherry Zitter of Nonviolent Peaceforce---are mounting centennial events to promote civil resistance to aspects of war and corporate domination.

Courageous volunteers are making a difference and saving thousands of lives, occasionally at the cost of their own, in Iraq,

Sri Lanka, Colombia, Guatemala, Israel/Palestine, Uganda, Mexico, the Philippines, and elsewhere. The seminal justice campaign was waged by Gandhi, first in South Africa, then in India, against the colonial British. Gandhi insisted that nonviolence, far from being the passive tool of the weak, required the highest resolve and courage. His campaign was backed by a nonviolent army, 100,000 strong, formed by Islamic hero Badshah Khan from the revenge- and honor-driven Pashtun of Afghanistan. On one occasion Khan's army stood fast as the British started shooting. Nonviolence calls upon the best, not the worst, in its proponents and also its opponents. The British eventually negotiated with the despised Gandhi, and India won independence.

The twentieth century saw a blossoming of nonviolent resistance to oppression around the globe, for example, the US civil rights movement. South Africa moved beyond apartheid and elected Mandela without a bloodbath. The Berlin Wall came down. Danes defied German occupation with noncompliance, slow-downs, and rescued most of their seven thousand Jews from the Holocaust. See PBS documentary and book *A Force More Powerful* for these stories and more.

For nonviolence to succeed it must be disciplined and strategic, and groups such as the Albert Einstein Institute research and educate on successful techniques. It is backed by a populace passionate about its means and goals, who disrupt everyday normal functions on which a dictator depends.

Movements organized recently are many and varied. Search for Common Ground trained some 10,000 internally displaced persons in conflict resolution in Angola, and The Compassionate Listening Project teaches people in bitter conflict such as Israel/Palestine to listen, and to hear each other's humanity. All cause to rejoice.

—Jean Marybom, *Friends Vigil, Sandpoint, Idaho*

CHAPTER NEWS

"Protecting our water" drew many people to our March meeting to hear Zandra Rice, Jonathan Leavitt, and Marie Miller tell about their action programs and Dave Lewit about ours, followed by a lively discussion. We will report on these and related water topics in BCA Dispatch for May, when we will also provide news from New Hampshire. We do request that persons interested in working in area schools—pairwise interviewing teachers, administrators, and students for starters—contact Dispatch editor (contact information in Colophon below).

ACTION ALERTS

Mon. 17 Apr. 6:30pm, Cambridge. UMassBoston Professor **Jim Green** on his new book *Death in the Haymarket*: a story of Chicago, the first labor movement, and the bombing that divided Gilded-Age America. Harvard Book Store, 1256 Mass. Ave, Harvard Sq. Free. Info: 617-661-1515

Thu. 20 Apr. 7pm, Cambridge. "Military: the 'new normal' in American politics & culture?" Fr. **Bryan Hehir**, practice of religion and public life professor at Kennedy School of Govern-

ment-Harvard U; **Missy Cummings**, former military pilot and aeronautics professor at MIT; and **Eugene Jarecki**, director of the film "Why We Fight" (excerpts shown at 6:30). Technology & Culture Forum, MIT Bldg 6 Rm 120. Info: <http://web.mit.edu/tac> or call 617-253-0108.

Wed. 3 May. 7:30pm, Boston. **Yolanda King** (daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., & Coretta Scott King).

"Nonviolence as a Way of Life" Benefit for Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF). St. Paul's Cathedral, 138 Tremont St. \$30 or what you will. Info: Andre, 617-964-5267

Thu. 4 May. 6pm—and other dates March-August, Boston.

Beehive Collective presents "MesoAmerica Resiste" – a picture-lecture tour de force about people power vs corporate power in Central America. "With 3 giant illustrated portable murals, a 6-ft fabric storybook, and an engaging narrative, the Bees take you on an interactive visual tour of the connections between colonization, militarization, and resource extraction in the Americas... Deconstruct the complex and overwhelming issues that are shaping our world, using bioregionally accurate depictions of animals and insects as metaphors to link cultural and ecological diversity." Simmons College, Main Bldg, 3rd fl, 300 The Fenway. Info: www.beehivecollective.org. A trip & ½

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Please help us as we fight to make a better future for ourselves and our children -- Join the Boston/Cambridge Alliance for Democracy. (Cut out or copy this form and send it to:

Dave Lewit, 271 Dartmouth St. #2h, Boston, MA 02116.)

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE

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COLOPHON

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Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org

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Web builder: Sergio Reyes. Webmaster: Stan Robinson.

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