

BCA Dispatch

"The issue is not issues; the issue is the system"
—Ronnie Dugger

Newsletter of the

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy

**April
2009**

*If we can pay farmers not to grow crops, we can pay
engineers and machinists not to build weapons.*

—Robert Bowman

COMMUNITY NOTES

Come to the next meeting of **BCA/North Bridge working group** on **Thursday, 30 April, 7:00p.m.**, in Waltham MA at 760 Main St. The #70 bus from Central Square, Cambridge, drops you off at Exchange St., right across from the fieldstone church behind which is AfD's home office. Plenty of parking right there. We will review our Newton conference of 11 April especially about renewing our Alliance work. Are we still about "ending corporate rule and promoting true democracy"? How do our healthcare, globalization, and video projects tie in? Share conversation and cookies! Confirm at: 781-894-1179. *(Continued on page 7 >>)*

Which Ones Are the Pirates?

Foreign Ships Run Wild, Somalis Suffer

by *Jeremy Scahill, RebelReports.com, 8 April 2009*

THE SOMALI PIRATES WHO TOOK CONTROL of the 17,000-ton "Maersk Alabama" cargo-ship in the early hours of Wednesday morning probably were unaware that the ship they were boarding belonged to a US Department of Defense contractor with "top security clearance," which does a half-billion dollars in annual business with the Pentagon, primarily the Navy. What's more, the ship was being operated by an "all-American" crew—there were 20 US nationals on the ship. "Every indication is that this is the first time a U.S.-flagged ship has been successfully seized by pirates," said Lt. Nathan Christensen, a spokesperson for the U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet. The last documented pirate attack of a US vessel by African pirates was reported in 1804, off Libya, according to *The Los Angeles Times*.

The company, A.P. Moller-Maersk, is a Denmark-based company with a large US subsidiary, Maersk Line, Ltd, that serves US government agencies and contractors. The company, which is based in Norfolk, Virginia, runs the world's largest fleet of US-flag vessels. The "Alabama" was about 300 miles off the coast of the Puntland region of northern Somalia when it was taken. The US military says the Alabama was not operating on a DoD contract at the time and was said to be delivering food aid.

The closest US warship to the "Alabama" at the time of the seizure was 300 miles away. The US Navy did not say how or if it would respond, but seemed not to rule out intervention. "It's fair to say we are closely monitoring the situation, but we will not discuss nor speculate on current and future military operations," said Navy Cmdr. Jane Campbell.

The seizure of the ship seemed to have been short-lived. At the time of this writing, the Pentagon was reporting that the US crew retook the ship and was holding one of the pirates in custody. At this point, it is unclear if *(Continued on next page >>)*



A British household of 13. Britain has a population of 43 million. If it had to be self-sufficient, its land could support only 18 million.

Specter of Population Growth

Must Our Grandkids Bar & Kill to Survive?

by *Chris Hedges, Truthdig, 11 March 2009.*

ALL MEASURES TO THWART THE DEGRADATION and destruction of our ecosystem will be useless if we do not cut population growth. By 2050, if we continue to reproduce at the current rate, the planet will have between 8 billion and 10 billion people, according to a recent U.N. forecast. This is a 50 percent increase. And yet government-commissioned reviews, such as the Stern report in Britain, do not mention the word population. Books and documentaries that deal with the climate crisis, including Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," fail to discuss the danger of population growth. This omission is odd, given that a doubling in population, even if we cut back on the use of fossil fuels, shut down all our coal-burning power plants and build seas of wind turbines, will plunge us into an age of extinction and desolation unseen since the end of the Mesozoic era, 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs disappeared.

First They Came For the Animals...

We are experiencing an accelerated obliteration of the planet's life-forms—an estimated 8,760 species die off per year—because, simply put, there are too many people. Most of these extinctions are the direct result of the expanding need for energy, housing, food and other resources. The Yangtze River dolphin, Atlantic gray whale, West African black rhino, Merriam's elk, California grizzly bear, silver trout, blue pike and dusky seaside sparrow are all victims of human overpopulation. Population growth, as E.O. Wilson says, is "the monster on the land." Species are vanishing at a rate of a hundred to a thousand times faster than they did before the arrival of humans.

If the current rate of extinction continues, Homo sapiens will be one of the few life-forms left on the planet, its members scrambling violently among themselves for water, food, fossil fuels and perhaps air until they too disappear. Humanity, Wilson says, is leaving the Cenozoic, the age of mammals, and entering the *Ereozoic*—the era of solitude. As long as the Earth is viewed as the personal property of the human race, a belief embraced by everyone from born-again *(Continued on page 6 >>)*

the crew acted alone or had assistance from the military or another security force. [Update: Captive ship's captain rescued by snipers firing from the stern of a US Navy destroyer, killing 3 Somalis.]

Over the past year, there has been a dramatic uptick in media coverage of the "pirates," particularly in the Gulf of Aden. Pirates reportedly took in upwards of \$150 million in ransoms last year alone. In fact, at the moment the Alabama's seizure, pirates were already holding 14 other vessels with about 200 crew members, according to the International Maritime Bureau. There have been seven hijackings in the past month alone.

"Pirate" Speedboats

Often, the reporting on pirates centers around the gangsterism of the pirates and the seemingly huge ransoms they demand. Indeed, piracy can be a very profitable business, as the following report from Reuters suggests:

A rough back-of-the-envelope calculation shows that the operation to hijack the Saudi tanker, the Sirius Star, cost no more than \$25,000, assuming that the pirates bought new equipment and weapons (\$450 apiece for an AK-47 Kalashnikov, \$5,000 for an RPG-7 grenade launcher, \$15,000 for a speedboat). That contrasts with an initial ransom demand to the tanker's owner, Saudi Aramco, of \$25 million.

"Piracy is an excellent business model if you operate from an impoverished, lawless place like Somalia," says Patrick Cullen, a security expert at the London School of Economics who has been researching piracy. "The risk-reward ratio is just huge."

Intercepting Weapons, Fish-Theft, Toxics

But this type of coverage of the pirates is similar to the false narrative about "tribalism" being the cause of all of Africa's problems. Of course, there are straight-up gangsters and criminals engaged in these hijackings. Perhaps the pirates who hijacked the Alabama on Wednesday fall into that category. We do not yet know. But that is hardly the whole "pirate" story. Consider what one pirate told *The New York Times* after he and his men seized a Ukrainian freighter "loaded with tanks, artillery, grenade launchers and ammunition" last year.

"We don't consider ourselves sea bandits," said Sugule Ali. "We consider sea bandits those who illegally fish in our seas and dump waste in our seas and carry weapons in our seas. We are simply patrolling our seas. Think of us like a coast guard." Now, that "coast guard" analogy is a stretch, but his point is an important and widely omitted part of this story. Indeed the *Times* article was titled, "Somali Pirates Tell Their Side: They Want Only Money." Yet, *The New York Times* acknowledged, "the piracy industry started about 10 to 15 years ago... as a response to illegal fishing."

Take this fact: Over \$300 million worth of tuna, shrimp, and lobster are "being stolen every year by illegal trawlers" off Somalia's coast, forcing the fishing industry there into a state of virtual non-existence.

But it isn't just the theft of seafood. Nuclear dumping has polluted the environment. "In 1991, the government of Somalia collapsed," wrote Johann Hari in *The Independent*. "Its nine million people have been teetering on starvation ever since—and the ugliest forces in the Western world have seen this as a great opportunity to steal the country's food supply and dump our nuclear waste in their seas."

According to Hari, as soon as the [Somali] government was gone, mysterious European ships started appearing off the coast of Somalia, dumping vast barrels into the ocean. The

coastal population began to sicken. At first they suffered strange rashes, nausea and malformed babies. Then, after the 2005 tsunami, hundreds of the dumped and leaking barrels washed up on shore. People began to suffer from radiation sickness, and more than 300 died.

This is the context in which the "pirates" have emerged. Somali fishermen took speedboats to try to dissuade the dumpers and trawlers, or at least levy a "tax" on them. They call themselves the Volunteer Coastguard of Somalia—and ordinary Somalis agree. The independent Somali news site *WardheerNews* found 70 per cent "strongly supported the piracy as a form of national defense."

Private Warship

As the media coverage of the pirates has increased, private security companies like Xe/Blackwater have stepped in, seeing profits. A few months ago, Blackwater executives flew to London to meet with shipping company executives about protecting their ships from pirate attacks. In October, the company deployed the *MacArthur*, its "private sector warship equipped with helicopters" to the Gulf of Aden. "We have been contacted by shipowners who say they need our help in making sure goods get to their destination," said the company's executive vice-president, Bill Matthews. "The *MacArthur* can help us accomplish that."

According to an engineer aboard the *MacArthur*, the ship, whose crew includes former Navy SEALs, was at one point stationed in an area several hundred miles off the coast of Yemen. "Security teams will escort ships around both horns of Africa, Somalia and Yemen as they head to the Suez Canal... The *MacArthur* will serve as a staging point for the SEALs and their smaller boats."

All of this is important to keep in context any time you see a short blurb pop up about pirates attacking ships. "Did we expect starving Somalis to stand passively on their beaches, paddling in our toxic waste, and watch us snatch their fish to eat in restaurants in London and Paris and Rome?" Hari asked. "We won't act on those crimes—the only sane solution to this problem—but when some of the fishermen responded by disrupting the transit-corridor for 20 percent of the world's oil supply, we swiftly send in the gunboats."

Jeremy Scahill is a correspondent for Amy Goodman's Democracy Now!, and author of Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army (2008).

Gorby Blasts NATO Eastward Expansion

MOSCOW, 2 April 2009 (RIA Novosti) - FORMER SOVIET LEADER Mikhail Gorbachev has criticized NATO's eastward expansion and the failure by Western powers to keep their promise not to deploy military bases near Russia's borders.

Gorbachev said in an interview with Germany's *Bild* newspaper published on Thursday that Western Germany, the United States and other powers had pledged after Germany's reunification in 1990 that "NATO would not move a centimeter to the east." Gorbachev said the Americans had failed to fulfill the promise and the Germans had also turned a blind eye. "They probably rubbed their hands rejoicing at having played a trick on the Russians," the former Soviet leader told the paper, adding that this had led to Russia's disillusionment with post-Cold War relations with the West.

NATO has enlarged since 1999, admitting three ex-Soviet Baltic republics and four Communist-bloc states in Eastern Europe. The membership was more recently increased on Wednes-

day, when Albania and Croatia formally joined the alliance.

The expansion has strained relations between the West and Russia, which is concerned by the new military bases emerging along its borders. Last December, European NATO members led by Germany blocked U.S.-backed bids by Ukraine and Georgia to join programs leading to membership in the military alliance, but the ex-Soviet states were told they would eventually be allowed to join.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Gorbachev is respected in the United States and Europe for his role in ending the Cold War, but criticized by some in Russia for the reforms that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing chaos.

Palestinian Kids Sing for Elderly Israelis

by Associated Press, Haaretz.com, 25 March 2009

THE PALESTINIAN YOUTHS FROM A TOUGH West Bank refugee camp stood facing the elderly Holocaust survivors on Wednesday, appearing somewhat defiant in a teenage sort of way. Then they began to sing.

The choir burst into songs for peace, bringing surprised smiles from the audience. But the event had another twist: Most of the Holocaust survivors did not know the youths were Palestinians from the West Bank, a rare sight in Israel these days. And the youths had no idea they were performing for people who lived through Nazi genocide—or even what the Holocaust was.

"I feel sympathy for them," said Ali Zeid, an 18-year-old keyboard player, who added that he was shocked by what he learned about the Holocaust, in which the Nazis killed 6 million Jews in their campaign to wipe out European Jewry.

"Only people who have been through suffering understand each other," said Zeid, who said his grandparents were Palestinian refugees forced to flee the northern city of Haifa during the war that followed Israel's creation in 1948.

The 13 musicians, aged 11 to 18, belong to Strings of Freedom, a modest orchestra from the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank, the scene of a deadly 2002 battle between Palestinian militants and Israeli soldiers.

The event, held at the Holocaust Survivors Center in this tree-lined central Israeli town, was part of Good Deeds Day, an annual event run by an organization connected to billionaire Shari Arison, Israel's richest woman.

The two-hour meeting starkly highlighted how distant Palestinians and Israelis have become after more than eight years of bloody Palestinian militant attacks and deadly Israeli military reprisals. Most of the Palestinian youths had not seen an Israeli civilian before—only gun-toting soldiers in military uniforms manning checkpoints, conducting arrest raids of wanted Palestinians or during army operations.

"They don't look like us," said Ahed Salameh, 12, who wore a black head scarf woven with silver. Most of the elderly Israelis wore pants and T-shirts, with women sporting a smear of lipstick. "Old people look different where we come from," Salameh said.

She said she was shocked to hear about the Nazi genocide against Jews. Ignorance and even denial of the Holocaust is widespread in Palestinian society...

The encounter began with an Arabic song, "We sing for peace," and was followed by two musical pieces with violins and Arabic drums, as well as an impromptu song in Hebrew by two in the audience.

Sarah Glickman, 68, whose family moved to the newly

created Jewish state in 1949 after fleeing to Siberia to escape the Nazis, said she had no illusions the encounter would make the children understand the Holocaust. But she said it might make a small difference.

"They think we are strangers, because we came from abroad," Glickman said. "I agree: It's their land, also. But there was no other option for us after the Holocaust."

Later, she tapped her feet in tune as the teenagers played a catchy Mideast drum beat. After the event, some of the elderly Israelis chatted with students and took pictures together.



The encounter was not absent of politics. Younis dedicated a song to an Israeli soldier held captive by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip—and also criticized Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

Israel to Fall in 20 Years

CIA Sees Single Arab-Jewish State

by PressTV(Iran), GlobalResearch.ca, 13 March 2009

A STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) has cast doubt over Israel's survival beyond the next 20 years. The CIA report predicts "an inexorable movement away from a two-state to a one-state solution, as the most viable model based on democratic principles of full equality that sheds the looming specter of colonial Apartheid while allowing for the return of the 1947/1948 and 1967 refugees. The latter being the precondition for sustainable peace in the region."

The study, which has been made available only to a certain number of individuals, further forecasts the return of all Palestinian refugees to the occupied territories, and the exodus of two million Israeli—who would move to the US in the next fifteen years.

"There are over 500,000 Israelis with American passports and more than 300,000 living in the area of just California," International lawyer Franklin Lamb said in an interview with Press TV on Friday, adding that those who do not have American or western passports, have already applied for them.

"So I think the handwriting at least among the public in Israel is on the wall...[which] suggests history will reject the colonial enterprise sooner or later," Lamb stressed. He said CIA, in its report, alludes to the unexpectedly quick fall of the apartheid government in South Africa and recalls the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, suggesting the end to the dream of an 'Israeli land' would happen 'way sooner' than later.

The study further predicts the return of over one and a half million Israelis to Russia and other parts of Europe, and denotes a decline in Israeli births whereas a rise in the Palestinian population.

Lamb said given the Israeli conduct toward the Palestinians and the Gaza strip in particular, the American public—which has been voicing its protest against Tel Aviv's measures in the last 25 years—may 'not take it anymore'.

Some members of the US Senate Intelligence Committee have been informed of the report. ■

Leahy Drops 'Truth Commission' Plan Senators Ignore Justice, Focus on Economy

by Charlotte Dennett, Consortium News, 2 April 2009

THOSE OF YOU FOLLOWING THE GEORGE W. BUSH PROSECUTION TRAIL will be interested to know that [US Senator] Patrick Leahy's "truth commission" is a no-go. I was in a meeting with Leahy and four other Vermonters on Monday when he broke the news to us.

We had asked for the meeting to learn why he supported a truth commission over the appointment of a special prosecutor.

Halfway through the allotted 30-minute meeting (with him taking up much of the time explaining why he was not generally opposed to prosecution, since he had been a DA for eight years and had the highest conviction rate in Vermont), he told us that his truth commission had failed to get the broad support it needed in Congress, and since he couldn't get one Republican to come behind the plan, "it's not going to happen."

It was a sobering exchange. The meeting had begun with our expressing serious concerns about ongoing dangers to our democracy, with the trend going to executive power while damaging our Constitution.

"We are a nation of laws," said Dan DeWalt, who had helped organize 36 Vermont towns to vote for impeachment of Bush on town meeting day. "If we have a system of justice, why not let it take its course? It seems to many Americans that the rich and powerful don't have the same system of justice, and they're getting away with torture, murder, fraud, and Ponzi schemes."

By the end of the meeting, we were beginning to wonder

whether anything at all was going to be done—by Congress, by Attorney General Eric Holder, by President Barack Obama—to hold the Bush team accountable for its crimes.

Leahy's own aversion to appointing a special prosecutor appeared to be more practical than philosophical. "We don't want another Abu Ghraib," he said. "You know, 'Boy, did we get those privates and corporals.' So many up on high will never get touched. It's like the war on drugs—'let's get those black kids on cocaine.'"

So it's not that Leahy had a problem with prosecutions per se. "I just worry that the prosecutions will be done only on middle-level people," he said.

Well then, what would happen to the higher-ups? Leahy had said, on previous occasions, that the purpose of his truth commission was to grant immunity to those willing to testify—presumably middle-level people—and we could infer from that that they, in turn, would spill the beans on their superiors.

If any of the witnesses lied under oath or were less than thorough in their answers, Leahy had told MSNBC's Rachel Maddow a month ago, they could be prosecuted for perjury. But that still left the fate of high government officials uncertain.

Leahy had hinted to Maddow that if officials refused to honor subpoenas, they, too could be prosecuted. But in the real world, as Monday's news suggests, the people most responsible for the crimes will continue to get off free.

We should at least be content, Leahy said, with his success in forcing former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's resignation in 2007.

After Leahy left the meeting, his aide, Chuck Ross, assured our group that there was no one more devoted to protecting the Constitution than Leahy. "He has been persistent in the face of

obfuscation," Ross said. "He got rid of Gonzales. I would challenge you to find someone who has done more to defend the Constitution."

Then Ross let out a memorable one-liner: "He's all you've got."

What? Leahy's all we've got to protect the Constitution? And we have to accept Gonzales's resignation as the only punishment for years of gutting the rule of law? It took about five minutes for all this to sink in.

Then fellow Vermonter John Nirenberg spoke, I think, for all of us: "If he's the only guy, this is not a healthy situation."

It is, perhaps, no coincidence, that the same time Leahy down-played the truth commission, congressional aides were quoted by reporter Jason Leopold of Consortiumnews.com that "the focus has shifted to the econo-

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by TOM TOMORROW

DOWN THE ROAD, A DISTRAUGHT STRANGER RUSHES TO WARN LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF AN IMPENDING CATASTROPHE...

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my and that pressure for a special prosecutor to bring criminal charges over the Bush administration's past actions could become a distraction to that focus."

Leahy's aide Ross had said same thing. Everyone was focusing on the economy. So now, it seems, the wrecked economy, compliments of the Bush administration, is becoming the excuse for congressional inaction after eight years of unremitting malfeasance by the Bush administration.

This is serious, folks. Appointing a special prosecutor had been the top issue on President Obama's web site when he took office. Either he's not listening any more, or his supporters are "looking forward, not backward," just as he prefers—and just as his right flank (the CIA, the neocons, and everyone else who has something to hide) desperately want.

It remains to be seen if Obama's huge base can get through to him on this issue, now that he occupies the White House. If they cannot, then the failure to hold even a truth commission, let alone prosecutions, signals a return to the same old way of doing things. Deterrence be damned.

Charlotte Dennett is a lawyer and investigative journalist. She recently ran for Attorney General in Vermont on a pledge to prosecute George W. Bush under state criminal statutes for murder (i.e. for sending troops to their deaths in Iraq under false pretenses). She also promised, if elected, to appoint legendary Manson prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi as her special prosecutor.

Rep Jane Harman Caught Dealing With Israeli Operative

by Amy Goodman, DemocracyNow.org, 20 April 2009

CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY IS REPORTING Democratic Congresswoman Jane Harman of California was overheard in 2005 on an NSA wiretap speaking with a suspected Israeli agent. During the call, Harman reportedly said she would lobby the Justice Department to reduce espionage-related charges against two officials of AIPAC, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee. In exchange for Harman's help, the suspected Israeli agent reportedly pledged to help lobby Nancy Pelosi to appoint Harman chair of the Intelligence Committee after the 2006 elections.

The conversation is said to have been picked up on a court-approved NSA wiretap directed at alleged Israel covert action operations in Washington. *Congressional Quarterly* reports then-Attorney General Alberto Gonzales decided to stop a probe of Harman, because he wanted Harman to be able to help defend the administration's secret domestic spy program that the *New York Times* was about to expose.

Ed. Comment: Remember the pained expression on Rep. Harman's face on the cover of *BCA Dispatch* for Dec. 2007? It was when she introduced a bill to fight "violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism." Could there be a bit of "projection" here, folks? How does she classify the jeering Zionist mobs that actively block speakers and conferences that dare criticize Israel?

LETTERS

I commend your recent [Feb 09] treatment on the 9/11 conspiracy. As an engineer and supporter of the Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth effort, there is no credible explanation for the manner of collapse of the three buildings [World Trade Center 1, 2, and 7] other than controlled demolition.

—William R. Nugent, P.E., Eastham MA

Explosives Were Used At 9/11 Site

Nano-Chemists Analyze WTC Dust

MOST OF THE HUNDREDS OF PROFESSIONALS identified with 9/11 Truth groups believe that the World Trade Center towers and Building 7 were brought down by controlled demolition involving explosives such as thermite/thermate systematically set before the dramatic events of 0/11/2001. The following paper, just out, tends to confirm their contention. —Ed.

"Active Thermitic Material Discovered in Dust from the 9/11 World Trade Center Catastrophe"

by Niels H. Harrit*, Jeffrey Farrer, Steven E. Jones, Kevin R. Ryan, Frank M. Legge, Daniel Farnsworth, Gregg Roberts, James R. Gourley and Bradley R. Larsen

**Niels Harrit is Asso Prof of Chemistry, U of Copenhagen, specializing in nano-chemistry. Jones is a physics professor at Brigham Young U. Dr. Farrar is a lab manager there and specialist in electron microscopy. Published in Open Chemical Physics Journal, Vol. 2, 4 April 2009. ISSN: 1874-4125.*

Abstract

We have discovered distinctive red/gray chips in all the samples we have studied of the dust produced by the destruction of the World Trade Center. Examination of four of these samples, collected from separate sites, is reported in this paper. These red/gray chips show marked similarities in all four samples. One sample was collected by a Manhattan resident about ten minutes after the collapse of the second WTC Tower, two the next day, and a fourth about a week later. The properties of these chips were analyzed using optical microscopy, scanning electron microscopy (SEM), X-ray energy dispersive spectroscopy (XEDS), and differential scanning calorimetry (DSC). The red material contains grains approximately 100 nm across which are largely iron oxide, while aluminum is contained in tiny plate-like structures. Separation of components using methyl ethyl ketone demonstrated that elemental aluminum is present. The iron oxide and aluminum are intimately mixed in the red material. When ignited in a DSC device the chips exhibit large but narrow exotherms occurring at approximately 430 C, far below the normal ignition temperature for conventional thermite. Numerous iron-rich spheres are clearly observed in the residue following the ignition of these peculiar red/gray chips. The red portion of these chips is found to be an unreacted thermitic material and highly energetic.

The paper ends with this sentence: "Based on these observations, we conclude that the red layer of the red/gray chips we have discovered in the WTC dust is active, unreacted thermitic material, incorporating nanotechnology, and is a highly energetic pyrotechnic or explosive material."

Co-author Stephen Jones comments at 911Blogger.com: "In short, the paper explodes the official story that 'no evidence' exists for explosive/pyrotechnic materials in the WTC buildings."

Because various writers dismiss 9/11 Truth evidence for lack of publication in peer-reviewed journals, Jones points out that the paper was subjected to "grueling" questioning by several reviewers, demanding additional experiments which the authors completed and included in the published version.

He continues: "What is high-tech explosive/pyrotechnic material in large quantities doing in the WTC dust? Who made tons of this stuff and why? Why have government investigators refused to look for explosive residues in the WTC aftermath?..." ■

Gag (out of) Order

Folksy Columnist Leans Toward Chuck

by Kevin Cullen, *Boston Globe*, 19 March 2009

THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN THIS LIFE I ASSUMED I'D NEVER DO:
Walk on the moon. Dunk a basketball. Kiss Kate Winslet. Stick up for Chuck Turner.

But having read the decision by US Magistrate Timothy Hillman ordering City Councilor Turner to do something he has never been very good at—i.e., keep his trap shut—it is impossible not to feel sympathy for Comrade Chuck and a little thing called the First Amendment.

Hillman's ruling is very lawyerly. He cites all the relevant case law and makes a strong argument that Turner's disclosure of any information prosecutors turn over to lawyers defending him against corruption charges would make a mockery of the process. The government already did that. Hillman's order would make more sense had he issued it before the feds released the video showing FBI cooperating witness Ron Wilburn slipping Turner what Vinnie Piro once described as a little walking around money.

Anybody who hasn't seen that video, or read or heard talk about it, is either dead, deaf, or blind, and in any case is so insulated from everyday life as to preclude them from being qualified to sit in judgment of a parking violation, much less a man's liberty. After the release and the media's unquestioning dissemination of the incriminating video, to suggest that Turner's talking about the case will somehow prevent him from getting a fair trial is a non sequitur.

Let's be honest here. Chuck Turner has already been tried in the court of public opinion, and it's probably safe to say that, his family and friends aside, this public court has found him guilty, based solely on the image of him taking a wad of cash. Turner can hold a myriad of press conferences on City Hall Plaza and point to evidence that undermines the government's case all he wants. Most people will remember only the video.

So, even as Wilburn says he has misgivings about entrapping Turner, the feds have already accomplished their goal of embarrassing, if not ruining, Turner.

Whatever you think of Turner, the two things he has in common with disgraced former senator Dianne Wilkerson, other than being photographed taking cash from Wilburn, is that he's black and represents the most marginalized people in the city. And if you don't think that is relevant, I'll have what you're having. People who know Turner don't believe for a minute he's corrupt in the old-fashioned sense of influence peddling or taking money to fund a high life. He doesn't have much influence. And he doesn't live high. Even some of Wilkerson's friends admit she's been ethically challenged for years.

Turner's problem, God love him, is that he thinks it's 1973 and you can still blame The Man for everything. At least he sticks up for poor people.

It's truly a marvelous public service that our government has performed, wiring up an agent provocateur and dispatching him to slip chump change into the hands of some minor politicians who just happen to represent the poorest people in the city. Meanwhile, the most powerful pols in town continue to practice legalized theft, grabbing our money with both hands, handing out jobs to relatives and cronies, padding their payrolls, boosting their salaries and pensions while ours get slashed.

There's no law against the way politics is practiced at City Hall and the State House. Steal legally and you can steal at will.

Welcome to Massachusetts, a one-party state, where the pols are the only ones having a party. We're just paying for it.

As for the embattled city councilor, if it comes down to choosing between him and a government that wants to limit free speech when it suits its purposes, I'm down with Comrade Chuck.

POPULATION GROWTH (Continued from Page 1)

Christians to Marxists to free-market economists, we are destined to soon inhabit a biological wasteland.

The populations in industrialized nations maintain their lifestyles because they have the military and economic power to consume a disproportionate share of the world's resources. The United States alone gobbles up about 25 percent of the oil produced in the world each year. These nations view their stable or even zero growth birthrates as sufficient. It has been left to developing countries to cope with the emergent population crisis. India, Egypt, South Africa, Iran, Indonesia, Cuba and China, whose one-child policy has prevented the addition of 400 million people, have all tried to institute population control measures. But on most of the planet, population growth is exploding. The U.N. estimates that 200 million women worldwide do not have access to contraception. The population of the Persian Gulf states, along with the Israeli-occupied territories, will double in two decades, a rise that will ominously coincide with precipitous peak oil declines.

The overpopulated regions of the globe will ravage their local environments, cutting down rainforests and the few remaining wilderness areas, in a desperate bid to grow food. And the depletion and destruction of resources will eventually create an overpopulation problem in industrialized nations as well. The resources that industrialized nations consider their birthright will become harder and more expensive to obtain. Rising water levels on coastlines, which may submerge coastal nations such as Bangladesh, will disrupt agriculture and displace millions, who will attempt to flee to areas on the planet where life is still possible.

Starvation and Slaughter

The rising temperatures and droughts have already begun to destroy crop lands in Africa, Australia, Texas and California. The effects of this devastation will first be felt in places like Bangladesh, but will soon spread within our borders. Footprint data suggests that, based on current lifestyles, the sustainable population of the United Kingdom—the number of people the country could feed, fuel and support from its own biological capacity—is about 18 million. This means that in an age of extreme scarcity, some 43 million people in Great Britain would not be able to survive. Overpopulation will become a serious threat to the viability of many industrialized states the instant the cheap consumption of the world's resources can no longer be maintained. This moment may be closer than we think.

A world where 8 billion to 10 billion people are competing for diminishing resources will not be peaceful. The industrialized nations will, as we have done in Iraq, turn to their militaries to ensure a steady supply of fossil fuels, minerals and other non-renewable resources in the vain effort to sustain a lifestyle that will, in the end, be unsustainable. The collapse of industrial farming, which is made possible only with cheap oil, will lead to an increase in famine, disease and starvation. And the reaction of those on the bottom will be the low-tech tactic of terrorism and war. Perhaps the chaos and bloodshed will be so massive that overpopulation will be solved through violence, but this is hardly a comfort.

Earth Is A Giant Organism

James Lovelock, an independent British scientist who has spent most of his career locked out of the mainstream, warned several decades ago that disrupting the delicate balance of the Earth, which he refers to as a living body, would be a form of collective suicide. The atmosphere on Earth—21 percent oxygen and 79 percent nitrogen—is not common among planets, he notes. These gases are generated, and maintained at an equable level for life's processes, by living organisms themselves. Oxygen and nitrogen would disappear if the biosphere was destroyed. The result would be a greenhouse atmosphere similar to that of Venus, a planet that is consequently hundreds of degrees hotter than Earth. Lovelock argues that the atmosphere, oceans, rocks and soil are living entities. They constitute, he says, a self-regulating system [Gaia]. Lovelock, in support of this thesis, looked at the cycle in which algae in the oceans produce volatile sulfur compounds. These compounds act as seeds to form oceanic clouds. Without these dimethyl sulfide "seeds" the cooling oceanic clouds would be lost. This self-regulating system is remarkable because it maintains favorable conditions for human life. Its destruction would not mean the death of the planet. It would not mean the death of life-forms. But it would mean the death of Homo sapiens.

Lovelock advocates nuclear power and thermal solar power; the latter, he says, can be produced by huge mirrors mounted in deserts such as those in Arizona and the Sahara. He proposes reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide with large plastic cylinders thrust vertically into the ocean. These, he says, could bring nutrient-rich lower waters to the surface, producing an algal bloom that would increase the cloud cover. But he warns that these steps will be ineffective if we do not first control population growth. He believes the Earth is overpopulated by a factor of about seven. As the planet overheats—and he believes we can do nothing to halt this process—overpopulation will make all efforts to save the ecosystem futile.

Gaia—Love Her and Live

Lovelock, in *The Revenge of Gaia* said that if we do not radically and immediately cut greenhouse gas emissions, the human race might not die out but it would be reduced to "a few breeding pairs." *The Vanishing Face of Gaia* his latest book, which has for its subtitle "The Final Warning," paints an even grimmer picture. Lovelock says a continued population boom will make the reduction of fossil fuel use impossible. If we do not reduce our emissions by 60 percent, something that can be achieved only by walking away from fossil fuels, the human race is doomed, he argues. Time is running out. This reduction will never take place, he says, unless we can dramatically reduce our birthrate.

All efforts to stanch the effects of climate change are not going to work if we do not practice vigorous population control. Overpopulation, in times of hardship, will create as much havoc in industrialized nations as in the impoverished slums around the globe where people struggle on less than two dollars a day. Population growth is often overlooked, or at best considered a secondary issue, by many environmentalists, but it is as fundamental to our survival as reducing the emissions that are melting the polar ice caps.

Chris Hedges, a Pulitzer prize-winning reporter, is a senior fellow at the Nation Institute. His latest book is Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians.

Ed Comment:

Lovelock's research and warnings concerning overpopulation

are overdue. He predicts what will happen if the course of human affairs will not change. The crucial question is how to change.

It occurred to me long ago that Malthus lives—that the wealthy of the West are aware that their policies condemn the great "inferior" majority to early death, with consequent global population shrinkage. They assume that there OUGHT to be a die-off, and it's them or us. So they view "hungry masses" as virgin soil to be exploited, sucked dry, and abandoned.

Now it appears that those billions of brown people in the global South, and even millions of white people, will not hold still to be bled dry: The technical superiority in weapons and communications cannot, it seems, be monopolized. And the secret brown weapon of jihad (internal) or swaraj—self rule—together with tribal or village participatory process, may ensure the triumph of community over greed, despite US efforts to master "asymmetric warfare". But will that community be democratic—altruistic? And will "Enough" become a prime value, as required for population control?

To ensure sustainable levels of population, what do we need?

***Grandparent Complex**—love thy neighbor's kids without needing to have thine own.

***Friend Complex**—"If you land in jail I'll pay your bail"—or better, prefer restorative justice and help create community.

***Free-Bike Complex**—share your tools; see nature; feel the air.

***Glad-Rag Complex**—rags can be peek-a-boo, and challenge your creativity, not the market's.

***Crazy for (lean) Travel**—stay over with Afghans; stay for supper on the other side of tracks in your own town.

***Forget contracts**; forget wages; forget interest—just rely on neighbors.

***Strive for a B**; be special with the fruits of your one A.

***Mindfulness**—learn to think connections and causes behind the visible.

***Home Over Jordan**—live like a songbird for now; be glad to die when your time comes, and join your ancestral beings.

Without systematic research—theory, invention and testing—these assertions remain dream and metaphor. It is time for psychologists to get into the act. Not those working for and paid by corporations to ensure profitability, but those concerned with global welfare and social and societal change.

COMMUNITY NOTES (Continued from Page 1)

9/11 Truth Leader at BU

Philosopher-theologian **David Ray Griffin** addressed an enthusiastic crowd of maybe 300 at Boston University's Morse Auditorium on Saturday evening, 11 April. If you didn't attend, just buy or borrow Griffin's latest of seven books—*The New Pearl Harbor Revisited*—scrutinizing what he concludes was a "false-flag" inside job of demolishing three World Trade Center buildings and part of the Pentagon. (The *Dispatch* regrets not having been able to post notice of this event in the last issue—actually it was announced after we had gone to press. These days few events are announced a month in advance—most lecture-and-rally goers rely on email notices, so many sponsors post notices only a week or so in advance. Please send your email address to us—see **Colophon**, page 8.)

Griffin's amazing store of knowledge about 9/11—the facts, circumstances, and politics—poured out with each of the many audience questions—on this issue, shades of Noam Chomsky

(who does not opine about 9/11 causation). But his bottom line was to have an impartial investigation, with subpoena power—something which the Bush-appointed 9/11 Commission was not. See **Action Alerts**, page 8, to join the effort to submit this prospect to New York City's voters. Also at Action Alerts, find out how to watch a YouTube video of nano-chemist Niels Harrit interviewed on Danish TV about termite explosives in the World Trade towers.

Alliance Conference in Newton MA

Ruth Weizenbaum's determination to make the Alliance work drove her and David Whitty—representatives to AfD's national council—to organize a Northeast region all-day conference on 11 April. Their idea was to air what everyone was doing in the pro-democracy struggle. To this end she invited over a dozen AfD-related activists to speak, inspiring and joining us in song by the **Raging Grannies** and food by the staff of the Walker Center. Thus we heard about crises like peak oil, global warming, militarism, and global financial failures on the one hand, and constructive projects like single-payer health insurance, local initiatives (in Ashland and Concord), media initiatives, participatory budgeting, and citizen trade commissions on the other hand.

About 25 or 30 people attended, mostly from the immediate Boston and suburban area. It was a long day, and several people had to leave for Griffin's lecture at BU, so the planned discussion after dinner never happened. In our opinion, this bottom-up element should have been the guiding principle, replacing the top-down lecturing of most of the morning presentations, and some of the afternoon. It might have been assumed that all attendees were familiar with the large issues discussed so often in the progressive media.

We are too wedded to the conventional notion of what a "convention" is—lots of speeches and some committee work and voting, plus food and networking. The Newton gathering was a truncated version of that, minus committees and voting. Perhaps the Lecture + Discussion format should be replaced by a workshop format in which ALL attendees would be encouraged to say HOW they are doing what they are doing, and what they really WANT to be doing if only they had the time, means, and organization. Are the members convinced that the Alliance is spot on with its mission of "end corporate rule; foster true democracy; establish a just and sustainable economy"? Are we moving toward issues rather than the system? Are those issues redundant with those of other organizations better equipped to be effective? Are we building a community of allies? Are members leaving the Alliance to be more effective in other groups, or just aging and dropping out? Don't we have models of effective action among us or our allies which can be emulated by many others?

Members of the exemplary Alliances of the 1890s "rode circuit"—visited groups in towns all over the region. Shouldn't we in New England be doing this, and not just relying on posting emails or web articles? Is it our job to sound alarms about tides of disaster—or to provide models of high-leverage action which leads to expectation "another world is possible." If we haven't the energy, perhaps we could attend meetings of younger groups, and influence their goals.

Taking Charge Locally

Thanks to Ruth Caplan, Bonnie Preston, and their allies in Barnstead NH, Shapley ME, Sterling MA, and other towns in northern and central New England, communities are standing up for their rights by passing ordinances and amending town

charters to end corporate taking of their resources like water. Key to these efforts is the work of **Thomas Linzey**, a lawyer from south central Pennsylvania who started the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) and Democracy Schools to educate townsfolk about constitutions and rights—of towns and of nature—regardless of corporate insistence that they have all the rights of persons, as well as the money to enforce their will. Ruth has become a Democracy School instructor, and with grants she obtained from private foundations continues to inform and motivate folks throughout the region to codify their local authority, and prepare to stand up to corporate and state resistance and insistence.

On 21 April **Amy Goodman** interviewed Tom Linzey for 8 minutes at the end of her daily Democracy Now! program. Watch it on YouTube by going to the DemocracyNow.org archive or go to TheAllianceForDemocracy.org, click on "defending water in Maine", and click on Linzey's image. He is cool! You will hear about all this and his latest organizing success in Spokane WA and even constitutional rights for Nature in the whole country of Ecuador!

ACTION ALERTS

- Watch democracy activist-lawyer **Tom Linzey** any time, on YouTube. About citizens seizing local authority. See above paragraph for details.
- Watch nano-chemist **Niels Harrit** any time on YouTube. In 10 minutes, Harrit is interviewed on Danish TV (English subtitles) about 10 or more tons of **explosive nano-thermite** being set in the **World Trade Towers and Building 7 before 9/11**. He and his colleagues analyzed abundant dust samples taken a day or a week after the buildings collapsed, pointing strongly to an "inside job" interpretation of the disaster. See story, p.5.
- Help create a powerful **new investigation of the responsibility for 9/11** by empowering the voters of New York City, the main site of the disaster. Send contributions for a referendum through NYCCAN.org.

JOIN THE BCA

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. #2h, Boston, MA 02116.)

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COLOPHON

Dave Lewit, Editor 617-266-8687 dlewit@igc.org

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