

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy

November
2006

*War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade,
And, to those royal murderers, whose mean thrones
Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on which they lean.*

—Percy B. Shelley, quoted by Lewis H. Lapham

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued on page 8)

Chapter Calendar

* * Election AfterMath * *

Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 15**, at 7:00 p.m. at **Cambridge Friends Meeting house**, 5 Longfellow Park (10-minute walk from Harvard Square T station, west on Brattle St.), Cambridge.

Agenda

As we go to press, we breathe a bit easier with news of a Democratic take-back of the House of Representatives in Washington. Was there less fraud, much more turnout, or better monitoring? Control of the Senate is in doubt, and we wonder whether GOP vote manipulation will tip the balance. What needs to be done?

Join Election Defense Alliance's **Jonathan Simon** and **Sally Castleman** to review and to explore democratic alternatives.

— Refreshments —

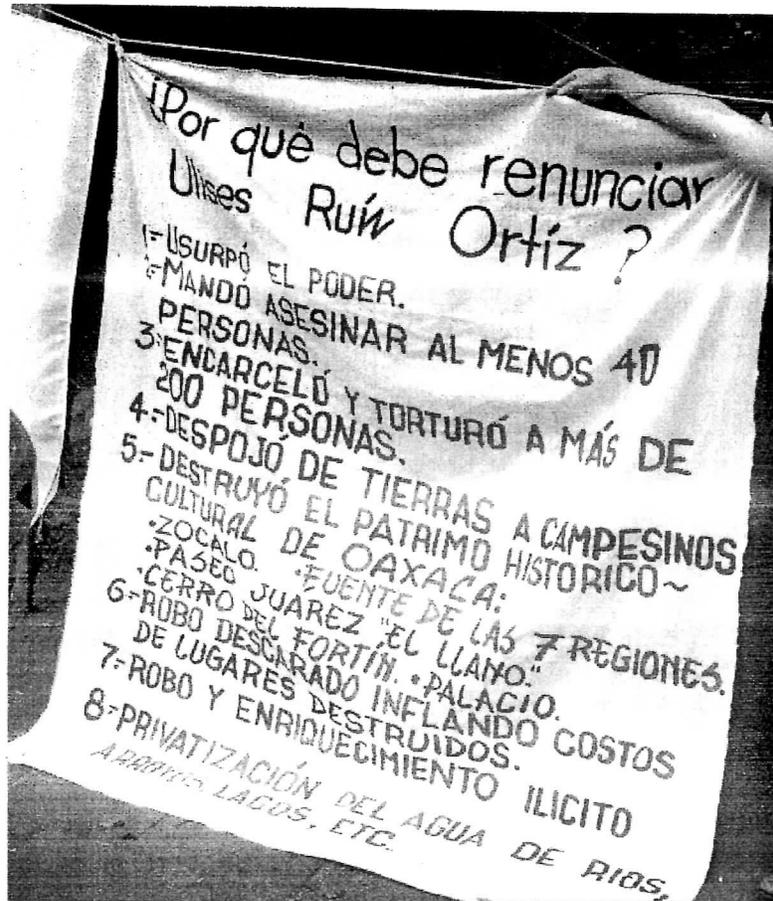
Bush Moves Toward Martial Law He Can Now Override Governors' Objections

by Frank Morales, TowardFreedom.com, 26 Oct 2006

In a stealth maneuver, President Bush has signed into law a provision which, according to Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), will actually encourage the President to declare federal martial law.¹ It does so by revising the Insurrection Act, a set of laws that limits the President's ability to deploy troops within the United States. The Insurrection Act (10 U.S.C.331-335) has historically, along with the Posse Comitatus Act (18 U.S.C.1385), helped to enforce strict prohibitions on military involvement in domestic law enforcement. With one cloaked swipe of his pen, Bush is seeking to undo those prohibitions.

Public Law 109-364, or the "John Warner Defense Authorization Act of 2007" (H.R.5122)², which was signed by the commander in chief on October 17th, 2006, in a private Oval Office ceremony, allows the President to declare a "public emergency" and station troops anywhere in America and take control of state-based National Guard units without the consent of the governor or local authorities, in order to "suppress public disorder."

President Bush seized this unprecedented power on the very same day that he signed the equally odious Military Commissions Act of 2006. In a sense, the two laws complement one another. One allows for torture and (continued on page 2 >>)



Citizen display in Oaxaca, Mexico:

Why get rid of Ulises Ruíz Ortiz?

1. He stole the election [for governor].
2. He ordered the assassination of more than 40 people.
3. He jailed and tortured more than 200 people.
4. He stole peasants' land.
5. He destroyed the cultural inheritance of Oaxaca at:
* City Square * Fountain of the Seven Regions * Juárez Mall ("The Flats") * Fort Hill * Palace
6. He profited from looting the desecrated places.
7. He embezzled.
8. Privatization of the water from rivers, arroyos, lakes, etc.

Riot Police, Tanks Invade Oaxaca But Congress Asks Governor To Resign

by John Gibler, GlobalExchange, 1 Nov 2006

Before the recent outbreak of paramilitary violence, indigenous teachers stood guard over the APPO barricades in Oaxaca City. It appeared as if the conflict in Oaxaca would come to an anti-climactic end. After a week of heated internal debate, on Thursday, Oct. 26, the Oaxaca local Section 22 of the National Union of Education Workers voted to end their five-month strike and return to classes the following Monday.

[Ed. note: This strike of 70,000 teachers throughout the impoverished state of Oaxaca, Mexico, began in May after years of low wages and 20 months of autocratic rule by the state's governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz (URO), age 48. (See photo above of washline citizen indictment.) URO's party is the PRI, which ruled Mexico exclusively since 1929 until displaced by the PAN, the pro-corporate party of outgoing President Fox and of the incoming president Calderón, both their elections apparently having been stolen from progressive (continued on page 6 >>)]

detention abroad, while the other seeks to enforce acquiescence at home, preparing to order the military onto the streets of America. Remember, the term for putting an area under military law enforcement control is precise; the term is "martial law."

Section 1076 of the massive Authorization Act, which grants the Pentagon another \$500-plus-billion for its ill-advised adventures, is entitled, "Use of the Armed Forces in Major Public Emergencies." Section 333, "Major public emergencies; interference with State and Federal law" states that "the President may employ the armed forces, including the National Guard in Federal service, to restore public order and enforce the laws of the United States when, as a result of a natural disaster, epidemic, or other serious public health emergency, terrorist attack or incident, or other condition in any State or possession of the United States, the President determines that domestic violence has occurred to such an extent that the constituted authorities of the State or possession are incapable of ("refuse" or "fail" in) maintaining public order, "in order to suppress, in any State, any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy."

For the current President, "enforcement of the laws to restore public order" means to commandeer guardsmen from any state, over the objections of local governmental, military and local police entities; ship them off to another state; conscript them in a law enforcement mode; and set them loose against "disorderly" citizenry—protesters, possibly, or those who object to forced vaccinations and quarantine in the event of a bio-terror event.

The law also facilitates militarized police round-ups and detention of protesters, so called "illegal aliens," "potential terrorists" and other "undesirables" for detention in facilities already contracted for and under construction by Halliburton. That's right. Under the cover of a trumped-up "immigration emergency" and the frenzied militarization of the southern border, detention camps are being constructed right under our noses, camps designed for anyone who resists the foreign and domestic agenda of the Bush administration.

An article on "recent contract awards" in a recent issue of the slick, insider *Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security International* reported that "global engineering and technical services powerhouse KBR [Kellog, Brown & Root] announced in January 2006 that its Government and Infrastructure division was awarded an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract to support U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities in the event of an emergency." "With a maximum total value of \$385 million over a five year term," the report notes, "the contract is to be executed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," "for establishing temporary detention and processing capabilities to augment existing ICE Detention and Removal Operations (DRO)—in the event of an emergency influx of immigrants into the U.S., or to support the rapid development of new programs." The report points out that "KBR is the engineering and construction subsidiary of Halliburton."³ So, in addition to authorizing another \$532.8 billion for the Pentagon, including a \$70-billion "supplemental provision" which covers the cost of the ongoing, mad military maneuvers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places, the new law, signed by the president in a private White House ceremony, further collapses the historic divide between the police and the military: a tell-tale sign of a rapidly consolidating police state in America, all accomplished amidst ongoing U.S. imperial pretensions of global domination, sold to an "emergency managed" and seemingly willfully gullible public as a "global war on terrorism."

Make no mistake about it: the de-facto repeal of the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA) is an ominous assault on American democratic tradition and jurisprudence. The 1878 Act, which reads,

"Whoever, except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress, willfully uses any part of the Army or Air Force as a posse comitatus or otherwise to execute the laws shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both," is the only U.S. criminal statute that outlaws military operations directed against the American people under the cover of 'law enforcement.' As such, it has been the best protection we've had against the power-hungry intentions of an unscrupulous and reckless executive, an executive intent on using force to enforce its will.

Unfortunately, this past week, the president dealt posse comitatus, along with American democracy, a near fatal blow. Consequently, it will take an aroused citizenry to undo the damage wrought by this horrendous act, part and parcel, as we have seen, of a long train of abuses and outrages perpetrated by this authoritarian administration.

Despite the unprecedented and shocking nature of this act, there has been no outcry in the American media, and little reaction from our elected officials in Congress. On September 19th, a lone Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) noted that 2007's Defense Authorization Act contained a "widely opposed provision to allow the President more control over the National Guard [adopting] changes to the Insurrection Act, which will make it easier for this or any future President to use the military to restore domestic order WITHOUT the consent of the nation's governors."

Senator Leahy went on to stress that, "we certainly do not need to make it easier for Presidents to declare martial law. Invoking the Insurrection Act and using the military for law enforcement activities goes against some of the central tenets of our democracy. One can easily envision governors and mayors in charge of an emergency having to constantly look over their shoulders while someone who has never visited their communities gives the orders."

A few weeks later, on the 29th of September, Leahy entered into the Congressional Record that he had "grave reservations about certain provisions of the fiscal Year 2007 Defense Authorization Bill Conference Report," the language of which, he said, "subverts solid, longstanding posse comitatus statutes that limit the military's involvement in law enforcement, thereby making it easier for the President to declare martial law." This had been "slipped in," Leahy said, "as a rider with little study," while "other congressional committees with jurisdiction over these matters had no chance to comment, let alone hold hearings on, these proposals."

In a telling bit of understatement, the Senator from Vermont noted that "the implications of changing the (Posse Comitatus) Act are enormous". "There is good reason," he said, "for the constructive friction in existing law when it comes to martial law declarations. Using the military for law enforcement goes against one of the founding tenets of our democracy. We fail our Constitution, neglecting the rights of the States, when we make it easier for the President to declare martial law and trample on local and state sovereignty."

Senator Leahy's final ruminations: "Since hearing word a couple of weeks ago that this outcome was likely, I have wondered how Congress could have gotten to this point. It seems the changes to the Insurrection Act have survived the Conference because the Pentagon and the White House want it."

The historic and ominous re-writing of the Insurrection Act, accomplished in the dead of night, which gives Bush the legal authority to declare martial law, is now an accomplished fact.

The Pentagon, as one might expect, plays an even more direct role in martial law operations. Title XIV of the new law, entitled, "Homeland Defense Technology (*continued on page 3 >>*)

Imprisonment Without Due Process Habeas Corpus, R.I.P. (1215–2006)

by Molly Ivins, *TruthDig*, 28 Sept 2006

O h dear. I'm sure he didn't mean it. In Illinois' Sixth Congressional District, long represented by Henry Hyde, Republican candidate Peter Roskam accused his Democratic opponent, Tammy Duckworth, of planning to "cut and run" on Iraq.

Duckworth is a former Army major and chopper pilot who lost both legs in Iraq after her helicopter got hit by an RPG. "I just could not believe he would say that to me," said Duckworth, who walks on artificial legs and uses a cane. Every election cycle produces some wincers, but how do you apologize for that one?

The legislative equivalent of that remark is the detainee bill now being passed by Congress. Beloveds, this is so much worse than even that pathetic deal reached last Thursday between the White House and Republican Sens. John Warner, John McCain and Lindsey Graham. The White House has since reinserted a number of "technical fixes" that were the point of the putative "compromise." It leaves the president with the power to decide who is an enemy combatant.

This bill is not a national security issue—this is about torturing helpless human beings without any proof they are our enemies. Perhaps this could be considered if we knew the administration would use the power with enormous care and thoughtfulness. But of the over 700 prisoners sent to Gitmo, only 10 have ever been formally charged with anything. Among other things, this bill is a CYA for torture of the innocent that has already taken place.

Death by torture by Americans was first reported in 2003 in a New York Times article by Carlotta Gall. The military had announced the prisoner died of a heart attack, but when Gall saw the death certificate, written in English and issued by the military, it said the cause of death was homicide. The "heart attack" came after he had been beaten so often on his legs that they had "basically been pulpified," according to the coroner.

The story of why and how it took the Times so long to print this information is in the current edition of the Columbia Journalism Review. The press in general has been late and slow in reporting torture, so very few Americans have any idea how far it has spread. As is often true in hierarchical, top-down institutions, the orders get passed on in what I call the downward communications exaggeration spiral.

For example, on a newspaper, a top editor may remark casually, "Let's give the new mayor a chance to see what he can do before we start attacking him."

This gets passed on as "Don't touch the mayor unless he really screws up." And it ultimately arrives at the reporter level as "We can't say anything negative about the mayor."

The version of the detainee bill now in the Senate not only undoes much of the McCain-Warner-Graham work, but it is actually much worse than the administration's first proposal. In one change, the original compromise language said a suspect had the right to "examine and respond to" all evidence used against him. The three senators said the clause was necessary to avoid secret trials. The bill has now dropped the word "examine" and left only "respond to."

In another change, a clause said that evidence obtained outside the United States could be admitted in court even if it had been gathered without a search warrant. But the bill now drops the words "outside the United States," which means prosecutors can ignore American legal standards on warrants.

The bill also expands the definition of an unlawful enemy combatant to cover anyone who has "has purposefully and materially supported hostilities against the United States." Quick, define "purposefully and materially." One person has already been charged with aiding terrorists because he sold a satellite TV package that includes the Hezbollah network.

The bill simply removes a suspect's right to challenge his detention in court. This is a rule of law that goes back to the Magna Carta in 1215. That pretty much leaves the barn door open.

As Vladimir Bukovsky, the Soviet dissident, wrote, an intelligence service free to torture soon "degenerates into a playground for sadists." But not unbridled sadism—you will be relieved that the compromise took out the words permitting interrogation involving "severe pain" and substituted "serious pain," which is defined as "bodily injury that involves extreme physical pain."

In July 2003, George Bush said in a speech: "The United States is committed to worldwide elimination of torture, and we are leading this fight by example. Freedom from torture is an inalienable human right. Yet torture continues to be practiced around the world by rogue regimes, whose cruel methods match their determination to crush the human spirit."

Fellow citizens, this bill throws out legal and moral restraints as the president deems it necessary—these are fundamental principles of basic decency, as well as law.

I'd like those supporting this evil bill to spare me one affliction: Do not, please, pretend to be shocked by the consequences of this legislation. And do not pretend to be shocked when the world begins comparing us to the Nazis.

With Ronnie Dugger, Molly Ivins was co-editor of the Texas Observer.

Bush & Martial Law (Continued from page 2)

Transfer Legislative Provisions," authorizes "the Secretary of Defense to create a Homeland Defense Technology Transfer Consortium to improve the effectiveness of the Department of Defense (DOD) processes for identifying and deploying relevant DOD technology to federal, State, and local first responders."

In other words, the law facilitates the "transfer" of the newest in so-called "crowd control" technology and other weaponry designed to suppress dissent from the Pentagon to local militarized police units. The new law builds on and further codifies earlier "technology transfer" agreements, specifically the 1995 DOD-Justice Department memorandum of agreement achieved back during the Clinton-Reno regime.⁴

It has become clear in recent months that a critical mass of the American people have seen through the lies of the Bush administration; with the president's polls at an historic low, growing resistance to the war Iraq, and the Democrats likely to take back the Congress in mid-term elections, the Bush administration is on the ropes. And so it is particularly worrying that President Bush has seen fit, at this juncture to, in effect, declare himself dictator. (NOTES on next page >>)



"Inquisition" by Diego Rivera

(1) <http://leahy.senate.gov/press/200609/091906a.html> and <http://leahy.senate.gov/press/200609/092906b.html> See also, *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, "The Use of Federal Troops for Disaster Assistance: Legal Issues," by Jennifer K. Elsea, Legislative Attorney, August 14, 2006

(2) <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h109-5122>

(3) *Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security International*, "Recent Contract Awards", Summer 2006, Vol. 12, No. 2, pg. 8; See also, Peter Dale Scott, "Homeland Security Contracts for Vast New Detention Camps," *New American Media*, January 31, 2006.

(4) "Technology Transfer from defense: Concealed Weapons Detection", *National Institute of Justice Journal*, No 229, August, 1995, pp. 42-43.

Frank Morales is an Episcopal priest and anti-violence activist in New York City. He has written for *Covert Action Quarterly* and *Global Outlook*, and appears as a character named "Jesus" in Seth Tobocman's graphic novel, *War in the Neighborhood*.

Beware Empires in Decline U.S. Set to Attack Iran

by Michael Klare, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 13 Oct 2006

The common wisdom circulating in Washington these days is that the United States is too bogged down in Iraq to consider risky military action against Iran or—God forbid—North Korea. Policy analysts describe the U.S. military as "over-burdened" or "stretched to the limit." The presumption is that the Pentagon is telling President Bush that it can't really undertake another major military contingency.

Added to these pessimistic assessments of U.S. military capacity is the widespread claim that a "new realism" has taken over in the administration's upper reaches, that cautious "realists" like Condoleezza Rice have gained the upper hand over fire-breathing neoconservatives. Ergo: No military strike against Iran or North Korea.

But I'm not buying any of this.

Just as an empire on the rise, like the United States on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, is often inclined to take rash and ill-considered actions, so an empire on the decline, like the British and French empires after World War II, will engage in senseless, self-destructive acts. And I fear the same can happen to the United States today, as we, too, slip into decline.

The decline of an empire can be a hard and painful thing for the affected imperial elites. Those who are used to commanding subservience and respect from their subjects and from lesser powers are often ill-prepared to deal with their indifference and contempt. Even harder is overcoming the long-inbred assumption that one's vassals are inferior—mentally, morally, and otherwise. The first malady makes the declining elites extraordinarily sensitive to perceived slights or insults from their former subjects; the second often leads elites to overestimate their own capabilities and to underestimate those of their former subjects—an often fatal error. The two misjudgments often combine to produce an extreme readiness to strike back when a perceived insult coincides with a (possibly deceptive) military superiority.

The Suez Blunder

One of the most spectacular examples of such miscalculation in modern times—and an especially illuminating one—was the Suez Canal crisis of 1956. The crisis began in July 1956 when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, angry at the West's failure to support construction of the Aswan High



Dam on the Nile, nationalized the Suez Canal, then owned principally by a British-French company and long regarded as a pre-eminent symbol of the British Empire.

A reasonable Anglo-French response to Nasser's move might have been to negotiate a dignified turnover of the canal (as President Carter did in 1977 with the Panama Canal, thereby removing a major irritant in U.S.-Latin America relations). But no: it was beneath their dignity to negotiate with rabble like Nasser. Instead, with images of imperial grandeur still fresh in their minds, the British and French embarked on October 29, 1956 upon an invasion of Egypt (wisely bringing in the Israelis for a little backup).

Then the second malady kicked in. From what can be reconstructed today, it never occurred to British and French leaders that their former subjects would even consider putting up any resistance to modern European armies, and so victory would occur swiftly. Instead, it was pure debacle. The British and French were far too few on the ground to win any military victories, and the Egyptians didn't cry "uncle" at the first sight of the Union Jack.

Desperately, the British and French—who had first dismissed any need for American help—pleaded with then-President Eisenhower for American assistance. But Ike wasn't in a mood to help. Having seen which way the wind was blowing in the Middle East, he decided it was better to abandon his NATO allies than support the old imperialists in a battle with pan-Arab nationalism (which might then choose to align with Moscow). And so the British and French were forced to withdraw in utter humiliation.

Much in this extraordinary episode bears on the situation in Washington today. Once again, a former subject state—in this case, Iran—is thumbing its nose at its former imperial overlords—Britain and the United States (which together put the megalomaniacal Shah in power there in 1953). Once again, extreme discomfort and distress has been the result. Yes, I recognize that Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology poses a different sort of danger than Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal (though to hear the British tell it, that was no less of a strategic peril).

But there nevertheless remains a symbolic aspect to this whole crisis that cannot be entirely ignored. A once subservient Third World nation confronts the Greatest Power the World Has Ever Known on something approaching equal terms. It is precisely these sorts of circumstances that are likely to trigger rash, ill-considered action on the part of the declining power.

"How dare they stand up to us in that way?" British and French officials must have been muttering to themselves back in 1956. And: "We'll teach them a thing or two!—Just you watch!"

"How dare they stand up to us in that way?" White House officials must be saying to one another in private today. And: "We'll teach them a thing or two!—Just you watch!"

Overcoming Objections to War

But what about the problem of the over-stretched U.S. military and all those American soldiers now bogged down in Iraq? This

is where the second post-Imperial malady comes in. Yes, American ground troops are bogged down in Iraq, but American air and sea power, currently under-utilized in the Iraq conflict, can be used to cripple Iranian military capabilities with minimum demand on U.S. ground forces. Despite the Israeli inability to emasculate Hezbollah with airpower during the Lebanon fighting last summer,

American air and naval officers, I suspect, believe that they can inflict punishing damage on the Iranians with air power alone, and do so without suffering significant casualties in return. I also suspect that well-connected neoconservatives and, no doubt, Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld are whispering this message into the ear of President Bush.

And what about all the forms of retaliation we might expect from the Iranians, like an upsurge in Shiite disorder in Iraq and chaos in the oil markets? These and other likely Iranian responses are also said to be deterring a U.S. military strike. But the Iranians will be incapable of such coordinated action after the U.S. Air Force subjects them to Shock and Awe, and anyway there are contingency plans in place to deal with the fallout. Or so say the neocons, I would imagine.

So I believe that the common wisdom in Washington regarding military action against Iran is wrong. Just because American forces are bogged down in Iraq, and Condoleezza Rice appears to enjoy a bit more authority these days, does not mean that "realism" will prevail at the White House. I suspect that the response of declining British and French imperial elites when faced with provocative acts by a former subject power in 1956 is a far more accurate gauge of what to expect from the Bush administration today.

The impulse to strike back must be formidable. Soon, I fear, it will prove irresistible.

Michael T. Klare is a professor of peace and world-security studies at Hampshire College, and the author of Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependence on Imported Petroleum.

POEM

*compadre,
if i injected my flesh with silicone
did hundreds of situps a day
wore lacy push up bras
got surgery to correct my asian single-eyelid
wore subtle lipstick, concealer, & gloss
made my gaze bruised with shadow & mascara
wore dainty stiletto heels & flippy skirts
got some hips
would you buy me then?*

*hermano,
does market follow demand, or demand follow market?
i want to be the white girls of your wet dreams with million-dollar prosthetic bodies, \$40,000 makeovers, features imprinted on your cock
by billion-dollar industries*

*i am beautiful in my mind
until you choose them instead
slap my ugliness to my face*

*and you tell me you don't understand this kind of competition!
i didn't write the rules
of this game you don't recognize
you just follow the market, the ads, the art, the enterprise...
shaping the sadness of my sickness*

*sisters, come together & incite refugees
of false dreams
to unite.*

www.inciteboston.blogspot.com

No Bush Left Behind Neil Sees \$\$\$ in Standardized Teaching

by *Business Week Online*, 16 Oct 2006

Across the country, some teachers complain that President George W. Bush's makeover of public education promotes "teaching to the test." The President's younger brother Neil takes a different tack: He's selling to the test. The No Child Left Behind Act compels schools to prove students' mastery of certain facts by means of standardized exams. Pressure to perform has energized the \$1.9 billion-a-year instructional software industry.

Now, after five years of development and backing by investors like Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal and onetime junk-bond king Michael R. Milken, Neil Bush aims to roll his high-tech teacher's helpers into classrooms nationwide. He calls them "curriculum on wheels," or COWs. The \$3,800 purple plug-and-play computer/projectors display lively videos and cartoons: the XYZ Affair of the late 1790s as operetta, the 1828 Tariff of Abominations as horror flick. The device plays songs that are supposed to aid the memorization of the 22 rivers of Texas or other facts that might crop up in state tests of "essential knowledge."

Bush's Ignite! Inc. has sold 1,700 COWs since 2005, mainly in Texas, where Bush lives and his brother was once governor. In August, Houston's school board authorized expenditures of up to \$200,000 for COWs. The company expects 2006 revenue of \$5 million. Says Bush about the impact of his name: "I'm not saying it hasn't opened any doors. It may have helped with some sales." (In September, the U.S. Education Dept.'s inspector general accused the agency of improperly favoring at least five publishers, including The McGraw-Hill Companies, which owns *BusinessWeek*. A company spokesman says: "Our reading programs have been successful in advancing student achievement for decades; that's why educators hold them in such high regard.")

The stars haven't always aligned for Bush, but at times financial support has. A foundation linked to the controversial Reverend Sun Myung Moon has donated \$1 million for a COWs research project in Washington (D.C.)-area schools. In 2004 a Shanghai chip company agreed to give Bush stock then valued at \$2 million for showing up at board meetings. (Bush says he received one-fifth of the shares.) In 1988 a Colorado savings and loan failed while he served on its board, making him a prominent symbol of the S&L scandal. Neil calls himself "the most politically damaged of the [Bush] brothers."

While hardly the first brother to embarrass a President—remember Billy Carter's Billy Beer or Roger Clinton's cocaine?—Neil could be the first to seek profit from a hallmark Presidential crusade. And also that of a governor: Jeb makes school standards a centerpiece in Florida, too.

Neil says he never talks shop with his brothers. He attributes his interest in education to his struggles with dyslexia. His

son, Pierce, also had difficulties in school, he says. "Not one of our investors has ever asked for any kind of special access—a visa, a trip to the Lincoln Bedroom, an autographed picture, or anything." #



Bush's COW

candidates. The strike inspired a general rebellion, with citizens setting up local assemblies and occupying public buildings throughout the state, governing on a day-to-day basis.]

With the teachers committed to head back to their communities, the protesters' camps in the town square and surrounding government buildings would have thinned dramatically. Many of the farmers and indigenous organizations that make up the Oaxaca People's Popular Assembly (APPO) were discussing ways to continue their struggle without trying to hold the camps against an imminent police attack. Without the teachers, they said, they simply would not have enough people to guarantee their security.

One might have imagined that by Monday morning, Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz would be walking into the town center, guarded by state police while proclaiming victory. But the APPO was still holding on, and many of the teachers who had voted to continue the strike were considering dissenting from the majority vote and remaining in the protest camps.

Then, on Friday, Oct. 27, plainclothes police officers and city counsel members from Santa Lucia, a suburb of Oaxaca City, stepped into the street and opened fire on protesters guarding their barricades. The protesters dove out of the way, but the reporter who was standing behind them, filming the confrontation, did not see the gunmen. A split second later, two bullets tore into the chest and abdomen of New York Indymedia journalist Brad Will. After filming more than a month of interviews with the rank-and-file of the teachers' union and the APPO, Brad Will recorded his own assassination at the hands of paramilitary gunmen.

Throughout the day, more than 15 shootouts occurred in different parts of Oaxaca City and its surrounding suburbs. In most cases, plainclothes police and gangs linked to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) fired on unarmed protesters with handguns and assault rifles. In some cases, members of the APPO fired back with handguns, though they mostly defended themselves with rocks, bottle rockets and Molotov cocktails. By the end of the day, the paramilitaries had killed 3 people and wounded 23. No deaths or injuries were reported from the APPO's defense.

Within hours of Brad Will's death, President Vicente Fox ordered the Federal Preventive Police (PFP)—a militarized, anti-riot force—to move into Oaxaca. Throughout Saturday, Oct. 28, plane after plane landed at the Oaxaca City airport, dispatching the police, their trucks and anti-riot tanks. The long dreaded face off between the APPO and the federal police was at hand.

But on Sunday morning, the APPO called for protesters to maintain their barricades until the federal police approached, then to allow them to break through the barricade and march ahead of them until the next one, growing in numbers at every barricade and marching ahead of the police all the way to the town square.

Thousands of people took to the streets, reinforcing existing barricades and building hundreds more. On the federal highway leading into Oaxaca City, federal police formed a line with their riot shields, shutting off the highway. Behind the line, riot tanks pulled up, police readied their teargas launchers and machine guns, and helicopters flew overhead, occasionally landing and taking off again.

Hundreds of protesters from the APPO and surrounding neighborhoods gathered less than 15 feet from the police line. About 50 women moved forward to form the protesters' frontline, holding flowers and images of the Virgin of Guadalupe out to the

police. For hours the protesters shouted, chanted, pleaded and even joked with the police, invoking their conscience and calling out for them not to repress the people of Oaxaca.

When the tanks fired up their engines and the police began to bang batons against riot shields, signaling their first attempt to move forward, men and women pushed against the tanks' bulldozer blades and threw their bodies down on the street. The police sounded their sirens and soon fired their water canons to push protesters back. After a short and tense attempt to impede the police advance, protesters turned around and began to march ahead of the police.

The police also advanced directly from the airport, arriving in the city center by early afternoon, and blocking two streets leading into the town square. Protesters gathered at the police lines chanting and calling out to the police. Some protesters attempted to throw rocks and Molotov cocktails at the police, but the crowd called for them not to provoke the police and incite a clash. Violence broke out at the barricade set up to protect the occupied public television station, Canal 9. Police beat several protesters, and killed two. When night fell, the protesters left the town square and the barricades to the police.

On Monday, Oct. 30, the first day of federal presence in the historic center of Oaxaca City, the sun rose to trash and piles of human waste littered throughout the police-occupied zone. All businesses remained closed, and the morning air was fetid.

But outside of the city center, thousands of people again took to the streets to build and maintain barricades and to carry out three marches that converged just two blocks from the occupied town square before turning up to the famous Santo Domingo Cathedral, where the APPO called for a new protest camp.

The show of support in the streets on Monday took many by surprise; at least 10,000 people joined the marches, and more maintained barricades throughout the city. Many believed that the PFP would either beat and arrest the majority of protesters, or scare them off the streets. But the APPO's strategy of continuing to mobilize while avoiding direct clashes with the PFP enabled the protesters to seriously challenge the PFP's assumed control of the city.

As the marchers were gathering numbers and making their way toward the city center, protesters received news that the Mexican Congress has passed a resolution calling for Governor Ulises Ruiz to "reconsider" and resign from office, leading them to erupt in shouts: "Ulises has fallen!" Hours later, the Senate approved, unanimously, the same resolution—the first time that elected officials from Ruiz's own PRI party publicly expressed their lack of faith in the governor's ability to remain in office. Ruiz however, remains undaunted; he responded by submitting a complaint to the Supreme Court, alleging that Congress had acted illegally by passing the resolution.

While the presence of the PFP blocking roads and walking about in riot armor with machine guns provides a ready image of the potential for the government to resort to a violent confrontation, the possibility for continued paramilitary attacks is equally alarming. The paramilitaries killed with total impunity for months in Oaxaca before their assassination of a foreign journalist led to the current PFP intervention.

Oaxaca is still in crisis; in fact, the crisis has only deepened. While the PFP block streets, wash spray paint from the walls of town square restaurants and raid the houses of known APPO activists, those responsible for organizing paramilitary death squads remain free, and the potential for further attacks looms.

Who Won?

Does It Matter?—Our Task

by Gerald Friedman, *Center for Popular Economics*, 3 Nov 2006

As I write this, it appears likely that after 12 years in the wilderness, the Democrats will capture a majority in the House of Representatives and will make substantial gains in the Senate. (<http://www.electoralvote.com/>, my favorite objective source, gives the Democrats a 225-208 lead in the House and a gain of 4 Senate seats to move to 49-51 in the upper body.) After 6 years of almost uninterrupted one-party rule, and the worst government this country has endured since the 1850s, we can only rejoice at Democratic gains as, if nothing else, a sign of a return to sanity after the trauma of September 11, 2001. But, beyond this, what can we expect from the Democrats? Can we anticipate a reversal of Bushism, and a renewed push for social progress?

Alas, the short answer is 'no'. That said, we should all hope for a Democratic win. A Democratic victory would bring welcome changes in Congress. A Democratic majority would install John Conyers of Michigan as chair of the House Judiciary Committee. Sponsor of a Bush impeachment resolution, a dedicated opponent of the use of torture, and a defender of civil rights and civil liberties, Conyers would replace the reprehensible F. James Sensenbrenner. Charles Rangel of New York, a liberal with a nearly perfect labor voting record, would become chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means, replacing William (Cal) Thomas, a dedicated opponent of social security and progressive income taxation whose lifetime AFL-CIO voting record is 12% right, 88% wrong. Holocaust-survivor and Iraq-war critic Tom Lantos would replace right-wing ideologue Henry Hyde at International Relations. Without exception, a Democratic majority would install committee chairs preferable to the Republicans; and we can confidently anticipate that with the new committee structure, the new Democratic majority would not endorse torture, repeal Habeas Corpus, tie a minimum-wage increase to repeal of the Estate Tax, or privatize social security. And there may even be more to gain from a Democratic victory. After six years of virtual free ride, the Bush-Cheney Administration will finally be subject to meaningful oversight. And Bush's reign of error provides abundant opportunities for serious investigation!

Still, even if the Democrats capture control of the Senate as well as the House, we should not expect that the new Democratic majority will be able to do much more than to limit the damage that Bush-Cheney can do. The structures of government power will still largely be in Republican hands. First, the Republicans will retain the White House, of course, with all of its newly accrued power, control of the Federal bureaucracy, the right to interpret and reinterpret legislation, and the power to veto congressional legislation. Republican minorities in Congress will fight the Democrats at every turn. And, outside of Congress, the Republicans retain the infrastructure of the Conservative Revolution, including an arsenal of right-wing think tanks, media outlets, and corporate funding.

Nor have the Democrats prepared the ground to reverse Bush-Cheney. Instead of campaigning to win a mandate for economic renewal and a reborn democracy, they have fought to attract moderate and conservative voters by emphasizing the Administration's failures of execution, such as its mismanagement of the Iraq war and the Federal deficit.

To show their moderation, Democrats have emphasized their military links, the large number of Iraq-war veterans they have nominated. As a result, any Democratic majority will be installed by the election of relatively conservative Democrats from dis-

tricts with a history of supporting Bush and other Republicans. As if to seal the deal with conservatives and to slam the door on significant social reform, the Democrats have nominated for the Virginia Senate seat a life-long Republican, Jim Webb, Naval Academy graduate, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, and Assistant Secretary of Defense under Ronald Reagan. Corporations have understood the message the Democrats have been sending; the *New York Times* reports (October 28, 2006) that rather than donating more to the Republicans to try to stop a Democratic victory they have been shifting their campaign contributions dramatically towards the Democrats to ensure continued access to congressional leadership.

Without a mandate for single-payer health insurance, for renewed regulation, for new environmental initiatives, or even for a withdrawal from Iraq, it is hard to see how a new Democratic Congressional majority will be able to do much more than to slow the bleeding. This is a worthwhile goal. More, it is just about all that we could ever expect from political action by itself. Every major legislative reform—from slave emancipation in the 1860s through the anti-trust activity of the Progressive Era, the New Deal's Social Security Act, and the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s—was the result of popular pressure from below. In each case, politicians voted social reforms to catch up with popular pressure and to appease militants. Congress did not create the Civil Rights movement by passing the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965; instead, those acts ratified and institutionalized the gains made by the popular movements of the 1950s and 1960s.

Whatever happens on November 7, our task is clear: to build a popular democratic movement that will not only slow Bush-Cheney but will reverse their works and rollback the neoliberal program of the 1980s and 1990s. Our model should be successful movements like the New Deal, the Civil Rights campaign, and the Conservatives of the 1970s and 1980s: each built from the ground up, beginning with an ideological campaign both to critique the prevailing wisdom and to support a new vision. Each of these campaigns was helped by friendly politicians; but they learned that the best way to make political friends is to build people power. We should remember that as we head to the polls to vote Democratic November 7.

Sources:

Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941*. 1970. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why they Succeeded, how they Fail*. 1979.

LETTER

Disease Control Warning

The Centers for Disease Control have issued a warning about a virulent new strain of sexually transmitted disease. The disease is contracted through dangerous and high-risk behavior. The disease is called *Gonorrhoea Lectum* and is pronounced "gonna re-elect him." Many victims contracted it in 2004, after having been screwed for four years.

Cognitive characteristics of individuals infected include: anti-social personality disorders, delusions of grandeur with messianic overtones, extreme cognitive dissonance, inability to incorporate new information, pronounced xenophobia and paranoia, inability to accept responsibility for one's own actions, cowardice masked by misplaced bravado, uncontrolled facial smirking, ignorance of geography and history, tendencies towards evangelical theocracy, and categorical all-or-nothing behavior.

This destructive disease originated only a few years ago from a bush found in Texas.

—Ron and Patty Reed, Ft. Worth, TX

RADIO UNIVERSIDAD Oaxaca

You can listen to radio direct from Oaxaca via these mirror sites. For English speakers there is a source of Live Text translation.

Snippets from earlier today [5 Nov]:

20:22 "i think he said he's at the plaza de santo domingo, which is totally full of people"

20:24 "They estimate some 1,200,000 people at the mega marcha, its a 4 Km long march"

20:34 "lots of speakers, people from different sectors of society"

Current partial list of mirror streams (Spanish)

Not all are working at all times.

<http://webradio.podzone.net:8000/appo.mp3.m3u>

<http://208.99.202.72:8000/appo.mp3.m3u>

<http://freeit.org:8000/appo.mp3.m3u>

<http://compi.ath.cx:8000/appo.mp3.m3u>

<http://radio.indymedia.org:8000/appo.mp3.m3u>

<http://ahimsa-radio1.indymedia.org:8300/appo.mp3.m3u>

<http://stream.r23.cc:2323/appo.mp3.m3u>

Live Text English Translation

(refresh every 20 seconds)

<http://www.iteration.org/radioappo.txt>

Contact information:

RADIO UNIVERSIDAD UABJO

Tels. 01 (951) 516 58 43, 516 57 83, 516 53 44

<http://www.uabjo.mx/radio/radioOnLine.php>

—Charlie Welch, actma@rcn.com

CHAPTER NEWS

The bad news is that hardly anybody showed up at the October chapter meeting. The good news is that those who did, including our resource guest, adjourned to the Tanjore restaurant in Harvard Square and had a jolly time. The meeting was to have continued our discussion of strategic nonviolence, and because **Marshall Ganz** took a raincheck, **Anika Binnendijk** filled in. She had experience in Serbia and Ukraine during their electoral turbulence, and she wants to come back to us—welcome! We are also staying in touch with Marshall... So can anyone tell us why so few came—time shift (from 3rd to 4th Wednesday)? Newsletter and e-announcements untimely? No reminder calls? Burnout on topic? Failure of steering committee to deliberate?..

Another bust bore new fruit: **Soesan Kae Clarke** and **Dave Lewit** met with English High teacher **Gabriell Paye**, but none of the Social Justice club showed up. The reason seemed to be that Gabriell was too exhausted to contact the leaders. So we spent 1½ hours learning why—teaching to the MCAS universal achievement test makes more demands on the teachers and short-changes both the students and the teachers in terms of civic curriculum. There's only English, Math, and Science—essentially rote, with dry city-wide texts. No time for local projects. Gabriell showed us a text she'd written, on the chemistry and biology of foods of the many ethnic groups at EHS—it cannot be used because that sort of thing isn't on the MCAS.

We will follow up with teachers and school committee members, e.g. **Susan Naimark**. Dave and possibly Kae are meeting on new civic frameworks and curriculum with Boston City Councilor **Chuck Turner** and **Jesús Gerena** of Hyde Square Task Force. Anyone want to join us? See *Colophon*. :>

ACTION ALERTS

Call for Comment—Media Bias. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was rebuked by the US Supreme Court for biasing its rules toward media corporations. So now it is calling for comment "on the rules and to seek arguments and factual data about their impact on **competition, localism and diversity** [on radio and TV]". "We welcome comments on the current rules and suggestions about how the Commission might revise them to better satisfy our policy goals and legal obligations. **[What are you seeing/hearing, or not, locally? What do you want?]** Opening comments were due October 23, 2006 and replies due December 21, 2006. Although the formal comment period ends on the latter date, the agency will continue to accept input after that time... We also plan to hold a series of public hearings on media ownership issues at diverse locations across the nation." Comment at www.FCC.gov/ownership Copy to all!

Sun 19 Nov. 6-9pm. Somerville. Comic **Jimmy Tingle** on "**Boston Goes Buggy**" about bioweapons lab. With guests Raging Grannies, state rep Gloria Fox, biolab activist Klare Allen, and short film with 5 distinguished scientists. Desserts, cash bar. At Jimmy Tingle's Off Broadway Theater, 255 Elm St. (Red Line, Davis Square). \$20 at www.jimmytingle.com Info: 617-591-1616.

Tue 28 Nov. Logan Airport. **Depart for Venezuela** with Boston delegation to observe election and visit many social/political organizations. Enroll now with Jorge Marin. There's still time. Call Jorge at 508-577-4661 or Dave Lewit at 617-266-8687.

Thu 14 Dec. 7:00pm. Boston. **Noam Chomsky** (just back from Venezuela): "**What's Next?**" Plus other panelists. \$10-20 fundraiser for Encuentro5. At Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St. (Green Line, Arlington stop). Info: 617-482-6300.

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., Boston, MA 02116.)

BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE ALLIANCE for DEMOCRACY PLEDGE
___ \$26/Year - "Count me in!"
___ \$52/Year - "Contributor" (We need to average this amount.)
___ \$104/Year - "Sustainer" (Helping us thrive.)
___ \$208/Year - "Community Steward"
___ \$500/Year - "Realize the vision"
___ What's fair for YOU? _ \$ ___

Name : _____ Date: _____

Street, No./Box/Apt: _____

Town and Zip: _____

Phone: Day _____ Night: _____

E-mail: _____

COLOPHON

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

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