

BCA Dispatch

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

*In the US, everything which is not forbidden is permitted.
In Germany, everything which is not permitted is forbidden.
In the USSR, everything which is permitted is forbidden.
In France, everything which is forbidden is permitted.*
—20th century wiseacre

CHAPTER NEWS

* * 9/11, Projects Discussed * *

BCA and North Bridge chapters of the Alliance are meeting as a project-oriented forum. See notes on Page 7 about our meeting of 4 December. North Bridge will also meet separately.

Our next joint meeting date will be **Wednesday, Jan 9 or 16** — call Alliance office in Waltham (781-894-1179) or BCA Dispatch editor (617-266-8687) to confirm date and hour, and proposed agenda, or to get on the e-mail notification list. All are welcome, especially if you are ready to work on some project, or if you have practical experience to share.

OK, please read notes on Page 7 for project updates.

Fighting "Executive Privilege" Congress Can Jail Sealed-Lip Witnesses

by Adam Cohen, *New York Times*, 4 Dec 2007

CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE appear to be headed for a constitutional showdown. The House of Representatives is poised to hold Joshua Bolten, the White House chief of staff, and Harriet Miers, a former White House counsel, in contempt for failing to comply with subpoenas in the United States attorneys scandal. If the Justice Department refuses to enforce the subpoenas, as seems likely, Congress will have to decide whether to do so.

Washington lawyers are dusting off an old but apparently sturdy doctrine called "inherent contempt" that gives Congress the power to bring the recalcitrant witnesses in—by force, if necessary.

What we know that Congress has learned in its investigation of the purge of nine top federal prosecutors is disturbing. Cases appear to have been brought against Democrats and blocked against Republicans to help Republicans win elections. The stakes have grown steadily: it now seems that innocent people, like Georgia Thompson, a Wisconsin civil servant, may have been jailed for political reasons. Congress has a duty to find out what happened.

Mr. Bolten and Ms. Miers may have important evidence. When Congress subpoenaed them, however, both claimed executive privilege in ways that go far beyond what the law allows. Ms. Miers should, at the very least, have appeared and invoked the privilege in response to specific questions. Instead, she refused to appear at all. Mr. Bolten, who was asked to produce documents, should have said specifically which ones he believed to be privileged. Instead, he rejected Congress's right to ask for the documents.

As a result, the House Judiciary (Continued on Page 6 >>)

Congressional
Take Home Package on
Counter Terrorism Policies



Rep. Jane Harmon eyes RAND Corporation booklet on Counter-Terrorism policies. Her House-approved bill "Violent Radicalism & Homegrown Terrorism Prevention" act drew heavily from the recommendations of this government-funded think tank.

Thought Police: "They're baaack!" "Extremist Beliefs, Homegrown Terrorism" Verboten!

by Matt Renner, *Truthout*, 29 November 2007

A MONTH AGO, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED legislation that targets Americans with radical ideologies for research. The bill has received little media attention and has almost unanimous support in the House. However, civil liberties groups see the bill as a threat to the constitutionally protected freedoms of expression, privacy and protest.

HR1955 [Senate S-1959], "The Violent Radicalization Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007", apparently intended to assess "homegrown" terrorism threats and causes is on a fast-track through Congress. Proponents claim the bill would centralize information about the formation of domestic terrorists and would not impinge on constitutional rights.

On October 23, the bill passed the House of Representatives by a 404-6 margin with 23 members not voting. If passed in the Senate and signed into law by George W. Bush, the act would establish a ten-member National Commission on the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism, to study and propose legislation to address the threat of possible "radicalization" of people legally residing in the US.

Despite being written by a Democrat, the current version of the act would probably set up a Commission dominated by Republicans. By allowing Bush and Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff to each appoint one member of the Commission, and splitting the appointment of the other eight positions equally between Congressional Democrats and Republicans, the Commission would consist of six Republican appointees and four Democrat ones.

The Commission would be tasked with collecting information on domestically spawned terrorism from a variety of sources, including foreign governments and previous domestic studies. The Commission would then report to Congress and recommend policy changes to (Continued on Page 2 >>)

HOMEOWN TERRORISM (Continued from Page 1)

address the threat. There is no opposition to this consolidation or research. However, the Commission would be given broad authority to hold hearings and collect evidence, powers that raise red flags for civil liberties groups.

Civil liberties activists have criticized the bill, some comparing the Commission it would establish to the McCarthy Commission that investigated Americans for possible associations with Communist groups, casting suspicion on law-abiding citizens and ruining their reputations. The Commission would be empowered to "hold hearings and sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, receive such evidence, and administer such oaths as the Commission considers advisable to carry out its duties."

Odette Wilkens, the executive director of the Equal Justice Alliance, a constitutional watchdog group, compared the legislation to the McCarthy Commission and to the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), which infiltrated, undermined and spied on civil rights and antiwar groups during the 1950s and 60s.

"The commission would have very broad powers. It could investigate anyone. It would create a public perception that whoever is being investigated by the Commission must be involved in subversive or illegal activities. It would give the appearance that whoever they are investigating is potentially a traitor or disloyal or a terrorist, even if all they were doing was advocating lawful views," Wilkens said.

In a speech on the floor of the House before the vote, Congresswoman Jane Harman (D-California: segment of LA), the chair of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence and author of the bill said, "Free speech, espousing even very radical beliefs, is protected by our Constitution—but violent behavior is not. Our plan must be to intervene before a person crosses that line separating radical views from violent behavior, to understand the forces at work on the individual and the community, to create an environment that discourages disillusionment and alienation, that instills in young people a sense of belonging and faith in the future."

In the same speech, Harman explained why "homegrown" terrorists are a threat to the US. She offered the explanation that adolescents who might be susceptible to recruitment by gangs might also be potential terrorists.

"Combine that personal adolescent upheaval with the explosion of information technologies and communications tools—tools which American kids are using to broadcast messages from al-Qaeda—and there is a road map to terror, a 'retail outlet' for anger and warped aspirations. Link that intent with a trained terrorist operative who has actual capability, and a 'Made in the USA' suicide bomber is born," Harman said.

The bill specifically identifies the Internet as a tool of radicalization. "The Internet has aided in facilitating violent radicalization, ideologically based violence, and the homegrown terrorism process in the United States by providing access to broad and constant streams of terrorist-related propaganda to United States citizens."

In a press release, Caroline Fredrickson, director of the Washington American Civil Liberties Union legislative office, took issue with this characterization. "If Congress finds the Internet is dangerous, then the ACLU will have to worry about censorship and limitations on First Amendment activities. Why go down that road?" Fredrickson asked in a press release.

The ALCU has "serious concerns" about the bill. Fredrickson said, "Law enforcement should focus on action, not thought. We

need to worry about the people who are committing crimes rather than those who harbor beliefs that the government may consider to be extreme."

According to Wilkens, the bill, in its current form, lacks specific definitions, which would give the Commission expansive and possibly dangerous powers. The Committee would be set up to address the process of "violent radicalization," which the bill defines as "the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change." According to Wilkens, the bill does not adequately define "an extremist belief system," opening the door for abuse.

"An 'extremist belief system' can be whatever anyone on the commission says it is. Back in the 60s, civil rights leaders and Vietnam War protesters were considered radicals. They weren't committing violence but they were considered radicals because of their belief system," Wilkens said.

The bill would also create a "Center of Excellence for the Study of Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism in the United States," on an unspecified university campus. Unlike other Centers of Excellence university-based government research centers created by the Department of Homeland Security, the Center established by this bill could have a chilling effect on political activity on campus because of its specific mission to "assist Federal, State, local and tribal homeland security officials through training, education, and research in preventing violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism," according to Wilkens.

"If you are on campus and the thought police are on campus are you going to want to join a political group?" Wilkens asked.

Congressman and presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) was one of three Democrats who voted against the bill, but he has given no public explanation for his opposition and his office did not respond to a call for comment as of this writing.

Neither the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-California) nor Congressman John Conyers (D-Michigan), the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, voted on the bill.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Homeland Security Committee, chaired by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-Connecticut). With overwhelming support from the House, it is likely to pass quickly through the Senate.

Matt Renner is an assistant editor and Washington reporter for Truthout.



Taking Responsibility Scot Breaks Silence

(Thanks to Ted Dooley for forwarding)

At a recent concert in Glasgow, Scotland, the lead singer of the band U2, Bono, asked the audience for total quiet.

Then, in the silence, he started to slowly clap his hands once every few seconds.

While having everyone's complete attention, he said into the microphone, "Every time I clap my hands, a child in Africa dies."

A voice with a broad Scottish accent from the front of the crowd pierced the quiet:

"Well, foockin stop doin' it then, ya evil bastard!"

Rep. Jane Harman Why So Dogged About Radical Thinking?

by Dave Lewit, *Alliance for Democracy*, Dec 2007

WHOM IS THIS CONGRESS MEMBER JANE HARMAN, who wrote and sponsored the "Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007" (HR 1955)?

Why would a Democrat promote this during a right-wing administration? Why would virtually every Democrat in the House—as well as Republicans—vote for it?

Jane Harman, Democrat from California's 36th District for 7 terms with one term off to run unsuccessfully for governor, is a lawyer living with her hi-fi industrialist husband (e.g., Harman-Kardon sound systems) in Venice, a funky town absorbed by Los Angeles in the 1920s. She sits (or in the 1990s sat) on the board of Planned Parenthood, which preferred a Democrat from this otherwise Republican stronghold of a congressional district. She is a member of the Democratic Leadership Council ("centrist") but her Democrat *bona fides* are compromised by her membership in the Blue Dog caucus, leaning to the Right.

Ms. Harman is the daughter of a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, and is the richest member of the House of Representatives, with a net worth of between 168 and 289 million dollars (Center for Responsive Politics, opensecrets.org). She has deep connections with both corporate globalization strategists (e.g., RAND Corporation, see Weitzel article, this issue, and the Israel lobby AIPAC) and intelligence instrumentation (her shareholder investments are mainly in communications and electronics [opensecrets.org] as are her largest campaign contributors).

Harman is a member of the Homeland Security Committee and Chair of its Intelligence, Information-Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee (information-sharing involves federal agencies with local police). For years she was the Ranking (minority) Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and expected to become Chair when the Democrats took over in 2006, but was rancorously passed over by Speaker Nancy Pelosi. At the time Harman was "under investigation" by the FBI for possibly trading favors with AIPAC—a plausible rumor which may have been set-up to make it easier for Pelosi to confine her.

The "Violent Radicalization & Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act" was Harman's second sponsored bill to reach the floor, and the first to pass (404-6 on 23 Oct without debate—a privilege requiring a 2/3 majority). A similar bill then went to Senator Joseph Lieberman's Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs of the Senate, filed by his committee's Ranking Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine. Harman and Lieberman have worked amicably together both inside Congress and in relation to the Israel lobby.

As a member of the group of eight top intelligence committee members in Congress, Harman was briefed on intelligence and terrorism issues by CIA, FBI, Homeland Security, and other Administration officials. She scolded the White House for—contrary to a post-WWII law—excluding the full committees from these briefings. Mindful of process, she seemed to have no quarrel concerning content of the briefings, as she seemed to have no quarrel with the report of the 9/11 Commission.

Ms. Harman's law would scrutinize and spotlight if not economically destroy so-called terrorists, and promote measures to prevent their development. But it would not scrutinize or touch radical anti- or counter-terrorists, who seem to be responsible

for far more death and destruction.

Stampeding Congress

Harman's bill, if it becomes law, will spawn a set of little McCarthy-type UnAmerican Activities Committees going about the nation calling witnesses and tarring many with "terrorism suspect" allegations, for visible opposition to the so-called "war on terror" or the (il-)logic behind it, or maybe even for anti-corporate thinking.

After 18 months this would be followed by the activation of a "Center of Excellence for the Prevention of Radicalization and Home Grown Terrorism" in some university to pay selected experts to say how wrong-thinkers become wrong-doers—terrorists or terrorist-encouragers, assuming that they do. Never mind that both these activities may be redundant with existing research—the alarm is what counts, and perhaps the names.

According to Harman's web site, the Center would "examine the social, criminal, political, psychological and economic roots of violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism and provide homeland security officials across the government with solutions to these threats."

Why did 404 congress members vote Yes on Harman's bill, and only 6 No (including Dennis Kucinich)? The motion was fast-tracked on the House floor by "suspension of rules", where-by without debate or amendments the motion could be passed by a 2/3rds majority. One commentator asked, what congress member is willing to risk being called "soft on terrorism"? We have placed calls to the appropriate aide on the staff of each Massachusetts congress member, to ask why the representative voted for the bill. A spokesperson—the press secretary actually—for our favorite, John Tierney of the Bedford/Peabody/Lynn/Gloucester area, e-mailed that John had after-thoughts. He happens to be a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. John may be quoted as saying

"As you know, H.R. 1955 passed in the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 404-6 on October 23, 2007. I supported the bill, which did include language directing the Department of Homeland Security to not violate the constitutional and civil rights of U.S. citizens when carrying out the legislation's activities. However, after the bill's passage in the House, certain additional concerns have been raised. As such, I shall revisit the language once again and discuss the matter with the Committee Members and involved staff experts—all before any vote on a conference report, which is the bill presented in its final form after the House and Senate resolve any differences."

Too little and too late? Stay tuned. Better, ask your representatives, including John Tierney, and senators at the Capitol switchboard: 202-224-3121. Don't settle for the press secretary. Ask for the actual aide dealing with Homeland Security.

Those aides are (in Washington DC offices for Massachusetts delegation—or you can try district offices):

- *Rep Olver: Brendan Bounty.
- *Rep Neal: William Tranghese.
- *Rep McGovern: Cindy Buhl.
- *Rep Frank: Bruno Freitas.
- *Rep Tsongas: Christopher Hickling.
- *Rep Tierney: Kevin McDermott.
- *Rep Markey: Mark Bayer.
- *Rep Capuano: Kaitlin McColgan
- *Rep Lynch: Ann Kramer.
- *Rep Delahunt: Davida Walsh.

Orwellian Newspeak

Hidden Purposes of the Terrorism Prevention Act

by Robert Weitzel, AxisOfLogic.com, 8 Dec 2007

"Political language has to consist largely of euphemisms...and sheer cloudy vagueness." —George Orwell

H.R. 1955: THE VIOLENT RADICALIZATION and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 recently passed by the House—a companion bill is in the Senate—is barely one sentence old before its Orwellian moment: It begins, "AN ACT To prevent homegrown terrorism, and for other purposes."

Those whose pulse did not quicken at "other purposes" have probably not read George Orwell's essay, "Politics and the English Language," or they voted for the other George both times.

Orwell's jeremiad on the corruption of the English language and its corrosive effect on a democracy was written two years before his novel *1984* spelled out in chilling detail the danger of Newspeak, which renders citizens incapable of independent thought by depriving them of the words necessary to form ideas other than those promulgated by the state.

After its opening "tribute" to Orwell, H.R. 1955 is strategically peppered with Newspeak regarding the establishment of a National Commission and university-based Centers of Excellence to "examine and report upon the fact and causes of violent radicalization, homegrown terrorism, and ideologically based violence in the United States" and to make legislative recommendations for combating it.

The "sheer cloudy vagueness" of H.R. 1955, as well as its terror factor, may account for its bipartisan 404-6 House vote but how, in an era informed by the Bush-Cheney administration's egregious assault on the Bill of Rights, can the phrase "other purposes" fail to raise the "National Terror Alert" from its current threat level of "elevated" to "severe"?

Future "other purposes" will undoubtedly be justified by the Act's use of the term "violent radicalization," which it defines as "the process of adopting or promoting an *extremist belief* system for the purpose of facilitating *ideologically based violence . . .*" or by the folksy, Lake Wobegonesque "homegrown terrorism," defined as "the use, planned use, or threatened use, of force or violence by a group or individual born [or] raised...within the United States...to *intimidate or coerce* the United States, the civilian population...or any segment thereof..." [italics added]

In the service of some self-serving "other purposes," will "extremist beliefs" become any belief the temporary occupants of the White House consider antithetical and threatening to their political agenda?

Will "ideologically based violence" or the use of "force" become little more than the mayhem resulting after a peaceful protest, daring to move beyond the barbed wire of the free speech zone, is attacked by a truncheon-wielding riot squad armed with tear gas, German shepherd dogs and water cannons?

Will the unarmed, constitutionally protected dissenters who are fending off blows or dog bites, or who are striking back in self-defense become "homegrown terrorists" and suffer draconian sentences for their attempt to "intimidate or coerce" the state with free thought and free speech?

A clue to future "other purposes" may lie in the Act's parentage. The proud House "mother" of the Patriot Act's evil twin is Rep. Jane Harmon (D-CA), chair of the Homeland Security Intelligence Subcommittee. Rep. Harmon has admitted to a

long and productive relationship with the RAND Corporation, a California based think-tank with close ties to the military-industrial-intelligence complex. RAND's 2005 study, *Trends in Terrorism*, contains a chapter titled, "Homegrown Terrorist Threats to the United States." Is this Act a bastard child?

Keep in mind that the RAND Corporation was set up in 1946 by Army Air Force General Henry "Hap" Arnold as "Project RAND" sponsored by the Douglas Aircraft Company. Keep in mind also that Donald Rumsfeld was its chairman from 1981 to 1986 and Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Dick Cheney's felonious former chief of staff, and Condoleezza Rice were trustees. Enough said!

RAND maintains that "homegrown terrorism" will not be the result of *jihadi* sleeper cells. Rather, it will result from anti-globalists and radical environmentalists who "challenge the intrinsic qualities of capitalism, charging that in the insatiable quest for growth and profit, the philosophy is serving to destroy the world's ecology, indigenous cultures, and individual welfare."

Further, RAND claims that anti-globalists and radical environmentalists "exist in much the same operational environment as al-Qaida" and pose "a clear threat to private-sector corporate interests, especially large multinational business." Therein lies the real "other purposes."

Predictably then, H.R. 1955 is not about protecting homegrown Americans. That protection is only incidental to its "other purposes" of protecting homegrown corporate interest and its unconscionable manipulation of the American political process to fill its coffers. Any thought or speech or action—however protected it might be by the Bill of Rights—that threatens corporate hegemony and profit will no doubt suffer the "other purposes" clause of the Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act.

Anyone doubting the Orwellian nature of a "bastard child" that equates anti-globalists and environmentalists with al-Qaida terrorists will do well to read Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" and to acquaint themselves with the fate of Winston Smith in *1984* (Read a summary of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in *Wikipedia* —Ed.).

Robert Weitzel is a freelance writer whose essays appear in The Capital Times in Madison, WI. He has been published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Skeptic Magazine, Freethought Today, and on popular liberal websites. He can be contacted at: robertweitzel@mac.com

Suicide Epidemic Among Vets

Agence France-Presse correspondents, New York, 15 Nov 2007

The U.S. military is experiencing a "suicide epidemic" with veterans killing themselves at the rate of 120 a week, according to an investigation by US television network CBS. At least 6256 US veterans committed suicide in 2005—an average of 17 a day—the network reported, with veterans overall more than twice as likely to take their own lives as the rest of the general population.

While the suicide rate among the general population was 8.9 per 100,000, the level among veterans was between 18.7 and 20.8 per 100,000. That figure rose to 22.9 to 31.9 suicides per 100,000 among veterans aged 20 to 24—almost four times the non-veteran average for the age group. "Those numbers clearly show an epidemic of mental health problems," CBS quoted veterans' rights advocate Paul Sullivan as saying.

CBS quoted the father of a 23-year-old soldier who shot himself in 2005 as saying the military did not want the true scale of

the problem to be known. "Nobody wants to tally it up in the form of a government total," Mike Bowman said. "They don't want the true numbers of casualties to really be known."

There are 25 million veterans in the United States, 1.6 million of whom served in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to CBS. "Not everyone comes home from the war wounded, but the bottom line is nobody comes home unchanged," Paul Rieckhoff, a former Marine and founder of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans for America said on CBS.

The network said it was the first time that a nationwide count of veteran suicides had been conducted. The tally was reached by collating suicide data from individual states for both veterans and the general population from 1995.

Anti-War Billboard-Sitter Arrested Free Speech Issue for Clown, Videographer

by Anita Fritz, (Greenfield, MA) Recorder, 7 Dec 2007

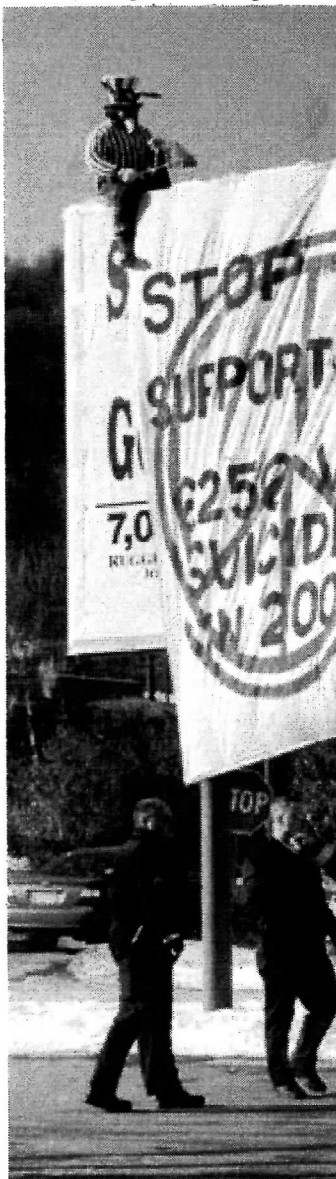
Greenfield— A MAN DRESSED AS UNCLE SAM WITH DONKEY ears slowed traffic on the Mohawk Trail and caused a jam in the parking lot for more than an hour Thursday morning when he climbed atop a 'Support Our Troops' sign at the Big Y plaza to protest the war and the sign.

Before the incident ended, Joshua Jay Dostis, also known as Waffles T. Clown, of New Salem, and three supporters on the ground were arrested. About 20 gathered to watch and support Dostis in temperatures that never reached 20 degrees.

Dostis straddled the sign, which stands at least 20 feet high, for more than an hour, while those below encouraged him and yelled out words of support. He waved a small American flag and yelled out anti-war slogans and other comments through a megaphone.

He draped a canvas sign, which said, 'Stop the War, Support Our Vets, 6,256 vet suicides in 2005.' The sign he sat upon is the one the Zoning Board of Appeals recently deemed illegal and ordered to be taken down.

Barry Gidseg of Robar Inc., owner of the plaza and the sign, called police Thursday morning after a protester called him to say the man was sitting atop the sign. 'I told him he couldn't be up there and he ignored my wishes, so I called the police,' said Gidseg in a phone interview Thursday afternoon. 'It's a shame that people feel the right to free speech and protest when it infringes on others' rights... The protest caused a



disruption on the property and interrupted businesses,' he said. 'I guess some people feel it's OK to break the law because their cause is just. I just thank God no one was injured.'

Tickets had been handed out for the Waffles T. Clown Show—Admit One, Box Seat on the 50-Yard Line.

When police arrived shortly after 10 a.m., they ordered the crowd to step back about 50 yards to make room for the Greenfield Fire Department ladder truck. Police encouraged Dostis to come down willingly or be 'retrieved off your perch.' When Dostis refused, a man in the crowd chanted, 'All the king's police and all the king's firefighters couldn't get Humpty Dumpty off the sign.'

Two officers went up in the bucket of the aerial truck with a firefighter and pulled Dostis into the bucket—people clapped and cheered. When Dostis' feet hit the parking lot, he was handcuffed and arrested and charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct—people booed and hissed.

Three people who had been ordered off the property by police at the request of Big Y store manager Mike Piziak were arrested for refusing to leave. Piziak had no comment.

Greenfield Police Sgt. Daniel McCarthy said all four who were arrested were taken to the police station on High Street and later appeared in court. He said he believes they were released and will all be in court again today to be arraigned.

John Thomas MacLean, 82, of Greenfield, and Gail Noble Carson of Northampton, 65, were both arrested and charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct.

Emily Peyton, 49, of Putney, Vt., was arrested and charged with trespassing, disorderly conduct and inception of wire and oral communications for illegally recording someone else's voice, said McCarthy. She had been videotaping the incident from the parking lot and later, her car, and was ordered to stop taping and leave. When she didn't respond, police ordered her from the car and handcuffed and arrested her.

Police took an inventory of her car and had it towed. McCarthy said that is standard procedure and police will hold onto the video camera until the court orders them to give it back or the case ends...

While protesters complained their constitutional rights of free speech and assembly were being denied, police tried to remind them they were on private property. A police photographer took photographs of all of the protesters, many of whom gave the peace sign while being photographed...

McCarthy said it was unfortunate that police and firefighters had to take so much manpower from the community to deal with the incident... 'It's a fine line between individual rights to peaceably assemble and the right of government to ensure the safety of all,' said McCarthy. 'Something like this takes away resources from the community, but it has to be done.'...

McCarthy said police checked with the mayor's office before going to the plaza to see if a permit had been granted for the demonstration. He said a permit had not been applied for or granted.

Iran On the Line... Bostonians Chat Person-to-Person

by John C. Drake, Boston Globe, 14 Nov 2007

ASOMERVILLE PEACE ACTIVIST with a knack for political theater set up a display yesterday with a simple proposition: LET ANYONE WHO PASSED BY PICK UP THE PHONE and talk to Iranian citizens, giving regular citizens in both countries a

chance to do what the activist said the country's leaders have failed to do: talk to each other. (See: EnoughFear.org)

Most people passing the Boston Common's Park Street T stop shrugged at the display: a red telephone with a retro design, symbolic of the hotline established between the White House and the Kremlin during the Cold War. It sat on a small table with a white table cloth and a sign out front, which proclaimed "Direct Line to Iran." An MIT student stood to its left, listened in on headphones and provided English-Farsi translation.

The activist, Nick Jehlen, had connected the display phone to a cellphone, which he used to dial the numbers of people in Iran he had met online. The idea was that random Bostonians could chat directly with Iranian citizens.

At times, it looked better than it worked. Several times, the calls were dropped, leaving one particularly animated Boston Common caller to assume that he had insulted the Iranian with his direct question: "What do you think about your leader there?" "He hung up on me," declared the caller, Dave Walsh, 48, a construction worker.

After several minutes, the connection was reestablished, and Walsh got his answer. The Iranian caller—organizers declined to identify the people on the other end of the line—was no fan of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, apparently referring to him with a derogatory term.

"I think ours is, too; George W. Bush. I think they're both idiots," Walsh responded.

But the comity dissipated when Walsh switched topics: "What's Iran's problem with Israel?" As Walsh became agitated, Jehlen encouraged him to pass the phone to the next person.

Jehlen, a magazine art director and consultant who helped organize the "Turn Your Back on Bush" protest at the president's second inaugural, said the idea came from conversations he had with Iranians on an Internet discussion forum. "They wanted to speak to Americans," he said.

Connecting a cellphone to a stationary phone was as much a practical move as it was symbolic. The alternative, handing a cellphone to random passersby in Boston Common, did not seem very smart, he explained.

Sarah Shugars, a 24-year-old graduate student at Emerson College, said she had heard about the effort through an e-mail group. She was the first to step up to the phone and exchanged pleasantries with a 25-year-old Iranian painter. "So what do you do? Do you work, go to school?" Shugars asked.

After conversation about the job prospects for painters in Iran and Shugars's life in America, she asked: "May I ask how the US is portrayed in the media in Iran and sort of what the general feeling toward [the United States] is?"

"She says that Iranians don't have any problems with Americans in general," said the translator from MIT, who is from Iran and, like the Iranians on the line, gave only her first name, Rana. "It's just your president that is very problematic and is giving Iran a hard time."

Erica Jones, 30, of Quincy, watched for a while from just outside the entrance to the T station. "I think it's a good idea," she said. "We can learn what's really going on, because the government's not telling us." Still, she eyed the line of about five people waiting for a turn on the phone, and decided she did not have the time.

Vicki Halal, a teacher from Medford, got on the line to ask whether her Iranian counterpart had any hope for the future. This time, the man on the other end spoke English. His response, Halal said, was that he did not, not as long as Ahmadi-nejad was in charge. ##

Committee voted in the summer to hold Mr. Bolten and Ms. Miers in contempt. If the full House does, too—or if the Senate, which is also considering contempt, does so—then the United States attorney in Washington, D.C., will be responsible for taking Mr. Bolten's and Ms. Miers's cases to a grand jury. The problem is that the White House argues that the contempt of Congress law does not apply to presidential subordinates who claim executive privilege. At his confirmation hearings, Attorney General Michael Mukasey sounded as if he might agree with this intransigent position.

This is where inherent contempt comes in. From the Republic's earliest days, Congress has had the right to hold recalcitrant witnesses in contempt—and even imprison them—all by itself. In 1795, shortly after the Constitution was ratified, the House ordered its sergeant at arms to arrest and detain two men accused of trying to bribe members of Congress. The House held a trial and convicted one of them.

In 1821, the Supreme Court upheld Congress's right to hold people in contempt and imprison them. Without this power, the court ruled, Congress would "be exposed to every indignity and interruption, that rudeness, caprice, or even conspiracy, may mediate against it."

Later, in a 1927 case arising from the Teapot Dome scandal, the court upheld the Senate's arrest of the brother of a former attorney general—carried out in Ohio by the deputy sergeant at arms—for ignoring a subpoena to testify.

The Congressional Research Service issued a report in July that confirmed Congress's inherent contempt powers. It explained how they work: "The individual is brought before the House or Senate by the sergeant at arms, tried at the bar of the body, and can be imprisoned in the Capitol jail." Congress can do this, the report concluded, to compel them to testify or to punish them for their refusal to do so.

Congress's inherent contempt powers are not limitless. If it arrested non-cooperating witnesses in the United States attorneys scandal—and there are more than just Mr. Bolten and Ms. Miers—then they would have the right to challenge their confinement in federal court. Ironically, they would rely on the habeas corpus right that the Bush administration has been whittling away.

Of course, just because Congress could literally start taking prisoners does not mean that it is a good idea. To modern sensibilities, having anyone other than a judge put citizens in jail feels heavy-handed and insufficiently insulated from politics. The thought of Tom DeLay, the former House majority leader, for example, holding people in the Capitol jail gives pause.

Nevertheless, inherent contempt is important. The Bush administration has been acting as if only the executive branch matters. Last week, when Patrick Leahy, the Vermont Democrat who is chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, formally rejected the executive privilege claims of Mr. Bolten and others, Dana Perino, a White House spokeswoman, said: "I don't understand why he continues to have this rope-a-dope that's not going to go anywhere."

This country has seen far too much of this sort of dismissal of Congress's authority. There is a simple way to avoid a constitutional showdown: If Congress holds witnesses in contempt, the Justice Department should enforce the subpoenas. Mr. Mukasey would need to focus not on the White House's interests, but rather on his duty to ensure that the laws are faithfully executed. ##

PROJECT NEWS

Chapters Work on Projects

BCA-Northbridge Joint Meeting at Alliance for Democracy
Waltham Office, 4 Dec 2007, 7:30pm

Present: Kathleen Anderson, Michael Bleiweiss, Barbara Clancy, Chris Gruener (from Boston 9/11 Truth), Joanna Herlihy, Dave Lewit, Karen O'Donnell, Cynthia Ritsher, Lois Voltmer, Mary White

Mary White described the **Democracy School** presented by Tom Linzey at the recent AfD national convention. This 2½ day program reviewed some 300 pages of historical documents to reach the conclusion that illegal movements are needed—assertion of rights not in the Constitution—to effect change. We do not live in a democracy; we live in a corporate state. Linzey's free legal service for towns in Pennsylvania (CELDF) initially worked via a regulatory strategy, but found that corporations wishing to set up civically unwanted operations were able to adapt and prevail. Then Linzey switched to the strategy of rights-based legislation—writing town ordinances to achieve the desired results.

Linzey will soon relocate to Spokane, Washington. Mary proposed that we hold a Democracy School in this area in the near future. Dave observed that Linzey wants to work with town officials and active citizens, so we have a lot of organizing to do first. Barbara noted that Massachusetts is a difficult case because of a restrictive Home Rule provision—the state legislature has to approve local ordinances. She suggested contacting CELDF to discuss this.

The **AfD convention** was successful, attended by a lot of Tucson people. Three attendees volunteered to be regional reps or co-reps, including Susan Willis from Tucson for the Southwest, Kyle Taylor Lucas from Washington for the Northwest, and Joel West from Texas for the South Central region. Participants in the Border Links **trip to Nogales, Mexico**, were enthusiastic. The convention met at the First Christian Church of Tucson, whose pastor, Robin Hoover, has set up a group called "Humane Borders" to tend water stations in the desert for people crossing the US/Mexico border on foot.

Dave and Boston **9/11 Truth** member Chris presented a section of video showing the collapse of Building 7 of the World Trade Center (not the two towers which were struck by airplanes). This building housed CIA and Securities & Exchange Commission headquarters with records of corporate crimes such as Enron, and the NY mayor's command control center on 23rd floor—not occupied by the mayor. The Building 7 collapse looks like a classic case of implosion—controlled demolition. Technical aspects of this collapse will be reviewed by scholars and professionals at 9/11 Truth's all-day forum at Faneuil Hall on Saturday, December 15. Barbara talked with Jason, one of the organizers of the 2nd Conference of Boston 9/11 Truth. He stressed that the theme is broader than 9/11, including civil liberties, the war, etc. A few in the group questioned the efficacy of focusing on what already has happened rather than what's going to happen next, grabbing attention with building collapse.

Dave and Barbara tuned us in to <http://www.prisonplanet.com/articles/July2007/240707fascistcoup.html> relating to a 1934 plot by Nazi-sympathizing US industrialists including the **Bush grandfather, to overthrow the Roosevelt government**. The plot failed when their chosen military leader, General Smedley Butler, informed Congress. Questioned about his purpose in

showing this video, Dave said that it could serve to illustrate corporate links to US coup attempts. He feels that emphasis on corporate connections might be AfD's contribution to the Boston 9/11 Truth weekend. Michael said it would be difficult to link this to the current situation, though a list of US corporations which supported the Nazis might be useful.

In discussing whether and how AfD should be involved in this conference, several expressed misgivings about associating AfD with "9/11 people". Dave stated that the best place to meet people attending the conference might be at the After Party at Hennessy's on Sunday. It was generally agreed that tabling would be appropriate: the *Justice Rising* on "Corporations and the War", the "Democracy Protection" materials, and perhaps a new flier by Dave and Barbara. AfD will not sponsor or speak at the event.

Dave reported that 13 students working with the Hyde Square Task Force for **high school civics** in Boston met with mayor Menino, school superintendent Johnson, school committee member Groover and others on 16 Nov and obtained their support. Dave is trying to help the students get input from Luc Schuster of the Cambridge school committee who has sponsored similar moves in Cambridge.

Mary White reported that 62 people attended a Concord showing of the new Joe Public film, "Out of Balance", cosponsored by Northbridge AfD and the First Parish Church of Concord's Green Sanctuary Committee. Ross Gelbspan and producer Tom Jackson were present. All stayed for discussion afterwards and many indicated interest in attending action organizing meetings of the sponsors. Gelbspan says that the political process can't adequately respond to **global warming** because if one congress member takes a stand against the oil industry and for non-carbon alternatives, the industry funds election campaigns of opponents. The problem underlying global warming is corporate rule.

North Bridge members will meet on Tuesday 18 Nov at Mary White's or Harvey Wheeler Community Center, Concord.

Karen O'Donnell proposed action to move the bill HR 374—the **Globalization Impact Bill** filed by Byron Rushing, relating to local effects of international treaties such as NAFTA. We might organize in our own towns to arrange for public comment, get as many legislators as possible to cosponsor the bill. Byron is willing to host a public information session. The main purpose of this would be to promote public awareness. Still, legislation on the state level could influence Congress (where international treaties are approved). Dave spoke on behalf of this as a major project aimed at enlisting many co-sponsors throughout the Legislature. Cynthia and Joanna expressed interest in finding out more. Dave suggested that we get copies of the bill and that the AfD office put out an e-mail about organizing. You can read a .pdf of the bill at

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/185/ht00pdf/ht00374.pdf>

Karen also recommended a website on **appropriate infrastructure** development: <http://www.aidg.org>

—*Joanna Herlihy*

Boston Moves Against Bottled Water

by Elizabeth Gary, egary@greencorps.org

"Under the Mayor's direction, the city is embarking on an effort to examine the feasibility of restoring public drinking water fountains in municipal buildings. This analysis will carefully examine the water quality and public health issues, the costs of

Architects Engineers Educators Speak Out

The Destruction of World Trade Center Towers 1, 2, and 7: A Case for Controlled Demolition



Dr. Joel Hirschhorn
Former Senior Staff Member, Congressional Office of Technology Assessment
Former Prof. of Metallurgical Engineering, University of Wisconsin



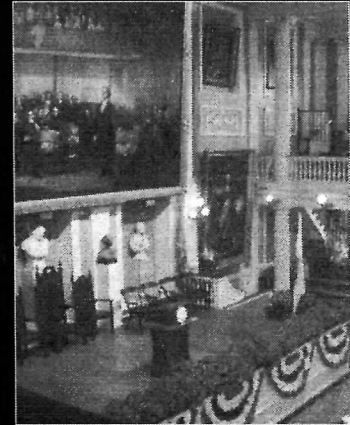
Dr. Steven Jones
Former Prof. of Physcs, Brigham Young University. Author of, "Why, Indeed did the Towers Collapse."
Co-editor of the *Journal of 9/11 Studies*



Richard Gage, AIA
California Architect and designer of steel-framed buildings. Founder of Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth



Kevin Ryan
Former Chemist, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Site Manager. Whistleblower. Co-editor of the *Journal of 9/11 Studies*



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any necessary capital upgrades, the future costs for operations and maintenance of a system, and the potential savings that could be realized from reducing bottled water contracts."

—Jim Hunt, Chief of Environment and Energy Services, Boston City Hall, *responding to a campaign letter from Corporate Accountability International, with whom AfD has collaborated. AfD wants bottled water not just limited, but banned everywhere except where potable tap water is unavailable.*

ACTION ALERTS

Sat 15 Dec, 9:30am–5pm, Boston. 9/11 Teach-in: Destruction of the **World Trade Center Towers: Case for Controlled Demolition.** Architects, Engineers, CIA Vet; films, discussion. Faneuil Hall. See poster above ^ ^ .

Sat 15 Dec. 7–9pm, Boston. Forum: **Ending the War, Restoring the Constitution,** with Ray McGovern (CIA vet), Nancy Murray (ACLU), Donna Marsh O'Connor, Barbara Honegger, others, discussion rel to 9/11. Faneuil Hall. \$10.

Sat 15 Dec. 7–9:30pm, Boston. **Changing Venezuela by Taking Power.** Gregory Wilpert, author, sociologist, resident in Caracas, Venezuelanalysis.com. Encuentro 5, 33 Harrison Ave, 5th Floor, Chinatown. \$10.

Sun 16 Dec. 12noon–2pm, Boston Common. **9/11 Truth Rally.** Cindy Sheehan, Ray McGovern, scientists, engineers, &c. 9/11 a set-up for imperial war, phony "war on terror". Bandstand.

Sun 16 Dec. 2–4pm, Boston. **Citizens Dump "Tea" into Harbor** (9/11 official reports). Seaport Av bridge/Fort Point Channel.

Sun 16 Dec. 4–9pm, Boston. **Brew & Brainstorm,** open mic. re 9/11. Hennessey's (upstairs), 25 Union St., nr Quincy Mkt. \$10.

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YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN BOSTON TO LOVE BCA

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., Boston, MA 02116.)

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___ \$26/Year - "Count me in!"

___ \$52/Year - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)

___ \$104/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)

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___ What's fair for YOU? _\$___

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COLOPHON

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Visit the Alliance web site: www.TheAllianceForDemocracy.org

Visit our new regional web site: www.NewEnglandAlliance.org

Web builder: Sergio Reyes.