

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the **Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy** **May 2008**

It looks like we're going to take the last six inches of Midwest topsoil and burn it in our gas tanks.

—Pennsylvania farmer

CHAPTER NEWS

North Bridge and Boston-Cambridge chapters will meet jointly on **Tuesday, 20 May, at 7pm, at Alliance offices in Waltham, 760 Main Street** (behind the stone church 3 blocks west of the city square, on bus route #70 from Central Square, Cambridge). For faster notice of our meetings, please email Editor (see p.8).

Our Globalization Impact Bill has advanced to the legislature's Rules Committee, numbered H.4705. Reward (Continued, p.8 >>)

Meat and Eco-Survival

Confessions of a PC Carnivore

by George Monbiot, *The Guardian (UK)*, 15 April 2008

Never mind the economic crisis. Focus for a moment on a more urgent threat: the great food recession that is sweeping the world faster than the credit crunch.

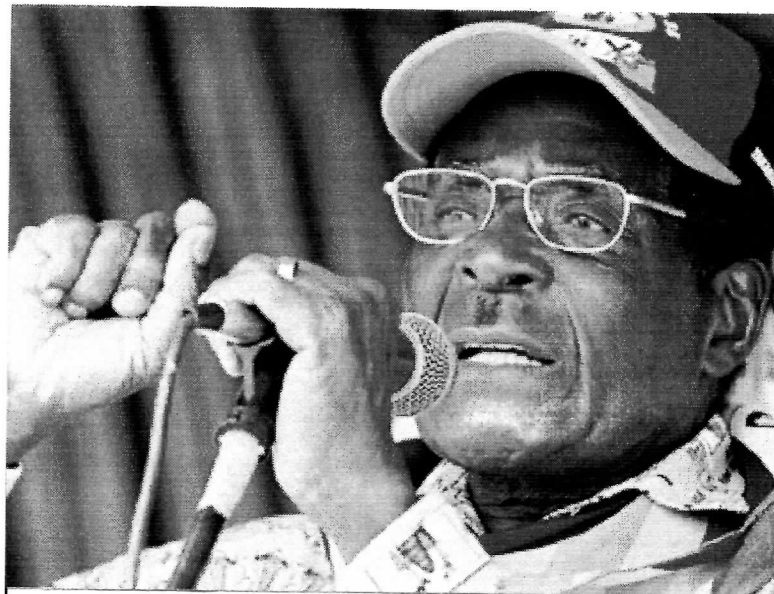
You have probably seen the figures by now: The price of rice has risen by three-quarters in the past year, that of wheat by 130 percent. There are food crises in 37 countries. One hundred million people, according to the World Bank, could be pushed into deeper poverty by the high prices. But I'll bet you have missed the most telling statistic. At 2.1 billion tons, last year's global grain harvest broke all records. It beat the previous year's by almost 5 percent. The crisis, in other words, has begun before world food supplies are hit by climate change. If hunger can strike now, what will happen if harvests decline?

There is plenty of food. It is just not reaching human stomachs. Of the 2.13 billion tons likely to be consumed this year, only 1.01 billion, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), will feed people.

I am sorely tempted to write another column about biofuels. From this morning all sellers of transport fuel in the United Kingdom will be obliged to mix it with ethanol or biodiesel made from crops. The World Bank points out that "the grain required to fill the tank of a sports utility vehicle with ethanol...could feed one person for a year."

Last year global stockpiles of cereals declined by around 53 million tons; this gives you a rough idea of the size of the hunger gap. The production of biofuels this year will consume almost 100 million tons, which suggests that they are directly responsible for the current crisis. In the *Guardian* yesterday, British Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly promised that "if we need to adjust policy in the light of new evidence, we will." What new evidence does she require? In the midst of a global humanitarian crisis, we have just become legally obliged to use food as fuel. It is a crime against humanity in which every driver in this country has been forced to participate.

But I have been saying this for four years, and I am boring myself. Of course we must demand (Continued on Page 7 >>)



Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe

Zimbabwe: Their Choice or Ours? African Reforms vs. US-type Regime Change

by Eugene Puryear, *pslweb.org*, 9 May 2008

Over a month after the March 29 presidential election, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has released the final vote counts. As expected, Robert Mugabe of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union/Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was handed a defeat. Mugabe won 43.2 percent against 47.9 percent for Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The ZANU-PF and the MDC have been locked in an acute power struggle over the elections. According to Zimbabwe's electoral law, a candidate must get 50 percent plus one vote in order to win outright; short of that, a runoff must take place between the top two candidates.

Mugabe's ZANU-PF represents the government bureaucracy, the majority of veterans from Zimbabwe's liberation war, and many rural residents who back Zimbabwe's land reform process and are generally supportive of Mugabe's anti-imperialist stance.

The MDC, on the other hand, represents the union of the white farmers and former apartheid forces together with some union leaders and activists. Backed to the hilt by Washington and London, the MDC has offered a South African-style arrangement with little land reform and an imperialist-endorsed economic development model. It would largely maintain the authority and prestige of the former [Rhodesia] settler elite and would return Zimbabwe to the British Commonwealth.

These two divergent political perspectives have led to turmoil in the country during the post-election period. The ZANU-PF government, while not socialist, has embarked on a road of capitalist development that runs against imperialist dictates, expropriating land and businesses from the former settler elite and shunning the West in favor of increased "South-South" cooperation between Zimbabwe and large developing nations such as India and China.

In the period leading up to the election, the imperialists intensified their nearly decade-long offensive against Zimbabwe, continuing to isolate it financially and encouraging economic sabotage to increase economic hardship. Skyrocketing inflation, unemployment, and shortages of goods (Continued on Page 2 >>)

helped the MDC pick up a number of supporters who hoped for some immediate relief.

The facts make a mockery of those decrying the election as fake and claiming that the ZANU-PF attempted to steal it. They fail to see—or turn a blind eye to—the economic hardship promoted by the West and the domestic "opposition" seeking to corral the vote, a far cry from a commitment to self-determination or "free and fair" elections.

The road ahead

In the post-election period, the mobilization of forces by both parties resulted in a number of clashes. The MDC-led opposition claims that as many as 10 of their supporters have been killed. The government has been under increasing pressure to solve the electoral crisis, even proposing a government of national unity to prepare the way for new elections.

Now that the results have been released, the MDC is saying they may not contest the runoff, which would likely lead to Mugabe retaining power. However, they will wait for the runoff date to be announced before making a decision.

The specter of intervention continues to lurk in the shadows, as both the African Union and United Nations are discussing options for the "international community" to take some part in Zimbabwe's continued electoral process. The chance of violence could increase in the event a runoff is not contested and the MDC tries to use extralegal tactics to gain the presidency, or if foreign powers intervene to remove Mugabe by force.

The ZANU-PF is far from an impeccable institution. It is a capitalist party with some progressive elements, many of them war veterans. Nonetheless, we must recognize the Western campaign against Zimbabwe is motivated by the ZANU-PF's challenge to imperialism. Washington and its allies have done everything possible to destabilize the country in a bid to force regime change.

The MDC is the agent of that regime change, backed by the imperialists and the white settlers who want to return Zimbabwe to the neoliberal fold. The power struggle between those forces has not been one where the people of Zimbabwe can freely determine their future, but one muddied by foreign intervention.

Progressives must reject the oversimplifications promoted by the mainstream media and the majority of the "left," who reduce matters to "Mugabe vs. the People." Imperialism is the main culprit behind Zimbabwe's economic woes, and Mugabe, too, has millions of people behind him. The struggle for the country's destiny should proceed without outside interference. Hands off Zimbabwe!

Eugene Puryear is a Howard University student, National Coordinator of Youth and Student A.N.S.W.E.R. (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), and Party for Socialism & Liberation's candidate for US vice president.

Ed. Note: US mainstream media suggest that Mugabe's challengers, as with challengers in Serbia and Ukraine, are democratic populists cheated out of electoral victory. Skepticism is justified when considering US covert assistance to the challengers—part of a half century of foreign intervention in post-imperial African affairs. The conditions to which Eugene Puryear alludes, above, are dealt with in more detail at Black Commentator.com. by its editor Bill Fletcher, Jr. ("Z' Is For Zimbabwe") and especially Netfa Freeman ("Zimbabwe: More Than Complicity of Silence"). Both are scholars at the Institute for Policy Studies.

Who Lives, Who Dies?

Expertocracy, DHS Set Emergency Policy

by Steve Watson, *Infowars.net**, 5 May 2008

A new report compiled by a medical "task force" comprising physicians from prestigious universities, medical groups, the military and government agencies has outlined that specific groups of people should not be treated and be left to die should a flu pandemic or other deadly disease disaster infect millions throughout the USA.

Doctors in the pay of federal government agencies including the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services have concluded that the already ill, the weak, the severely injured and the elderly will have to "forgo" life [-sustaining treatment].

According to the report, which appears in the May edition of *Chest*, the medical journal of the American College of Chest Physicians, those who won't be treated will include:

*People older than 85.

*Severely burned patients older than 60.

*Those with severe mental impairment, which could include advanced Alzheimer's disease.

*Those with a severe chronic disease, such as advanced heart failure, lung disease or poorly controlled diabetes.

*Designated hospital "triage teams" will ultimately decide who gets treated and who is left to perish.

Dr. Asha Devereaux, lead writer of the task force report, told the Associate Press "the proposed guidelines are designed to be a blueprint for hospitals *so that everybody will be thinking in the same way* (author emphasis) when pandemic flu or another widespread health care disaster hits."

"Prior to the rationing of critical care resources, hospitals and surrounding areas must first experience a "trigger" event that includes a declared state of emergency and lack of critical equipment or infrastructure," the report states. "The decision to initiate emergency mass critical care (EMCC) must occur in conjunction with local and regional Medical Emergency Operations Command authority and not by individual hospitals."

"If a mass casualty critical care event were to occur tomorrow, many people with clinical conditions that are survivable under usual health care system conditions may have to forgo life-sustaining interventions owing to deficiencies in supply or staffing," the report continues. "While the notion of rationing health care is unpleasant, the report could help the public understand that it will be necessary," a senior vice president at American Hospital Association, said.

Critics and commentators have pointed out that the proposed rules are discriminatory and effectively exclude care for the poorest, most disadvantaged citizens in an emergency. Others have noted that the report may set a grim precedent for other disasters such as a repeat of a Hurricane Katrina type situation.

We have previously reported on moves to use a disease outbreak as justification to suspend Constitutional rights.

Last September we reported the fact that the World Health Organization and the U.N. have been handed control over response procedures in the event of a pandemic outbreak in the U.S. after an agreement was signed by President Bush at the 2007 Security and Prosperity Partnership meeting, bypassing congressional approval. The origins of the agreement can be traced back to 2005, when President (Continued on Page 5 >>)

Bush Power Grab Rolled Back

Congress Reinstates *Posse Comitatus*

by FEMA Law Assoc's PLLC, *fema-law.com*, Feb 2008

As noted in our Issue No. 7, in September 2006 Congress included, in the 2007 Defense Authorization Act, an amendment to the Insurrection Act that arguably broadened the President's authority—absent an invitation by the Governor of a state—to deploy troops and enforce the laws during a natural disaster, epidemic, serious public health emergency, terrorist attack, or other condition, "when the President determines that the authorities of the state are incapable of maintaining public order."

This change—once discovered—was immediately protested by the National Governor's Association and their vehement efforts led to repeal of the amendment. The repeal was included in the 2008 Defense Authorization Act, which was finally signed into law on January 28, 2008 as Section 1068 of Public Law 110-181.

Readers of our Issue No. 7 will also recall that it was not clear that the 2006 amendment actually changed the President's authority to use the military to enforce the laws of states; even the amended version required the President to find that the state, due to domestic violence, cannot enforce the laws or protect the Constitutional rights of its citizens.

However, the extraordinary opposition which this provision provoked among Governors certainly demonstrates that they were concerned that its existence might encourage Presidents to invoke the Insurrection Act more freely. And the speed with which the Congress repealed the provision should cause any President to pause before asserting that a major disaster or emergency provides a basis for taking military control over a State.

House Blocks Colombia Free Trade Bill Weakens "Fast Track" Executive Authority

by Jim Capo, *John Birch Society**, 18 April 2008

On April 8th, President Bush submitted implementing legislation for the Colombian Free Trade Agreement to Congress. Under the rules of the Trade Act of 1974 and those contained in subsequent "Fast Track" Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) bills, Congress requires of itself a 90 day legislative window to hold an up-or-down vote on trade pacts duly negotiated and submitted by the executive branch. Further abdicating its Constitutional authority to "regulate trade," it's self-imposed TPA rules also require Congress to consider implementation of executive branch brokered deals with limited debate and no amendments allowed.

On April 10th however, something quite dramatic happened. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, likely not realizing the full implications of her "clever" legislative maneuver around the President, allowed members of the US House to display the Constitutional power they have to wield over other branches of our federal government. On a simple majority vote of 224-195 (mostly along party lines) the House passed a one-sentence long resolution that simply exempted the Colombia FTA legislation from the Trade Act of 1974. The *Wall Street Journal*, not used to losing on trade deals, called the move, "cheating" and "a first-order strategic blunder." Globalist whiners at the WSJ would of course

blame their apparent defeat on cheating. But, their strategic blunder comment may be more prescient than they intended.

Really, who could have imagined that Nancy Pelosi would become a deliverer in the restoration of our Constitution? Here's the real significance of last week's vote. Pelosi's "blunder" validates what the John Birch Society has been saying for 50 years now: "Congress is the Key."

**jbs.org "News Feed" Ed. Note: John Birch Society appears libertarian on this issue, contrary to corporatist Heritage Foundation or American Enterprise Institute, both of whom fume at this crimp in executive power. JBS also opposes SPP, defining it as creator of a sovereignty-destroying North American Union.*

Mexico Nationalists Challenge SPP Congress Takeover Suspends Fast-Track

by Bill Weinberg, *WorldWar4Report*, 29 Apr 2008

On April 25, Mexican federal legislators of the three political parties that make up the Broad Progressive Front (FAP) ended their 16-day occupation of the congressional chambers after a deal was worked out with representatives of the ruling National Action Party (PAN) over proposed legislation to reform the state oil company, Pemex. FAP leaders claimed victory, telling the press that they had prevented the reform package submitted by President Felipe Calderón from being "fast tracked."

The new deal allows for 71 days of national debate before lawmakers can resume discussion and move to vote on the measures. Some FAP leaders, however, are insisting on a popular "ratification referendum" following the vote by the legislature.

At a mass rally in the downtown [13 acre] *zócalo* [city square] April 27, opposition leader Andrés Manuel López Obrador said the first phase of the "peaceful civil resistance" campaign had ended. But he told the crowd: "We have not won the war... Calderón and the PAN are hell-bent on going forward with their privatization plan. We must remain vigilant, and most important, we must remain organized to prevent any and every possible attempt at privatizing Pemex." [Note: *The Pemex privatization plan is part of SPP—the secretive Security and Prosperity Partnership, partnering North America's three conservative heads of state with North American Competitive-Council's 30 megacorporate CEOs.* —Ed.]...

FAP leaders called for increasing the number of brigadistas (local activists for the anti-privatization campaign) from 100,000 to 200,000 by the first week of May, to organizing neighborhood Committees in Defense of Oil and begin the national debate. They said they remain ready to occupy the legislative chambers again if the PAN seeks to sneak in a vote on the privatization measures, and called for their followers to be prepared for a popular campaign of civil disobedience. Some 500 women brigadistas known as the *adelitas* (after the peasant women who fought for Emiliano Zapata in the Mexican Revolution) blocked traffic on Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma on April 22 to pressure the PAN in the negotiations.

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that the decision to end the occupation came following talks [between] moderates and self-described "radicals" within the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the biggest pillar of the FAP. In a heated closed meeting April 23 Sen. Carlos Navarrete, the PRD's

leader in the Senate, pressed Lopez Obrador to lift the protest, according to the newspaper *El Universal*. "The Senate has become a madhouse," Navarrete was said to have told López Obrador. "We can't transform the country like this. I believe in the parliamentary way."

López Obrador reportedly retorted: "What we've won so far has been thanks to taking the dais and because of our movement, not because of negotiation."

After the deal with the PAN, Navarrete told the press: "We won. We stopped the quick approval of these proposals...which are clearly in violation of the constitution." The deal came after Calderón broke his silence on the protest, calling it a "ridiculous" farce.

Ben Franklin Solves Wall Street Crisis Interest, Not Taxes, Into Public Treasury

by Ellen H. Brown, *GlobalResearch.ca*, 11 April 2008

Nationalization has traditionally had a bad name in the United States, but it could be an attractive alternative for the American people and our representative government as well. Turning bankrupt Wall Street banks into public institutions might allow the government to get out of the debt cyclone by undoing what got us into it. Instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul, flapping around in a sea of debt trying to stay afloat by creating more debt, the government could address the problem at its source: it could restore the right to create money to Congress, the public body to which that solemn duty was delegated under the Constitution.

The most brilliant banking model in our national history was established in the first half of the eighteenth century, in Benjamin Franklin's home province of Pennsylvania. The local government created its own bank, which issued money and lent it to farmers at a modest interest. The provincial government created enough extra money to cover the interest not created in the original loans, spending it into the economy on public services.

The bank was publicly owned, and the bankers it employed were public servants. The interest generated on its loans was sufficient to fund the government without taxes; and because the newly issued money came back to the government, the result was not inflationary.

The Pennsylvania banking scheme was a sensible and highly workable system that was a product of American ingenuity but that never got a chance to prove itself after the colonies became a nation. It was an ironic twist, since according to Benjamin Franklin and others, restoring the power to create their own currency was a chief reason the colonists fought for independence.

The bankers' money-creating machine has had two centuries of empirical testing and has proven to be a failure. It is time the sovereign right to create money is taken from a private banking elite and restored to the American people to whom it properly belongs.

Ellen Hodgson Brown is an attorney practicing civil litigation in Los Angeles. In Web of Debt (2008) she analyzes of the Federal Reserve and "the money trust" and advances solutions. This article is part of her article "Credit Default Swaps: Evolving Financial Meltdown and Derivative Disaster Du Jour". Visit www.webofdebt.com and www.ellenbrown.com

Mortgage Loans, Meds

Be A True Capitalist—Default!

by Dean Baker, *CommonDreams.org*, 29 April 2008

In the wake of revolutions in Russia, China, Cuba, and elsewhere, there was talk of creating a new type of person with a socialist mindset. The idea was that people in the prerevolutionary capitalist societies had been educated to be individualistic and greedy. The post-revolutionary societies would instead educate people to be socially minded and to consider the collective good in their actions.

I'll leave it to others to debate the merits of these efforts. The reason that they are suddenly relevant is that our political leaders now seem concerned that people have not been adequately educated for their vision of a capitalist society.

This came to light recently when Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson insisted that people who are underwater in their mortgages still had an obligation to pay off their loans. Mr. Paulson is concerned that, because of the collapse of the housing bubble, many people now find themselves owing more than the value of their house and are simply walking away from their debts.

For example, in some of the rapidly deflating bubble markets, many homeowners are in situations where they owe \$400,000 or \$500,000 on a home that today is worth \$100,000 less than the amount of their mortgage. In this situation, homeowners can effectively save \$100,000 if they stop paying the mortgage and let the bank foreclose on the house.

Tens of thousands of homeowners are opting do exactly this. They calculate that it makes more sense for them to let the bank take the house than to repay the mortgage. Businesses have even opened that show people exactly how to "walk away" from their mortgage and explain the potential consequences.

As a committed capitalist, we might expect Mr. Paulson to applaud people taking initiative and acting to improve their plight. Instead, he is insisting that these homeowners should ignore their self-interest and act in the interest of the banks. In other words, he wants homeowners to keep making payments on their mortgages even if it is a bad deal for them. Apparently, individualistic behavior can go too far when it affects bank profits.

Mr. Paulson isn't the only capitalist who wants people to put aside self-interest. The entertainment industry is also struggling with the fact that people acting in their self-interest are unlikely to pay copyright protected prices for music, movies and video games when they can get the material for free over the web. To try to discourage people from acting in their self-interest, the Recording Industry Association of America (the trade association for the music industry) has developed curriculum for grade school, high school and university level courses that are supposed to instill in children the proper respect for copyright. Instead of debating the most efficient mechanism for financing creative work in the Internet Age, we are getting propaganda courses on copyright protection.

Of course, no industry has a more urgent need for people to act selflessly in support of their profits than the pharmaceutical industry. Their profits depend on being able to sell drugs at prices that can be hundreds or even thousands of times the actual production cost.

With few exceptions, drugs are cheap to produce, but the industry can charge very high prices because it has a govern-

ment-granted patent monopoly. The absolute highest prices are associated with drugs for diseases like cancer that can literally mean life or death for patients. The cost for a year's prescription of these drugs can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

If people act in their own self-interest, they will seek out unauthorized copies of high-priced drugs, either from foreign countries or from gray market producers in the United States who will step in the fill the need. (There are more efficient ways to pay for pharmaceutical research than the patent system.) Unless the government becomes ever more repressive in enforcing patent protection, the pharmaceutical companies will not be able to sustain its current business model, since people will not pay tens of thousands of dollars for drugs that cost a few dollars to produce.

But the problems of the pharmaceutical industry, the entertainment industry and the mortgage industry can all be solved if we can just perfect the new capitalists' man—a person who willingly subordinates his own needs to the greater need for corporate profit. There is an obvious name for this new man: "sucker."

Dean Baker is the co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). He is the author of The Conservative Nanny State: How the Wealthy Use the Government to Stay Rich and Get Richer (www.conservativenannystate.org). He also has a blog, "Beat the Press," where he discusses the media's coverage of economic issues. You can find it at the American Prospect's web site.

Ed. Comment: Problem is, if the bank takes the house, you lose your settled beauty and neighborhood. Can you arrange for a friend (or co-op bank) to buy it cheap at auction, and return it to you?

WHO LIVES, WHO DIES (Continued from Page 2)

Bush announced a new International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza to a High-Level Plenary Meeting of the U.N. General Assembly, in New York. In April of 2005 President Bush also added pandemic influenza to the list of diseases for which quarantine is authorized.

China's zealous martial law tactics in dealing with SARS [a viral lung epidemic], home detention, curfews, mandatory vaccinations, restriction of travel, are the model for what could unfold in the US. The federal blueprint for the exact same scenario was released and picked up by the Associated Press a year earlier in 2004. This is a slow process of conditioning the public to accept mandatory vaccinations and restrictions on mobility under a rule of martial law.

The ball started rolling back in 2001 when the Model States Emergency Health Powers Act was passed, which allows for total government takeover of every industry, vehicle, building, location, distribution process, you name it. And when this flu pandemic happens who will we blame? Surely not US scientists playing around with the deadly 1918 Spanish flu virus at "less than the maximum level of containment" according to the *New Scientist* magazine.

**Alex Jones, Prison Planet*

Ed. Comment: The difference between a sensible and an outrageous public policy is whether it is really public. This triage policy came out of a summit of medical specialists in consultation with federal emergency authorities (Homeland Security subgroups). Were the whole and locally varied patterns of coping considered? Were there recommendations for prevention rather than focus on treatment? In other words, were civil society groups or citizens alerted and allowed in? Are the medical and

military models to be respected over the civic and the spiritual?

Apparently "We the People" are unqualified. This policy is top-down—itsself conducive of aggravated disaster, like New Orleans after the hurricane. The beauty of local decision making is that unanticipated sources of knowledge and help can come to the fore, helping with foresight for local benefits and sustainability. It is closer to the truth of "chaos theory" than to the hubris of technocratic national "leaders".

"Bioterror" Art Case Dismissed Fed Agents OutDo Adventure Movie Raiders

by B. Blagojevic, zine.artcal.net , 22 April 2008

Yesterday Federal Judge Richard J. Arcara ruled to dismiss the indictment against University of Buffalo professor and bio-artist Steven Kurtz, a member of the Critical Art Ensemble. The ruling comes as a happy suspension of the legal persecution Dr. Kurtz has been suffering since his 2004 arrest and subsequent targeting by the [Depts of Justice and Homeland Security's] Joint Terrorism Task Force, first on suspicions of "bioterrorism" charges, and later reduced to mail fraud and wire fraud charges for the acquisition and transport of certain legally available biological lab equipment and some few hundred dollars worth of harmless bacteria culture.

At the time Kurtz was developing an installation called "Free Range Grain", which allowed participants to test food for the presence of genetically modified organisms. While the prosecution may yet appeal the judge's decision, and consequently take the case up to a higher federal court, Judge Arcara's ruling was welcomed by Dr. Kurtz and his legal counsel and may yet be a signpost for a just resolution to a terrific mobilization of law enforcement against a symbolic and precedent-setting target.

Note: The harassment of Steven Kurtz began when he phoned police from his home after discovering that his wife had died of heart failure. Soon afterward they raided his home dressed in germ-blocking space suits, confiscated art materials, a book manuscript he was working on, and even his wife's body from the morgue. Kurtz was to have installed the politically critical "Free Range Grain" at Mass MoCA—Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams—and perhaps, when the dust has settled, it will appear there.



[A whiff of Margaret Thatcher?]

Zbig Warns of False-Flag Attack..

..“Blamed on Iran”—Urges Withdrawal, Talks

by Zbigniew Brzezinski, at Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 Feb 2007

Mr. Chairman: Your hearings come at a critical juncture in the U.S. war of choice in Iraq...

It is time for the White House to come to terms with two central realities:

1. The war in Iraq is a historic, strategic, and moral calamity. Undertaken under false assumptions, it is undermining America's global legitimacy. Its collateral civilian casualties as well as some abuses are tarnishing America's moral credentials. Driven by Manichean impulses and imperial hubris, it is intensifying regional instability.

2. Only a political strategy that is historically relevant rather than reminiscent of colonial tutelage can provide the needed framework for a tolerable resolution of both the war in Iraq and the intensifying regional tensions.

If the United States continues to be bogged down in a protracted bloody involvement in Iraq, the final destination on this downhill track is likely to be a head-on conflict with Iran and with much of the world of Islam at large. *A plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran involves Iraqi failure to meet the benchmarks; followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure; then by some provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the U.S. blamed on Iran; culminating in a "defensive" U.S. military action against Iran that plunges a lonely America into a spreading and deepening quagmire eventually ranging across Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.* [Emphases ours. —Ed.]

A mythical historical narrative to justify the case for such a protracted and potentially expanding war is already being articulated. Initially justified by false claims about WMDs in Iraq, the war is now being redefined as the "decisive ideological struggle" of our time, reminiscent of the earlier collisions with Nazism and Stalinism. In that context, Islamist extremism and al Qaeda are presented as the equivalents of the threat posed by Nazi Germany and then Soviet Russia, and 9/11 as the equivalent of the Pearl Harbor attack which precipitated America's involvement in World War II.

This simplistic and demagogic narrative overlooks the fact that Nazism was based on the military power of the industrially most advanced European state; and that Stalinism was able to mobilize not only the resources of the victorious and militarily powerful Soviet Union but also had worldwide appeal through its Marxist doctrine. In contrast, most Muslims are not embracing Islamic fundamentalism; al Qaeda is an isolated fundamentalist Islamist aberration; most Iraqis are engaged in strife because the American occupation of Iraq destroyed the Iraqi state; while Iran—though gaining in regional influence—is itself politically divided, economically and militarily weak. To argue that America is already at war in the region with a wider Islamic threat, of which Iran is the epicenter, is to promote a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Deplorably, the Administration's foreign policy in the Middle East region has lately relied almost entirely on such sloganeering. Vague and inflammatory talk about "a new strategic context" which is based on "clarity" and which prompts "the birth pangs of a new Middle East" is breeding intensifying anti-Americanism and is increasing the danger of a long-term collision between the United States and the Islamic world. Those in charge of U.S.

diplomacy have also adopted a posture of moralistic self-ostracism toward Iran strongly reminiscent of John Foster Dulles's attitude of the early 1950's toward Chinese Communist leaders (resulting among other things in the well-known episode of the refused handshake). It took some two decades and a half before another Republican president was finally able to undo that legacy.

One should note here also that practically no country in the world shares the Manichean delusions that the Administration so passionately articulates. The result is growing political isolation of, and pervasive popular antagonism toward the U.S. global posture.

It is obvious by now that the American national interest calls for a significant change of direction. There is in fact a dominant consensus in favor of a change: American public opinion now holds that the war was a mistake; that it should not be escalated, that a regional political process should be explored; and that an Israeli-Palestinian accommodation is an essential element of the needed policy alteration and should be actively pursued. It is noteworthy that profound reservations regarding the Administration's policy have been voiced by a number of leading Republicans. One need only invoke here the expressed views of the much admired President Gerald Ford, former Secretary of State James Baker, former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and several leading Republican senators, John Warner, Chuck Hagel, and Gordon Smith among others.

The urgent need today is for a strategy that seeks to create a political framework for a resolution of the problems posed both by the US occupation of Iraq and by the ensuing civil and sectarian conflict. Ending the occupation and shaping a regional security dialogue should be the mutually reinforcing goals of such a strategy, but both goals will take time and require a genuinely serious U.S. commitment.

The quest for a political solution for the growing chaos in Iraq should involve four steps:

1. The United States should reaffirm explicitly and unambiguously its determination to leave Iraq in a reasonably short period of time...

2. The United States should announce that it is undertaking talks with the Iraqi leaders to jointly set with them a date by which U.S. military disengagement should be completed, and the resulting setting of such a date should be announced as a joint decision. In the meantime, the U.S. should avoid military escalation...

3. The United States should issue jointly with appropriate Iraqi leaders, or perhaps let the Iraqi leaders issue, an invitation to all neighbors of Iraq (and perhaps some other Muslim countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Pakistan) to engage in a dialogue regarding how best to enhance stability in Iraq in conjunction with U.S. military disengagement and to participate eventually in a conference regarding regional stability...

4. Concurrently, the United States should activate a credible and energetic effort to finally reach an Israeli-Palestinian peace, making it clear in the process as to what the basic parameters of such a final accommodation ought to involve...

It is also time for the Congress to assert itself.

Zbigniew Brzezinski is the author of The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives and former National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter. His testimony came three weeks after Bush announced a "troop surge" in Iraq.

that our governments scrap the rules that turn grain into the fastest food of all. But there is a bigger reason for global hunger, which is attracting less attention only because it has been there for longer. While 100 million tons of food will be diverted this year to feed cars, 760 million tons will be snatched from the mouths of humans to feed animals. This could cover the global food deficit 14 times. If you care about hunger, eat less meat.

While meat consumption is booming in Asia and Latin America, in the United Kingdom it has scarcely changed since the government started gathering data in 1974. At just over 1 kilogram per person per week, it's still about 40 percent above the global average, though less than half the amount consumed in the United States. We eat less beef and more chicken than we did 30 years ago, which means a smaller total impact. Beef cattle eat about 8 kilograms of grain or meal for every kilogram of flesh they produce; a kilogram of chicken needs just 2 kilograms of feed. Even so, our consumption rate is plainly unsustainable.

In his magazine *The Land*, Simon Fairlie has updated the figures produced 30 years ago in Kenneth Mellanby's book *Can Britain Feed Itself?* Fairlie found that a vegan diet grown by means of conventional agriculture would require only 3 million hectares of arable land (around half the current total). Even if the United Kingdom reduced its consumption of meat by half, a mixed farming system would need 4.4 million hectares of arable fields and 6.4 million hectares of pasture. A vegan Britain could make a massive contribution to global food stocks.

But I cannot advocate a diet I am incapable of following. I tried it for about 18 months, lost about 28 pounds, went as white as bone, and felt that I was losing my mind. I know a few healthy-looking vegans, and I admire them immensely. But after almost every talk I give, I am pestered by swarms of vegans demanding that I adopt their lifestyle. I cannot help noticing that in most cases their skin has turned a fascinating pearl grey.

What level of meat eating would be sustainable? One approach is to work out how great a cut would be needed to accommodate the growth in human numbers. The United Nations expects the population to rise to 9 billion by 2050. These extra people will require another 325 million tonnes of grain. Let us assume, perhaps generously, that politicians like Ms. Kelly are able to "adjust policy in the light of new evidence" and stop turning food into fuel. Let us pretend that improvements in plant breeding can keep pace with the deficits caused by climate change. We would need to find an extra 225 million tons of grain. This leaves 531 million tons for livestock production, which suggests a sustainable consumption level for meat and milk, some 30 percent below the current world rate. This means 420 grams of meat per person per week, or about 40 percent of the United Kingdom's average consumption.

This estimate is complicated by several factors. If we eat less meat, we must eat more plant protein, which means taking more land away from animals. On the other hand, some livestock is raised on pasture, so it doesn't contribute to the grain deficit. Simon Fairlie estimates that if animals were kept only on land that's unsuitable for arable farming, and given scraps and waste from food processing, the world could produce between a third and two-thirds of its current milk and meat supply. But this system then runs into a different problem. The FAO calculates that animal keeping is responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. The environmental impacts are especially grave in places where livestock graze freely. The only reasonable an-

swer to the question of how much meat we should eat is: as little as possible. Let's reserve it—as most societies have done until recently—for special occasions.

For both environmental and humanitarian reasons, beef is out. Pigs and chickens feed more efficiently, but unless they are free range you encounter another ethical issue: the monstrous conditions in which they are kept. I would like to encourage people to start eating tilapia instead of meat. It's a freshwater fish that can be raised entirely on vegetable matter and has the best conversion efficiency—about 1.6 kilograms of feed for 1 kilogram of meat—of any farmed animal. Until meat can be grown in flasks, this is about as close as we are likely to come to sustainable flesh eating.

Rereading this article, I see that there is something surreal about it. While half the world wonders whether it will eat at all, I am pondering which of our endless choices we should take. Here the price of food barely registers. Our shops are better stocked than ever before. We perceive the global food crisis dimly, if at all. It is hard to understand how two such different food economies could occupy the same planet, until you realize that they feed off each other. [*George, can you explain that?* —Ed.]

George Monbiot is the author Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning. Read more of his writings at Monbiot.com.

DOUBLE BOOK REVIEW

Myths Empires Live By

by Dave Lewit, *Alliance for Democracy*

The Collapse of Globalism, and the reinvention of the world. Woodstock and New York, Overlook Press, 2005.
by John Ralston Saul

Morality Wars: How empires, the born-again, and the politically correct do evil in the name of good. Boulder and London, Paradigm Publishers, 2008.
by Charles Derber with Yale R. Magrass

Both Alliance friends Charlie Derber and John Ralston Saul show their erudition and insight, as well as facts and figures, in these two books concerning empire— political and economic respectively. Saul turns economists and corporate managers upside down and shakes out their narrow-minded assumptions, all the while showing how the creed of Globalism is based on one of a series of short-lived, flawed economic theories. Derber, in conversation with his former student and long-time friend Yale Magrass, provides an equally historically-based critique of imperial hubris, focusing on "politically correct" popular and political assumptions on the left as well as the right. Both highlight the mythologies which promote and sustain popular belief in empires.

John Ralston Saul is an historian, novelist, essayist, former oil executive, and husband of the once governor-general of Canada. His thickest book is the fascinating *Voltaire's Bastards*, a history and critique of rationalism and bureaucracies—church, military, academic, governmental, corporate. A practical humanist, he came down to Boston from Ottawa to debrief the dozen citizen panelists assembled by the Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy who were about to start work drafting A Common Agreement on Investment and Society (CAIS)—our 1999 answer to the corporate-driven Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

The Collapse of Globalism analyzes free-trade economies in social and historical perspective, comparing, for example, 18th

century mercantilism, post-WWII Keynesian economy, and the neoliberalism of the mid-1970s onward. Saul's foundational themes are obsessive management as opposed to capitalist risk-taking, and self-enhancement and corporate gigantism as opposed to public good. Neoliberal preference for the former—as displayed in the “courtly” World Economic Forum each year in Davos, Switzerland—in each case has been catastrophic. Our economic well-being has been entrusted to trade and paper (speculation, debt), not real production, but misclassified as GDP. Yet why have the people of the West allowed this to happen? We have acceded to myth. Free-trade theory is the holy grail, heralded by technical and economic specialists. Writing for an intelligent general audience, Saul often cites statistics—economic, social, political, environmental, and military—in a revealing way, eschewing the narrow and self-serving truncated formulas which economist angels brandish like swords.

And what is his prospect? It's what he calls positive nationalism, as opposed to globalism:

It is a belief in the positive tension of uncertainty and the central importance of choice. It is not wedded to narrow absolutes. It is particularly dubious about broad answers to utilitarian questions. Thus, the conviction that one market view must prevail in all considerations—whether it be Marxist or neoliberal—is of little interest. The utilitarian is a method to be used with as much variety and complexity as reality demands. Above all, it is there to be used, not worshiped.

Citizens feel comfortable with this complexity because they are anchored into a fundamental view of themselves and others as part of a civic commitment. This civic or positive nationalism has been with us throughout history. It is reinvented for each age. But the links between Cicero's idea of the Roman Republic, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's forty-meter-long 14th century [mural] of *good government* in Siena's town hall, Adam Smith's application of 18th century Moral Sentiments, Alexis de Tocqueville's 19th century [imagination and] democracy, Richard Rorty's 20th century humanism are remarkably tight. And there are equivalents in the *Analects* of Confucius and the Koran, to name just two among many non-Western approaches.” (Page 271, referring to lively discussions elsewhere in the book. For example, he quotes from the Koran: “We...made you into / Nations and tribes, that / Ye may know each other / (Not that ye may despise / Each other).

Morality Wars makes more of popular slogan and myth rather than heroic, theoretical dogma. This follows because Derber, a sociologist at Boston College where he helped BCA/AfD mount an impressive conference on the MAI and helped draft the CAIS, is looking at political empire, not focusing on economic empire. (His four previous books, since *Corporation Nation* in 1998, all deal in different contexts with corporations and democracy). Here his thinking especially brings together the myths supporting the Roman, British, and American empires. Examining writings of the time, he reduces each empire's myth to one hegemonic code or major factional codes—in the case of America, the Constitutional code, the Old South code, Manifest Destiny, the Gilded-Age code, the Evangelical code, and the Neoconservative (security elite's) code:

1. The U.S. is the bastion of freedom and democracy and the ultimate source of good for the rest of the world, responsible for containing evil (today, the evil of Islamic terror) and restoring moral order.
2. Not only is it the most moral nation on earth, it is also the most powerful.
3. Destroying evil requires the exercise of decisive force. Our enemies do not listen to reason.
4. For the sake of world peace and security, freedom, and democracy, as well as its own economic, political, and military interests, the U.S. must never hesitate to act or police any region of the planet.
5. The U.S. must maintain such overwhelming military and economic

power that nobody dares challenge it.

6. Ideally, the U.S. should act with the cooperation of the world community, but if that is not possible it should be prepared and willing to act alone.
7. The U.S. must not be permitted to hesitate acting upon its responsibilities and interests.
8. Misguided liberals have encouraged self-doubt, producing disastrous results in Vietnam and Iraq. This must never be repeated.
9. No one living within America's borders—be they citizen or alien—can be allowed to interfere with the U.S. seeking security or pursuing its interests and moral mission. If that requires an abridgement of civil liberties, it is better to sacrifice some freedom than lose all.

How this code interacts in citizens' minds with the Evangelical code of the religious Right is interpreted as anticipated civic or ethnic “rebirth” after ongoing liberal “decay”—a dynamic seen in the rise of earlier empires of both Right and Left. In the process of maintaining power, mockery of “political correctness” (PC)—implying hypocrisy—is used to silence opposition between parties. Hypocrisy is immoral, and falsely claiming it is a form of “immoral morality”. Within a faction, PC may be demanded: “The Left seems particularly vulnerable to radicals who are ‘holier than thou’ [who] denigrate those less pure as cowardly or bourgeois or reformist. PC then becomes synonymous with being truly radical, a catastrophe for the Left.”

In the end, Derber concurs with Jared Diamond (*Collapse*) and Naomi Klein (*Shock Doctrine*) that transformation of moral values will come after catastrophic threats—nuclear, environmental, financial or, as in Europe, war devastation and loss of the hegemonic empires. Though democracy is evolving, there is no assurance that our transformation will be democratic. Looking at Charlie's earlier books (and John Perkins' *Secret History of the American Empire*), that may depend on the popular transformation of the corporation.

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued from Page 1)

yourself by getting your legislators to assure a priority vote... Re our *New England Regional Roundtable*, please call *Dispatch* editor (below) to help shape and activate its steering committee, or to help with education, outreach, or video documentation.

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