

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** **September 2007**

This administration is a kleptocracy...little more than a classic protection racket writ large. Whether history will reveal that they manufactured 9/11, or purposely stood by and allowed it to happen, or simply screwed up the job of actually providing real national security, they in any case then milked that tragedy for everything it was worth, constantly sowing fear in the heartland, and offering the false promise of protection to a frightened public.

---David Michael Green, Hofstra University

CHAPTER NEWS

Chapter Calendar

* * **Meeting the Challenge** * *

Our next meeting—over dinner—will be jointly with North Bridge and the AfD's national office coordinator. We will discuss how we might work together on one or more priority projects, viewed in the light of the populist mission of the Alliance for Democracy. We will also discuss whether general meetings might be less frequent and devoted more to the support of action projects than to political education. If education is preferred, then who will organize them. Ongoing and planned projects of BCA, North Bridge, and AfD will be reported—democracy protection, water, localization, globalization impact, school civics, nonviolence, reading group, film, web—and priorities established for chapters or combined chapters.

WHERE: Bertucci's restaurant, at the **Alewife** (Red Line) station

WHEN: **Tuesday, Sept 25, 6:30 p.m.**

PARKING: T parking structure in same building.

COST: BCA will pay the bill. Voluntary contributions welcome.

The Shock Doctrine Radical Capitalism Thrives on Disaster

by Naomi Klein, *The Guardian (UK)*, 8 September 2007

Her explosive new book exposes the lie that free markets thrive on freedom. In our first exclusive extract, the No Logo author reveals the business of exploiting disaster.

I MET JAMAR PERRY IN SEPTEMBER 2005, at the big Red Cross shelter in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dinner was being doled out by grinning young Scientologists, and he was standing in line. I had just been busted for talking to evacuees without a media escort and was now doing my best to blend in, a white Canadian in a sea of African-American southerners. I dodged into the food line behind Perry and asked him to talk to me as if we were old friends, which he kindly did.

Born and raised in New Orleans, he'd been out of the flooded city for a week. He and his family had waited forever for the evacuation buses; when they didn't arrive, they had walked out in the baking sun. Finally they ended up here, a sprawling convention centre now jammed with (Continued on page 8 >>)



Moving Ahead with an SPP SuperCorridor

SPP at Montebello

Quietly Corporations Extend NAFTA's Grasp

by Laura Carlsen, *Americas Program*, 24 August 2007

FACED WITH OPPOSITION FROM THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT, George W. Bush, Felipe Calderon, and Stephen Harper met August 20-21 in Montebello, Quebec to discuss the little-known second phase of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Declarations to the press acknowledged public concerns about the content and the secrecy of the talks, but said nothing to clear up doubts about the closed-door proceedings or disclose specific policies under discussion.

Beyond the vague feel-good rhetoric about a "prosperous neighborhood" and "common commitments" the Canadian, U.S., and Mexican leaders each seemed to have his particular agenda. Canada fears another economically disastrous border closing like the one following the 2001 terrorist attacks and wants to assure it doesn't happen again. Bush emphasized the corporate wish-list of eliminating remaining barriers and harmonizing regulations. Calderon fears that Mexico is losing its NAFTA edge in the U.S. market and called for forming a regional trade bloc to compete with other regions of the world. No joint policy decisions or objectives were announced.

No wonder the public's confused.

A Short History

The Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) was launched in Waco, Texas in March 2005. The heads of state of the three NAFTA countries, other government officials, and business groups have met periodically to hammer out agreements to speed up integration and increase security. This has been done with almost no public input or Congressional oversight.

Since the SPP is not a law or a treaty or even a signed agreement, there are no formal mechanisms of accountability built in. It is essentially a "gentleman's agreement" between the executive branches and major corporations in the three nations.

This is what has people worried. Largely unknown to the public, the SPP has spawned numerous working groups, reports, and recommendations. In 2006, the private sector was brought in with the formation of the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC). This body is made up of business representatives from industries involved in intercontinental trade and investment, including Wal-Mart, (Continued on page 7 >>)

The Rep and the System Or, The Zen of Chipping Away

by Dave Lewit, *BCA Dispatch*, 30 August 2007

DEMOCRAT MIKE CAPUANO IS NOT A BAD GUY. For almost nine years he has represented most of Boston-Cambridge-Somerville (Massachusetts' 8th District— Speaker Tip O'Neill's in the glory days.) He is a "progressive", opposing the Iraq war almost from the start—opposing domestic spying, promoting universal health care, affordable housing, quality public education, labor organizing, estate taxing, all that. He is a leading team worker in the transition to Democratic leadership.

Mike is a consummate pragmatic insider. Impatiently spending half an hour with our "withdraw (from Iraq) and impeach" delegation, he made it clear that he will not promote a losing cause—like impeachment—on principle alone, but will negotiate with individual colleagues on individual issues to get half a loaf—for example, censure, which also takes less time—rather than none. He plays the system rather than defying or trying to alter the rules. Listening to him, I get the impression that he eschews efforts to reframe or change the political atmosphere in preparation for programmatic or systemic change, but prefers to "chip away" (his term) at bad policies or coalitions and proceed by small steps toward basic goods for everybody. And although he gives half-hours to many citizen delegations during congressional recess, he doesn't like to be distracted from chipping.

I was frustrated. Delegation members would like Mike to use his insider skills to fundamentally change the approach of the Democratic leadership, particularly Speaker Nancy Pelosi. But here is our representative chipping away while the Bush-Cheney administration audaciously takes giant steps toward authoritarian control, threatening any opposition and reducing citizen and public resources in arrogant and treasonable ways, such as: Sapping the public treasury or borrowing billions from foreign investors for illegal wars while nullifying acts of Congress through "signing statements". Kidnapping and torturing citizens without benefit of trial. Lying repeatedly to Congress to get partisan tax breaks and supplemental war funds. No-bid contracts to cronies. Privatizing much of the army, reducing accountability. Ordering seizure of assets of anyone actively opposed to their war or "democratization" activities. Stealing elections.

After the session Mike's aide Kate Auspitz indicated to me in private conversation that the loss of 3000 American lives in the 9-11 attacks was sufficient cause for war (presumably, in Afghanistan). Our discussion ended abruptly as we approached the question of whether a Muslim conspiracy was really or fully to blame for that catastrophe.

I would like to know what questions Mike may have about the planning of the 9-11 attacks and responses, and the significance of possible congressional hearings on that subject. If the official commission's report proves fraudulent, and inside operations were decisive, impeachment might be inevitable and scores of bad executive, legislative, and judicial decisions might have to be retracted. Approaching that issue with his aide led me to believe that at best, such a discussion would be barred as a waste of time. It would be inconsistent with the beliefs and dispositions of most members of Congress and would be disallowed.

Yet such a response would surprise me if Mike had indeed read the compelling Griffin critique and the testimony of "9-11

Truth" luminaries.* So has he read it? It may not be in the interest of a pragmatic insider to read it. Congressional hearings on the subject would delay action on progressive issues, if not democracy issues.

Mike stated that Cindy Sheehan lost all anti-war credibility with most Congress members when she praised neo-socialist Venezuela President Hugo Chavez, which makes me reluctant to argue that Mike should read Griffin et al, for fear that I will likewise lose credibility as a citizen advocate on the issue of, say, the portentous Security & Prosperity Partnership—an international double-whammy of corporate privilege and police-state measures, advanced without congressional oversight or media exposure.

We are caught in a bind, the representative and I. We are caught in the limiting structure of Congress, and the quasi-diplomatic structure of citizen relations with their representatives. Impeachment hearings or 9-11 hearings depend on one person—the chair of the designated House committee. This, by custom or agreement (House rules) among congress members. There is no back-up procedure for congressionally legitimate hearings, so one chairperson can block a vital democratic process. For example, he or she might decide that present voting dispositions would not be much changed by evidence revealed in hearings. Unless, one might suppose, major media miraculously pick up on it and the public becomes seriously involved. Mike's aide resisted the idea of a government (congressional or independent) channel, saying that NPR already performs that function. When I scoffed, the conversation came to an end. But perhaps it will resume if we can ever get beyond crisis mode or overload—and begin to look at system features and rethink them.

Mike's advice to us was applicable to both the system-players and the system changers: develop pressure. Identify not just representatives but also senators who need to be persuaded to sign on to good measures. Work with their constituent groups and leaders to persuade them with massive citizen insistence. This means lots of long-distance phone calls and lots of out-of-state visits. The advice, however, may be a Catch-22: how will volunteer organizers be able to do this, especially when it has to be done all over again for every issue? Such are the travails of reform, if not of revolution—or devolution.

* Professor David Ray Griffin's latest work on 9-11 is the revised edition of *Debunking the Debunkers* (2007). A thorough but succinct review of evidence that 9-11 was a "false flag" inside job may be read in the first 82 pages of Griffin's *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11* (2006). Supporting comments by experts in many fields may be read at www.patriotsquestion911.com. It is desirable to view a technical but easily intelligible video such as video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8129564295534231536 or the shorter www.911revisited.com/video.html. Griffin calls for an unbiased investigation, if not by Congress then by a consortium of churches. * *

Ed. Note: What if Congress went ahead with either impeachment or a real 9/11 investigation? Impeachment process would expose the already well-known high crimes of Bush/Cheney—no revelation, and hence likely to fail, further weakening the Constitution. 9/11 investigation, on the other hand, would likely succeed in educating the public to not just high crimes, but to intolerable deception, moral depravity, and family betrayal. Psychopathic Bush and Cheney would not relent, but the general epiphany could inspire one or more high-ranking conspirators to confess, which could lead to powerful national reformation. ■

California Toys with Autonomy U.S. Is Too Big, Regions Already Cooperate

by Gar Alperovitz, *New York Times*, 10 February 2007

SOMETHING INTERESTING IS HAPPENING IN CALIFORNIA. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger seems to have grasped the essential truth that no nation—not even the United States—can be managed successfully from the center once it reaches a certain scale. Moreover, the bold proposals that Mr. Schwarzenegger is now making for everything from universal health care to global warming point to the kind of decentralization of power which, once started, could easily shake up America's fundamental political structure.

Governor Schwarzenegger is quite clear that California is not simply another state. "We are the modern equivalent of the ancient city-states of Athens and Sparta," he recently declared. "We have the economic strength, we have the population and the technological force of a nation-state." In his inaugural address, Mr. Schwarzenegger proclaimed, "We are a good and global commonwealth."

Political rhetoric? Maybe. But California's governor has also put his finger on a little discussed flaw in America's constitutional formula. The United States is almost certainly too big to be a meaningful democracy. What does "participatory democracy" mean in a continent? Sooner or later, a profound, probably regional, decentralization of the federal system may be all but inevitable.

A recent study by the economists Alberto Alesina of Harvard and Enrico Spolaore of Tufts demonstrates that the bigger the nation, the harder it becomes for the government to meet the needs of its dispersed population. Regions that don't feel well served by the government's distribution of goods and services then have an incentive to take independent action, the economists note.

Scale also determines who has privileged access to the country's news media and who can shape its political discourse. In very large nations, television and other forms of political communication are extremely costly. President Bush alone spent \$345 million in his 2004 election campaign. This gives added leverage to elites, who have better corporate connections and greater resources than non-elites. The priorities of those elites often differ from state and regional priorities.

James Madison, the architect of the United States Constitution, understood these problems all too well. Madison is usually viewed as favoring constructing the nation on a large scale. What he urged, in fact, was that a nation of reasonable size had advantages over a very small one. But writing to Jefferson at a time when the population of the United States was a mere four million, Madison expressed concern that if the nation grew too big, elites at the center would divide and conquer a widely dispersed population, producing "tyranny."

Few Americans realize just how huge this nation is. Germany could fit within the borders of Montana. France is smaller than Texas. Leaving aside three nations with large, unpopulated land masses (Russia, Canada and Australia), the United States is geographically larger than all the other advanced industrial countries taken together. Critically, the American population, now roughly 300 million, is projected to reach more than 400 million by the middle of this century. A high Census Bureau estimate suggests it could reach 1.2 billion by 2100.

If the scale of a country renders it unmanageable, there are

two possible responses. One is a breakup of the nation; the other is a radical decentralization of power. More than half of the world's 200 nations formed as breakaways after 1946. These days, many nations — including Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, France, Italy and Spain, just to name a few — are devolving power to regions in various ways.

Decades before President Bush decided to teach Iraq a lesson, George F. Kennan worried that what he called our "monster country" would, through the "hubris of inordinate size," inevitably become a menace, intervening all too often in other nations' affairs: "There is a real question as to whether 'bigness' in a body politic is not an evil in itself, quite aside from the policies pursued in its name."

Kennan proposed that devolution, "while retaining certain of the rudiments of a federal government," might yield a "dozen constituent republics, absorbing not only the powers of the existing states but a considerable part of those of the present federal establishment."

Regional devolution would most likely be initiated by a very large state with a distinct sense of itself and aspirations greater than Washington can handle. The obvious candidate is California, a state that has the eighth-largest economy in the world.

If such a state decided to get serious about determining its own fate, other states would have little choice but to act, too. One response might be for an area like New England, which already has many regional interstate arrangements, to follow California's initiative—as it already has on some environmental measures. And if one or two large regions began to take action, other state groupings in the Northwest, Southwest and elsewhere would be likely to follow.

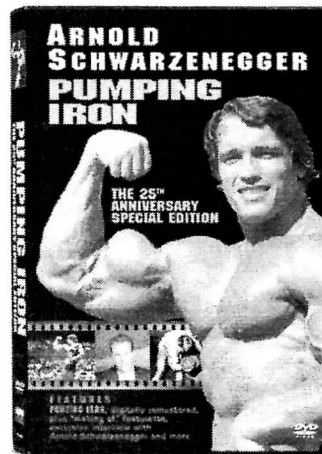
A new wave of regional devolution could also build on the more than 200 compacts that now allow groups of states to cooperate on environmental, economic, transportation and other

problems. Most likely, regional empowerment would be popular: when the Appalachian Commission was established in 1965, senators from across the country rushed to demand commissions to help the economies constituencies of their regions, too.

Governor Schwarzenegger may not have thought through the implications of continuing to assert forcefully his "nation-state" ambitions. But he appears to have an expansive sense of the possibilities: this is the governor, after all, who brought Prime Minister Tony

Blair of Britain to the Port of Long Beach last year to sign an accord between California and Britain on global warming. And he may be closer to the mark than he knows with his dream that "California, the nation-state, the harmonious state, the prosperous state, the cutting-edge state, becomes a model, not just for the 21st-century American society, but for the larger world."

Gar Alperovitz, a professor of political economy at the University of Maryland, College Park, is the author of "America Beyond Capitalism."



California Republic?

NH Town Trumps Corp Personhood CELDF, AfD Help Oust Water Corporations

by Doug Pibel, *Yes! Magazine*, Fall 2007

In 1819, THE SUPREME COURT DECLARED for the first time that corporations are entitled to protection under the Constitution. That case started in New Hampshire. Since then, corporations have been granted virtually all the rights constitutionally guaranteed to human beings. They use those rights to site polluting feedlots, dump toxic sludge, build big-box stores, and take municipal water to sell, all whether citizens want them to or not.

Now, New Hampshire townspeople are fighting to turn that around and put people, not corporations, in charge. What manner of revolutionaries are these? The kind you should expect in the United States: laborers, mothers, farmers, businessmen, and other ordinary citizens. They are people like Gail Darrell, a New Hampshire native who, 25 years ago, moved with her husband to the little town of Barnstead to raise their children in a rural environment. They are people like Barnstead Select Board member Jack O'Neil, a Vietnam veteran and George Bush voter.

What's These People's Problem?

Barnstead is located just south of New Hampshire's lakes region. The Suncook River runs through town, and four lakes are within the town limits. It's a water-rich community sitting on a big aquifer.

Which puts it in the crosshairs of corporate water miners. As bottled water has become a "must have" commodity generating nearly \$10 billion a year in consumer spending, corporations have descended on communities like Barnstead and set up pumping operations. They extract hundreds of thousands of gallons of water a day, bottle it, and ship it out for profit. Taking that much water raises the specter of lowered water tables and dry wells, infiltration of pollutants or saltwater, and damage to wetlands. The townspeople lose control of one of the necessities of life.

Barnstead residents watched as nearby Barrington and Nottingham fought to block multinational corporation USA Springs from taking their water. They saw those communities work through the state regulatory system and, after years of labor and hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs, find themselves without a remedy. Corporations, they were told, have constitutional rights that limit what regulators can do with zoning or other land-use controls.

Gail Darrell and Diane St. Germaine, another Barnstead resident, didn't want their town to face the same expensive battle. They already had experience with the regulatory system, having worked to get the town to ban local dumping of Class A sewage sludge. Once that ban was in place, the corporations shipping the sludge simply got it reclassified as Class B solids, and the town was back to square one.

"That was my first introduction to the regulatory process which actually does not allow citizens to say 'No' to anything," Darrell says. "All corporations have to do is change a word and they get their way."

The Trouble with Site Fights

One-at-a-time regulatory battles over a single project—whether sludge dumping, a Wal-Mart, or a nuclear power plant—are called "site fights." They are sometimes successful, although only about one time in 10. Even then, defeated corporations are

free to try again, as Wal-Mart frequently does when citizens defeat its siting plans.

The problem is that the system isn't set up to protect the rights or interests of the average human. Rick Smith of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) says that when people realize that corporate rights override community rights it's "shocking to them."

That the rights of a legal fiction, the corporation, trump the rights of human beings is the result of years of work by corporations to bend legislation and court rulings in their favor. Since the Supreme Court first cracked the constitutional door in 1819, it has steadily opened it wider, giving corporations virtually every protection in the Bill of Rights.

The Court, for instance, held that corporations have First Amendment rights to free speech and, in a later case, said that free speech includes spending money on political campaigns. Corporations have acquired full due process rights, a right to Fifth Amendment compensation for governmental "takings," and a right to require search warrants, even for OSHA safety inspections. (See Historical Scorecard)

Those rights come in handy in fighting governmental regulation. As long ago as the 1920s, the Supreme Court ruled that Pennsylvania could not require coal mines to leave enough coal in the ground to support the earth overhead, even if that meant that people's houses might be damaged or destroyed. Making corporations sacrifice that coal, the court said, would be an unconstitutional "taking" of property.

If corporations don't get the results they want in court, they can take the more direct approach of tailoring their own legislation. In a world where politicians depend on money to get elected, having a constitutional right to write big checks gains valuable access. Having a say in federal legislation is particularly useful since the Commerce Clause of the Constitution says that federal law trumps state law on matters of interstate commerce.

Beyond Site Fights

With the deck stacked against local control, what are citizens to do to step outside the regulatory game and take back power? Some bold communities have banned specific corporate operations, not based on regulation, but on a declaration that human beings have the right to control their local resources, and that corporations are not people and not entitled to rights the Constitution grants to humans.

That happened first in Pennsylvania when farmers and small-town residents tried to resist the encroachment of corporate feedlots and the dumping of sewage sludge from other states.

Ruth Caplan, of the Alliance for Democracy's "Defending Water for Life" program, tells how a Pennsylvania coalition including the Sierra Club, the Farm Bureau, unions, and the Democratic governor responded by getting legislation passed limiting pollution from corporate feedlots.

"The farmers in rural Pennsylvania were furious," about the new law, Caplan says, "because they didn't want less pollution. They didn't want those corporate farms in their area. Period."

Lawyer Thomas Linzey, founder of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), started getting calls from those outraged farmers. Linzey, Caplan says, had been working within the regulatory system, but he and the Pennsylvania farmers realized that they needed a new strategy. Linzey drafted model ordinances asserting community rights to self-governance and banning corporations from damaging operations in townships. More than 100 Pennsylvania townships

have adopted those ordinances.

Linzey and CELDF began offering "Democracy Schools," intensive weekend programs presenting the history of corporate power in the United States, and the history of successful movements, such as the abolitionists and suffragists, to overturn settled law. Caplan attended one of those schools. It was "a real wake-up call for me," she says, "because most of the work we've done has been through the regulatory system, with some success. But it's not leading toward a fundamental change between corporations and the rights of people and nature."

Caplan took her newfound knowledge to a U.S.-Canadian meeting on the problem of bottled water. There she met activists from New Hampshire who subsequently introduced her to Darrell and St. Germaine. Caplan told them of CELDF's work, and offered to work with them and the people of Barnstead on the water issue.

Darrell and St. Germaine made presentations to the town's Select Board, which had earlier passed a "Warrant Article" declaring the town's intention to protect its water. Ultimately, they invited CELDF to make a presentation to the Board. At the end of that presentation, the Board asked Linzey to draft an ordinance similar to the ones in Pennsylvania. Linzey told the group that they needed to understand that they would be taking on settled law, Caplan says. "Well, Mr. Linzey, we understand that, and we're ready to walk point for you," Jack O'Neil replied, using a Vietnam-era term for being out front on patrol.

Reclaiming Rights

CELDf's model ordinances go beyond zoning or other efforts to control corporate behavior. They ban corporations from specific operations altogether, citing the Declaration of Independence, international law, state law conferring rights on citizens, and the general rights of human beings to govern themselves and take care of their own communities.

Darrell says that she and St. Germaine spent the next year educating Barnstead residents about the proposed ordinance. "We talked to people about water rights everywhere we met them—at the dump, in parks. We told them why we needed to have this ordinance be unanimous and in place before corporations came to town."

People were receptive to the idea but curious why the ordinance needed to cite such a broad range of law. "There was a lot of education about why we needed to deny corporate personhood," Darrell says, "People don't understand how we've gotten to this point and how corporations have gotten so much power." Darrell credits CELDF's Democracy Schools with giving her the information she needed to provide that education.

In March 2006, the ordinance came before the town meeting. After final discussion, Barnstead took its vote: 136-1 in favor. The one "No" vote, Darrell says, was not in general opposition to the measure, but was cast by a person who felt declaring that corporations are not persons went too far.

Now Barnstead is walking point, the first town in the nation to ban corporate water mining within its limits.

One Town at a Time

The fight to take back power from corporations continues. Across the country in Humboldt County, California, the people passed a referendum banning outside corporations from participating in elections and declared that corporations are not recognized as people there. Blaine Township, in southwestern Pennsylvania, outlawed the destructive practice of longwall coal mining. People in Montgomery County in rural Virginia are fighting the taking of farmland to build a giant railway terminal.

These are admittedly radical steps, although, as Ruth Caplan points out, they are being carried forward by people who are not radicals. "These are not liberals, not progressives, not activists. But they don't want corporations to tell them how they should run their community."

The courts have not yet ruled on these measures. If they are challenged, no one knows what the outcome will be. But these new activists point to the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements. They were radical. They challenged well-settled law. They lost repeatedly, until the public saw the truth of their position, and the law changed.

Darrell and her fellow townfolk are working on amendments to strengthen their ordinance if a challenge does come. If they're defeated in court, she will continue to work to make humans more important than corporations. She's in it, she says, "to have a clear conscience. I did what I could after I got educated. I can tell that to my kids. It's my duty. I'll take that charge and do the best I can."

Doug Pibel is managing editor of YES! Magazine.

Ed. Note: This issue of Yes!—"Stand Up to Corporate Power"—is available free at the AfD office. Call 781-894-1179.

BOOK REVIEW

Blessed Unrest: How the largest movement in the world came into being, and why no one saw it coming.

By Paul Hawken. New York and London, Viking Penguin, 2007, 342 pp.

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT WHAT IS GOING RIGHT. Hawken's revelation is that hundreds of thousands of groups, perhaps millions, have emerged in response to the extinction of species and cultures resulting from globalization and the pursuit of progress through resource extraction and economic expansion. These groups are united by shared values—openness, diversity, resiliency, multiplicity—qualities that nourish life in any system, whether ecosystem, immune system, or social system.

This movement first emerged to full publicity in 1999 at the WTO protest in Seattle, challenging market fundamentalism and trade based on rules favoring big business. The question now is "can myriad organizations work together to challenge deeper systemic issues?" The challenges are colossal, but the emergence of connectivity offers hope. The movement could fail, but what might help preserve it is self-perception—the gift of seeing who we truly are. We will either come together as one globalized people or we will disappear as a civilization.

Hawken compares the role of these groups in human society to the human immune system. Optimally, they operate like a biological system—building from the bottom up, creating links, generating variations. Humanity, like the human body, can't be managed by top down control. Nor can the planet. The organizations in the movement cannot and need not take control; they should just take their place and attend to their mission on a multi-centric planet with a free flow of information and imagination.

Hawken has created an ambitious website to document and connect these groups: <http://wiserearth.org> [Note: wiser] Characteristics of the organizations included are set forth in a major appendix to the book.

—Joanna Herlihy, BCA

(Continued on next page >>)

Ed. Note: Hawken has lofted four web sites: wiserearth.org, wiserbusiness.org, wisergovernment.org, and naturalcapital.org. Wiserearth deals with hundreds of interrelated topics, classified alphabetically from Agriculture & Farming and its subtopics and their keywords, to Globalization..., to Population..., to Work and its subtopics and their keywords—listed in the book's 110-page appendix, which will gradually change in response to the interactive web site. Just now the site "...

* provides a relational and editable database of organizations and individuals searchable by areas of interest, geography, type of organization, profession or pursuit (for individuals), and scope of activity;

* offers advanced search tools, enabling users to find out quickly and easily who is working on what and where so that organizations can leverage their experience, knowledge, and resources;

* provides funders with an information landscape of the organizations engaged in program activity in their fields of interest, a helpful tool to better evaluate proposals and dockets;

* provides an instant and effective means for many people to give small amounts of money to organizations all over the world, thereby broadening the global philanthropic base;

* offers free listings of jobs, positions, and resources for organizations, prospective employees, interns, volunteers, and students;

* supports individualized calendars that notify users of any and all events in their specific geographical area regarding their areas of interest;

* establishes the means for bioregional hubs to empower local economies;

* facilitates free or low-cost VoIP [internet telephone] communication between listed organizations in the world;

* contains the first detailed taxonomy of the organizations within civil society;

* provides lists of resources including books, conferences, events, other databases, definitions, magazines, articles, podcasts, streaming audio and video, maps, research reports, and educational opportunities."

All in all, Hawken says, "We are moving from a world created by privilege to a world created by community... There are insistent calls for *autonomy*,* appeals for a new resource ethic based on the tradition of the *commons*, demands for the reinstatement of *cultural primacy* over corporate hegemony, and a rising demand for radical *transparency* in politics and corporate decision making... The world is a system, and it will soon be a very different world, driven [because of 'ecological crises and human suffering'] by millions of communities who believe that democracy and restoration are grassroots movements that connect us with values that we hold in common."

*[Italics ours]

New England Forests Endangered Population Grows, Houses and Lots Bloat

by Caitlin Carpenter, *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 Sept 2007

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE HENRY DAVID THOREAU WEEP. New England—the home of Vermont maple trees bursting with sweet syrup, and balsam fir and red spruce spread across New Hampshire's White Mountains—is losing its forests. Of all America's forests under pressure from development, New England's are shrinking the fastest.

The problem is severe enough that some conservation groups say they have limited time to act. "The window for conserving forests is closing," says Andy Swinton, director of field science with The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit habitat conservation organization. But "there's really an opportunity here, because the next 20 years will determine the character of New England forests. This is a race against time, and the time to act is now."

The region's forests had made quite a comeback in the past two centuries: As agriculture declined, fields went back to wooded land. Now, however, those forests are under threat—from homeowners, this time. In their push to create more housing in an area where home prices are already through the roof, developers are moving into wooded land.

The numbers are stark, particularly in southern New England. By 2050, 70 percent of Rhode Island and 61 percent of Connecticut will be urbanized, according to a recent report in the *Journal of Forestry* by two researchers with the US Agriculture Department's Forest Service. Massachusetts is already losing 40 acres a day to development, estimates Mass Audubon. These three states will lose the highest percentage of forest of any state by mid-century, the Forest Service researchers say.

Part of the reason for the region's forest loss is its population density. Its urban areas are already so developed that they're pushing out, often into surrounding forests. The other factor is New England's development pattern and lifestyle.

Take long-distance commuting. The Southwest may be famous for its vast metropolises, but the trend is actually more pronounced in New England, says Kathy Sferra, a land protection expert at Mass Audubon.

For example: To be able to afford the cost of living, many workers live in less expensive housing far from the urban centers where they work. That leads to more crowded highways. In addition to the 40 acres the state loses every day to sprawling development, it loses an additional 38 acres to the "hidden" cost of development, such as road construction.

And, as in the rest of New England, most of Massachusetts' residential developments are low density, meaning few people living in large houses on big lots. Residential lot sizes have increased 47 percent since 1970 in Massachusetts, according to Mass Audubon. New England's average lot size for new residential construction is the largest in the country at 1.3 acres, and its median lot size is three times the national average, says the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for Real Estate and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

Meanwhile, the state's household size has shrunk 20 percent since 1970 to 2.5 people per household. Small wonder then that while New England's population increased 6.6 percent between 1990 and 2000, its total housing units grew 7.4 percent, according to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training.

Houses are also getting bigger. The National Association of

Home Builders found that 40 percent of new homes in the Northeast have four or more bedrooms, making the region the national leader in terms of the size of homes.

These trends have spurred conservation groups to work more strategically, buying and protecting large plots of land in key areas rather than small, isolated locations.

"We've learned that doing conservation willy-nilly doesn't help because we end up with fragmented forests," says Mr. Swinton. "Since development is going to happen, we now know we need systematic, collaborative planning with the government, land trusts, and nonprofits to make sure that development and conserved forest area are intelligently designed."

For example: The Nature Conservancy worked with West Greenwich, R.I., and other conservation groups to purchase 1,700 acres of forest surrounding its town in an effort to protect the land. The conservancy's Borderlands Project is looking to accomplish a similar feat in another town in Rhode Island or Connecticut.

Conservation groups are also helping local governments improve their planning for infrastructure that leads to development, such as roads and Interstates, while minimizing sprawl and forest destruction.

State governments are also getting involved. Last month, Connecticut Gov. Jodi Rell (R) created a state office to "plot a new, antisprawl course." Rhode Island is now developing a land-use plan to encourage urban-center development. Massachusetts announced Aug. 4 that it would spend \$50 million on conservation over the next five years, an increase of \$20 million over its conservation spending during the past four years.

Forest-conservation groups next want to convince New England state governments to allocate some of the revenue generated through their greenhouse-gas reduction initiative to forest protection, according to Swinton.

Conservationists say that they'll need to bring all their tools to bear on the challenge of deforestation.

"Forests in this area made a comeback in the last century, but it looks like the pendulum is swinging in the opposite direction," he says.

Comes the revolution, where will we put all that concrete? —Ed.

SPP AT MONTEBELLO (Continued from page 1)

Lockheed Martin, the Mexican Foreign Trade Council, Canada's Suncor Energy, and others. The Council does not include representatives of labor, environmental, or civil society organizations.

Government officials have justified the secrecy by stating that the SPP is merely a forum for refining rules and standards for transborder transactions. However, the little that is known about it reveals that some major issues are on the table.

Many of those go way beyond what was passed by North American legislatures under NAFTA. They include extraterritorial rights over natural resources, extension of the Bush administration's vastly unpopular counter-terrorism agenda to Canada and Mexico, liberalization of financial services, and most likely a billion-dollar counternarcotics aid package to Mexico.

Although rarely identified as such, some SPP recommendations have already popped up in policies and regulation reforms. These include accelerating environmentally damaging oil production in Mexico and Canada, and "harmonizing" national standards so they sing to the tune of corporate profits rather than consumer protection.

For example, Canada has agreed to raise the amount of pesticide residues allowed in some foods and Mexico has

adopted a counter-terrorism law that contradicts its own foreign policy principles. In the United States, proposed highway construction to facilitate intercontinental trade has angered environmentalists and local populations and raised questions about what exactly is the overall "vision" that the SPP purports to have.

Many of the recommendations of the SPP will have a long-term impact on citizens' lives. While opposition has focused on resource use, consumer norms, and infrastructure, the security component of the partnership may prove to be the most far-reaching of all.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership was born in the post-9/11 era, when President Bush sought to extend U.S. counter-terrorism strategies to Mexico and Canada, and Homeland Security became a major player in the trilateral relationship. The counter-narcotics proposal falls under the rubric of this new area. The package would include the delivery of U.S. arms and surveillance equipment, sophisticated espionage programs, and training for Mexico's police and army.

Although negotiations on security issues have been among the most tightly guarded, immigration crackdowns on Mexico's southern border and Canada's "no-fly" list of people banned from air travel were most likely negotiated in the context of the SPP.

The Forgotten Issues of Integration

As the SPP extends its purview, the most pressing challenges to trilateral integration have been inexplicably left off the agenda. Immigration, which has experienced a two-fold increase since NAFTA, has been discarded as too politically sensitive in the United States to discuss as a regional issue—despite the fact that integration processes in other parts of the world have recognized that labor flows are a central issue of regional integration.

Calderon reportedly expressed concern over harsh new employer sanctions in the United States and the "void" left in the immigration law following the recent failure of the U.S. Congress to pass reforms that effectively deal with the estimated 12 million undocumented U.S. residents. However, no mention was made of measures to reduce deaths and human rights violations on the shared U.S.-Mexico border, provide compensation funds to Mexico's displaced sectors, or regularize Mexican immigrants in U.S. communities.

Another taboo subject was the total elimination of tariffs on corn and beans in Mexico, slated for January of 2008 under NAFTA's agricultural chapter. Mexican small farmers have demanded renegotiation of the chapter, charging it will drive them out of business and increase out-migration. But according to government representatives, the three governments decided not to take up the issue in Montebello.

Nor did those driving the latest stage of regional integration deign to deal with urgent matters such as the impact of NAFTA on job loss and job quality in the United States, or the growing monopolistic control of production and markets exercised by transnational corporations—a subject understandably off the table of a "competitiveness council" led by global market gobblers like Wal-Mart.

Voices of Dissent

Citizen groups have mobilized in all three countries to demand information and protest the priorities of "deep integration" designed in the upper spheres of commerce and government. Canadian citizen groups on hand to protest the summit proceedings were met with tear gas, pepper spray, and police provocateurs.

Elected representatives have also objected to the secrecy of the SPP. In May the Mexican legislature passed a resolution that requires President Calderon to send the Senate a detailed report on all agreements that government officials have assumed in

SPP working groups. The U.S. House of Representatives approved an amendment that prohibits the use of Department of Transportation funds in SPP working groups until the Congress has reviewed and assessed the SPP agenda. Although this amendment was rejected in the Senate, several more anti-SPP resolutions have been presented. A motion that calls for public consultations on the SPP has been tabled in the Canadian Parliament.

The United States, Canada, and Mexico trade a total of \$883 billion under NAFTA. The three nations clearly need mechanisms to assure that these flows are safe, orderly, and mutually beneficial.

The SPP, however, has surreptitiously proceeded well beyond the regulatory mandate into areas that threaten the sovereignty of the three nations and will have long-term effects on the lives of their citizens. This has happened not only without citizen participation, but also in many cases without citizens' knowledge.

Trilateral decisions that affect entire populations should be open to the public and subject to citizen review. The priority should always be placed on increasing the long-term well-being of the people. As democracies we cannot allow the course of North American integration to be dictated by a closed group of corporate and cabinet representatives.

At stake is the future of our three nations, and the continent we share.

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SHOCK DOCTRINE (Continued from page 1)

2,000 cots and a mess of angry, exhausted people being patrolled by edgy National Guard soldiers just back from Iraq.

The news racing around the shelter that day was that the Republican Congressman Richard Baker had told a group of lobbyists, "We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did." Joseph Canizaro, one of New Orleans' wealthiest developers, had just expressed a similar sentiment: "I think we have a clean sheet to start again. And with that clean sheet we have some very big opportunities."

All that week Baton Rouge had been crawling with corporate lobbyists helping to lock in those big opportunities: lower taxes, fewer regulations, cheaper workers and a "smaller, safer city"—which in practice meant plans to level the public housing projects. Hearing all the talk of "fresh starts" and "clean sheets", you could almost forget the toxic stew of rubble, chemical outflows and human remains just a few miles down the highway.

Over at the shelter, Jamar could think of nothing else. "I really don't see it as cleaning up the city. What I see is that a lot of people got killed uptown. People who shouldn't have died." He was speaking quietly, but an older man in line in front of us overheard and whipped around. "What is wrong with these people in Baton Rouge? This isn't an opportunity. It's a god-damned tragedy. Are they blind?" A mother with two kids chimed in. "No, they're not blind, they're evil. They see just fine."

Guru of Unfettered Capitalism

One of those who saw opportunity in the floodwaters of New Orleans was the late Milton Friedman, grand guru of unfettered capitalism and credited with writing the rulebook for the contemporary, hyper-mobile global economy. Ninety-three years old and in failing health, "Uncle Miltie", as he was known to his followers, found the strength to write an op-ed for the Wall Street Journal three months after the levees broke. "Most New Orleans schools are in ruins," Friedman observed, "as are the homes of

the children who have attended them. The children are now scattered all over the country. This is a tragedy. It is also an opportunity."

Friedman's radical idea was that instead of spending a portion of the billions of dollars in reconstruction money on rebuilding and improving New Orleans' existing public school system, the government should provide families with vouchers, which they could spend at private institutions.

In sharp contrast to the glacial pace with which the levees were repaired and the electricity grid brought back online, the auctioning-off of New Orleans' school system took place with military speed and precision. Within 19 months, with most of the city's poor residents still in exile, New Orleans' public school system had been almost completely replaced by privately run charter schools.

The Friedmanite American Enterprise Institute enthused that "Katrina accomplished in a day ... what Louisiana school reformers couldn't do after years of trying". Public school teachers, meanwhile, were calling Friedman's plan "an educational land grab". I call these orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with the treatment of disasters as exciting market opportunities, "disaster capitalism".

Privatising the school system of a mid-size American city may seem a modest preoccupation for the man hailed as the most influential economist of the past half century. Yet his determination to exploit the crisis in New Orleans to advance a fundamentalist version of capitalism was also an oddly fitting farewell. For more than three decades, Friedman and his powerful followers had been perfecting this very strategy: waiting for a major crisis, then selling off pieces of the state to private players while citizens were still reeling from the shock.

In one of his most influential essays, Friedman articulated contemporary capitalism's core tactical nostrum, what I have come to understand as "the shock doctrine". He observed that "only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change". When that crisis occurs, the actions taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. Some people stockpile canned goods and water in preparation for major disasters; Friedmanites stockpile free-market ideas. And once a crisis has struck, the University of Chicago professor was convinced that it was crucial to act swiftly, to impose rapid and irreversible change before the crisis-racked society slipped back into the "tyranny of the status quo". A variation on Machiavelli's advice that "injuries" should be inflicted "all at once", this is one of Friedman's most lasting legacies.

The Pinochet Shock

Friedman first learned how to exploit a shock or crisis in the mid-70s, when he advised the dictator General Augusto Pinochet. Not only were Chileans in a state of shock after Pinochet's violent coup, but the country was also traumatised by hyperinflation. Friedman advised Pinochet to impose a rapid-fire transformation of the economy—tax cuts, free trade, privatised services, cuts to social spending and deregulation.

It was the most extreme capitalist makeover ever attempted anywhere, and it became known as a "Chicago School" revolution, as so many of Pinochet's economists had studied under Friedman there. Friedman coined a phrase for this painful tactic: economic "shock treatment". In the decades since, whenever governments have imposed sweeping free-market programs, the all-at-once shock treatment, or "shock therapy", has been the method of choice.

I started researching the free market's dependence on the power of shock four years ago, during the early days of the

occupation of Iraq. I reported from Baghdad on Washington's failed attempts to follow "shock and awe" with shock therapy—mass privatisation, complete free trade, a 15% flat tax, a dramatically downsized government. Afterwards I travelled to Sri Lanka, several months after the devastating 2004 tsunami, and witnessed another version of the same manoeuvre: foreign investors and international lenders had teamed up to use the atmosphere of panic to hand the entire beautiful coastline over to entrepreneurs who quickly built large resorts, blocking hundreds of thousands of fishing people from rebuilding their villages.

By the time Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, it was clear that this was now the preferred method of advancing corporate goals: using moments of collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering. Most people who survive a disaster want the opposite of a clean slate: they want to salvage whatever they can and begin repairing what was not destroyed. "When I rebuild the city I feel like I'm rebuilding myself," said Cassandra Andrews, a resident of New Orleans' heavily damaged Lower Ninth Ward, as she cleared away debris after the storm. But disaster capitalists have no interest in repairing what once was. In Iraq, Sri Lanka and New Orleans, the process deceptively called "reconstruction" began with finishing the job of the original disaster by erasing what was left of the public sphere.

When I began this research into the intersection between super-profits and mega-disasters, I thought I was witnessing a fundamental change in the way the drive to "liberate" markets was advancing around the world. Having been part of the movement against ballooning corporate power that made its global debut in Seattle in 1999, I was accustomed to seeing business-friendly policies imposed through arm-twisting at WTO summits, or as the conditions attached to loans from the IMF.

As I dug deeper into the history of how this market model had swept the globe, I discovered that the idea of exploiting crisis and disaster has been the modus operandi of Friedman's movement from the very beginning—this fundamentalist form of capitalism has always needed disasters to advance. What was happening in Iraq and New Orleans was not a post-September 11 invention. Rather, these bold experiments in crisis exploitation were the culmination of three decades of strict adherence to the shock doctrine.

Seen through the lens of this doctrine, the past 35 years look very different. Some of the most infamous human rights violations of this era, which have tended to be viewed as sadistic acts carried out by anti-democratic regimes, were in fact either committed with the intent of terrorising the public or actively harnessed to prepare the ground for radical free-market "reforms". In China in 1989, it was the shock of the Tiananmen Square massacre and the arrests of tens of thousands that freed the Communist party to convert much of the country into a sprawling export zone, staffed with workers too terrified to demand their rights. The Falklands war in 1982 served a similar purpose for Margaret Thatcher: the disorder resulting from the war allowed her to crush the striking miners and to launch the first privatisation frenzy in a western democracy.

Welcoming the Terrorists

The bottom line is that, for economic shock therapy to be applied without restraint, some sort of additional collective trauma has always been required. Friedman's economic model is capable of being partially imposed under democracy—the US under Reagan being the best example—but for the vision to be implemented in its complete form, authoritarian or quasi-author-

itarian conditions are required.

Until recently, these conditions did not exist in the US. What happened on September 11 2001 is that an ideology hatched in American universities and fortified in Washington institutions finally had its chance to come home. The Bush administration, packed with Friedman's disciples, including his close friend Donald Rumsfeld, seized upon the fear generated to launch the "war on terror" and to ensure that it is an almost completely for-profit venture, a booming new industry that has breathed new life into the faltering US economy. Best understood as a "disaster capitalism complex", it is a global war fought on every level by private companies whose involvement is paid for with public money, with the unending mandate of protecting the US homeland in perpetuity while eliminating all "evil" abroad.

In a few short years, the complex has already expanded its market reach from fighting terrorism to international peacekeeping, to municipal policing, to responding to increasingly frequent natural disasters. The ultimate goal for the corporations at the centre of the complex is to bring the model of for-profit government, which advances so rapidly in extraordinary circumstances, into the ordinary functioning of the state—in effect, to privatise the government.

In scale, the disaster capitalism complex is on a par with the "emerging market" and IT booms of the 90s. It is dominated by US firms, but is global, with British companies bringing their experience in security cameras, Israeli firms their expertise in building hi-tech fences and walls. Combined with soaring insurance industry profits as well as super profits for the oil industry, the disaster economy may well have saved the world market from the full-blown recession it was facing on the eve of 9/11.

Friedman Eulogies Scrub Dirty Capitalism

In the torrent of words written in eulogy to Milton Friedman, the role of shocks and crises to advance his world view received barely a mention. Instead, the economist's passing, in November 2006, provided an occasion for a retelling of the official story of how his brand of radical capitalism became government orthodoxy in almost every corner of the globe. It is a fairytale history, scrubbed clean of the violence so intimately entwined with this crusade.

It is time for this to change. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has been a powerful reckoning with the crimes committed in the name of communism. But what of the crusade to liberate world markets?

I am not arguing that all forms of market systems require large-scale violence. It is eminently possible to have a market-based economy that demands no such brutality or ideological purity. A free market in consumer products can coexist with free public health care, with public schools, with a large segment of the economy—such as a national oil company—held in state hands. It's equally possible to require corporations to pay decent wages, to respect the right of workers to form unions, and for governments to tax and redistribute wealth so that the sharp inequalities that mark the corporatist state are reduced. Markets need not be fundamentalist.

John Maynard Keynes proposed just that kind of mixed, regulated economy after the Great Depression. It was that system of compromises, checks and balances that Friedman's counter-revolution was launched to dismantle in country after country. Seen in that light, Chicago School capitalism has something in common with other fundamentalist ideologies: the signature desire for unattainable purity.

This desire for godlike powers of creation is precisely why free-market ideologues are so drawn to crises and disasters.

Non-apocalyptic reality is simply not hospitable to their ambitions. For 35 years, what has animated Friedman's counter-revolution is an attraction to a kind of freedom available only in times of cataclysmic change—when people, with their stubborn habits and insistent demands, are blasted out of the way—moments when democracy seems a practical impossibility. Believers in the shock doctrine are convinced that only a great rupture—a flood, a war, a terrorist attack—can generate the kind of vast, clean canvases they crave. It is in these malleable moments, when we are psychologically unmoored and physically uprooted, that these artists of the real plunge in their hands and begin their work of remaking the world.

Torture: The Other Shock Treatment

From Chile to China to Iraq, torture has been a silent partner in the global free-market crusade. Chile's coup featured three distinct forms of shock, a recipe that would re-emerge three decades later in Iraq. The shock of the coup prepared the ground for economic shock therapy; the shock of the torture chamber terrorized anyone thinking of standing in the way of the economic shocks.

But torture is more than a tool used to enforce unwanted policies on rebellious peoples; it is also a metaphor of the shock doctrine's underlying logic. Torture, or in CIA parlance, "coercive interrogation", is a set of techniques developed by scientists and designed to put prisoners into a state of deep disorientation.

Declassified CIA manuals explain how to break "resistant sources": create violent ruptures between prisoners and their ability to make sense of the world around them. First, the senses are starved (with hoods, earplugs, shackles), then the body is bombarded with overwhelming stimulation (strobe lights, blaring music, beatings). The goal of this "softening-up" stage is to provoke a kind of hurricane in the mind, and it is in that state of shock that most prisoners give their interrogators whatever they want.

The shock doctrine mimics this process precisely. The original disaster—the coup, the terrorist attack, the market meltdown—puts the entire population into a state of collective shock. The falling bombs, the bursts of terror, the pounding winds serve to soften up whole societies. Like the terrorised prisoner who gives up the names of comrades and renounces his faith, shocked societies often give up things they would otherwise fiercely protect.

Naomi Klein is based in Toronto. This is an edited extract from her new book The Shock Doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007, 576 pp.

No More Shareholder Resolutions?

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is seeking to stop investors from filing shareholder resolutions.

Shareholder resolutions played a key role in ending apartheid in South Africa. Today, shareholders are filing resolutions at corporations to help end genocide in Darfur, stop labor rights abuses in sweatshops, and challenge corporations to tackle the causes of climate change.

The SEC is considering rule proposals that would seriously weaken our rights of shareholders to speak out to and be heard by the companies we own.

—E-vite from Simon Billenness to protest to SEC by email by 2 October comment deadline. Go to <http://saveshareholderrights.org> to do it.

Beware Al-Gebra Scorge of True Americans

by Anonymous, thanks to Ruth Boyd, PhD, IBM

A PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER WAS ARRESTED this morning at John F. Kennedy International Airport as he attempted to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a set square, a slide rule and a calculator. At a morning press conference, the US Attorney General said he believes the man is a member of the notorious Al-gebra movement. He did not identify the man, who has been charged by the FBI with carrying weapons of math instruction.

"Al-gebra is a problem for us," the AG said. "They desire solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in a search of absolute value. They use secret code names like 'x' and 'y' and refer to themselves as 'unknowns', but we have determined they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with coordinates in every country. As the Greek philanderer Iso Sceles used to say, 'There are 3 sides to every triangle'."

When asked to comment on the arrest, President Bush said, "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes."

White House aides told reporters they could not recall a more intelligent or profound statement by the President.

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