

BCA Dispatch

Newsletter of the
Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy June 2008

The weakness of the marketplace...is the possession of a memory somewhat longer than a dog's, slightly shorter than a cat's. But that is also its great strength—its ability to pick itself up after every fall, to recapture its enthusiasms, to move in circles without being bothered by the self-evident repetitions, even the repetitions of error.

—John Ralston Saul, *The Collapse of Globalism*

CHAPTER NEWS

The next joint meeting of BCA and North Bridge chapters will be on **Tuesday, 24 June, at 7pm** at Alliance offices, 760 Main St, (Rte 20) **Waltham MA**, behind the stone church—on the #70 bus line from Central Square, Cambridge. 781-894-1179.

We will continue our priority projects, hearing reports and planning further action on (1) Democracy Protection—questioning local officials about their limits of compliance with unwarranted federal emergency orders, (2) Pushing our Globalization Impact Bill with our legislators, (3) Producing a DVD based on our 2005 New England Roundtable on participatory budgeting, and (4) new business—your news and new ideas.

ALL ARE WELCOME! (Continued, Page 8 >>)

Endgame

Get Ready for Stolen Election, Martial Law

by Mark Crispin Miller, markcrispinmiller.blogspot.com, 19 May 2008

This is a transcript of a video commentary which you can see at www.NewEnglandAlliance.org. Miller crisply says what BCA Dispatch has been saying for a year. At this same web site you can download our Democracy Protection Kit—sample letters and other materials for use in gathering a delegation and questioning local officials about what they will do if, after a declared emergency, federal agents (Homeland Security) require them to do something unwarranted—and not in the interests of local citizens—like wholesale rounding up “terrorist suspects” for internment. Through related community forums, we hope that citizens will be prepared to resist, as Miller urges. —Ed.

The latest news is that John Edwards has endorsed Barack Obama; Hillary Clinton will continue to fight on, so this particular Democratic horse-race will continue. And of course we're all focused on that drama—at least the media is. I think it's important for us to recognize a few uncomfortable truths about what's to come.

First of all the Republican party is in a very good position to steal this election. Whether it's Clinton or Obama who is the Democratic nominee makes very little difference. The Republicans very much wanted Hillary Clinton to be the nominee. That's why they've been manipulating the results of the primary throughout this season ever since New Hampshire. They, I think, have worked out a very thorough play-book for representing a Clinton-McCain contest as an epic clash between Rambo and Hanoi Jane, and I think (Continued on Page 6 >>)



Prison Ship USS Peleliu

Photo: Zack Baddor/AP

Secret Prison Ships

What Evil Lurks in Law-Free Zones?

by Clive Stafford Smith, *the Guardian* (UK), 3 June 2008

One sordid revelation pursues another in the gradual unravelling of the Bush administration's “extraordinary rendition” program. This is, perhaps, because “extraordinary rendition” is a newfangled phrase for an ancient crime—aggravated kidnapping. Hardly surprising, then, that each time something trickles out, the news is always bad.

Yesterday's disclosure—reported on the front page of the *Guardian*, based on the latest Reprieve report—involves the Bush administration's fleet of “prison hulks”. The scheme is not so different from two centuries ago, when Charles Dickens opened *Great Expectations* on a hulk in the Thames. Then, as now, we transported prisoners around the world to little-known places. The US has injected a modern variation to the practice: even 200 years ago, there was a general insistence that prisoners be charged with and convicted of a crime before they could be condemned to the lower decks of an aging naval ship.

[*By its own admission, the US government is currently detaining at least 26,000 people without trial in secret prisons, and information suggests up to 80,000 have been 'through the system' since 2001. The US government must show a commitment to rights and basic humanity by immediately revealing who these people are, where they are, and what has been done to them.* —Quotation from the present author in yesterday's *Guardian* report]

In one sense, the use of ships is wholly predictable, following the Guantánamo pattern: the Bush administration planned its secret prisons to be law-free zones, totally controlled by the US, far away from prying media eyes or annoying lawyers' writs. What better place, some White House strategist no doubt suggested, than a boat in the middle of the ocean?

Indeed, in this misguided American rendition experiment, an early example involved the detention and interrogation of a terror suspect aboard a US Navy vessel in the Adriatic. The man was later rendered to Egypt for torture and, ultimately, death.

Where are these ships and what are they up to? The US government has admitted that prisoners were held aboard the USS Peleliu and the USS Bataan, both of which have been sighted in the vicinity of the UK Indian Ocean territory of Diego Garcia. Reprieve believes that the US has operated as many as 17 floating prisons since 2001.

(Continued on Page 8 >>)

Zimbabwe Plunges into Crisis

Crop Failure, Mega-Inflation, Terrorism

by Dave Lewit, *Alliance for Democracy*, 7 June 2008

Last month *BCA Dispatch* reprinted the young Eugene Puryear's article on Zimbabwe posted May 9th—written probably a few days earlier. Readers accused him of naïvety, especially regarding violence following President Mugabe's lagging electoral showing. Perhaps, in conjunction with Puryear's inclination toward land reform and maybe comeuppance with respect to white settlers in the opposition party. But right around press time Zimbabwe floated its currency, and faced its thinnest grain harvest on record. Other startling revelations surfaced:

The news today was that the Zimbabwe dollar is losing half its value every 24 hours (annualized inflation rate of 500,000 percent). The Z\$ had been pegged and repegged to the US\$ for 28 years up until one month ago—May 5—when the government (President Mugabe) let it float. At the same time he increased the printing of higher and higher denominations of currency, trying to sell it for foreign currency to pay Zimbabwe's interest on IMF and other foreign loans.

In 2001 Zimbabwe had defaulted on its debt, and unlike its treatment of other debtor countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) refused to renegotiate or cancel any part of the debt. The USA was doubly involved in the treatment of Zimbabwe at that time—it virtually determined IMF's refusal since the U.S. Treasury Department controls the IMF, and the US Congress passed a law called "The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, which enabled the United States government to block any finance applications made by Zimbabwe to multilateral lending institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank in which the US has majority shares or influence", according to UK financial lawyer Thomas J. Hornes' posting on today's *newzimbabwe.com*. "In other words, using its powerful influence over the world's lending agencies the US imposed economic sanctions on Zimbabwe by imposing a world-wide freeze on Zimbabwe's ability to access international credit. The reason: the US was unhappy with Harare's [the capital city] political policies and in particular, its land expropriation policies."

This hyperinflation almost instantly wiped out the savings of tens of thousands of citizens, as well as making it almost impossible for millions to buy their daily sustenance—the price of cornmeal, a staple food, has risen to 40 times what it cost before the 29 March election. At this rate it doesn't make sense for farmers to sell their corn today when it would bring so much more tomorrow, but inflation will make even that price worthless, so cornmeal is no longer available in many stores.

But this is only background. The harvest season has just begun, and Zimbabweans are looking at only 40 percent of normal yield! Why? This winter there was extensive flooding, followed by drought. Weather extremes have increased with global warming. IMF "structural adjustment" required farmers to "modernize" (part of the neoliberal program)—abandoning traditional organic methods and having to depend on imported chemicals, industrial purchasing and growing crops for export. But supplies of seed, fertilizer, pesticide, and fuel were very low, and very costly in large part due to IMF-required cutting of government services. A followup study in 1998 by IMF itself, under public pressure, admitted that this neoliberal policy—only irregularly enforced by Mugabe—engendered instability,

impoverishment, and incapacity for ever paying off the debt.

The proportions of this story get more and more Biblical. The date of the runoff election—following the indecisive results of the Mugabe vs. Tsvangirai presidential election in March—has now been announced for 27 June. In the runoff, pro-Mugabe ZANU-PF paramilitary bands of youth and revolutionary war veterans have been terrorizing villagers and their chiefs and traditional healers, threatening to kill them if village vote tallies go the wrong way. The pro-Tsvangirai opposition MDC claims that 60 of their supporters have thus far been murdered. Just yesterday Mugabe banned Oxfam, Care, and all relief and human rights organizations from doing their work in Zimbabwe, "pending relicensing". Meanwhile he says that his government will distribute massive amounts of food aid to the needy. Reports are that this is being limited to those who promise to vote for Mugabe and his party, letting the opposition starve.

So are these terrorists all patriots fighting to prevent an MDC victory and a return to the colonial policies of Rhodesia and the neocon dreams of total empire? What has been leaking out in the week since the May issue of *BCA Dispatch* is a quiet takeover of the daily running of the government by a junta of generals: Gen Constantine Chiwenga, Air Marshal Perence Shiri, Augustine Chihuri, the national police commissioner, and Gen Paradzai Zimondi, the commander of the prison service. This



Augustine Chihuri

Constantine Chiwenga

according to David Blair, UK *Daily Telegraph* diplomatic editor informed by an anonymous Western diplomat. Shiri "masterminded a brutal military campaign against Zimbabwe's minority Ndebele people in the 1980s." This junta is presumed to see 84-year-old President Robert Mugabe as a sometime revered figurehead useful in maintaining political control. This helps us to understand, in terms other than ego, Mugabe's blithely attending the current food conference in Rome.

So who or what is to blame? That all depends on one's time frame, and the scope of one's "bigger picture". We can go back to Cecil Rhodes and Ian Smith's white supremacy and exploitation or to tribal rivalries, or we can stick with fresh memory. Post-independence, we can note Zimbabwe as a geostrategic gateway between industrialized South Africa and East Africa and the Middle East. We can go back to 1992 with the entrance of the IMF and their structural adjustment loan conditions. The economic and health trends from independence up to that date looked good, but plummeted afterward. We can finger Mugabe's quirky, autocratic mode of governance. We can track overall impacts by following migration statistics. Explanations appear complicated and uncertain. Having read John Perkins' *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, one wonders if undercover, US-based, corporate imperial agents didn't have something to do with it. ■

"I Knew JFK...and Believe Me... Obama's the Better Leader"—Gore Vidal

by Melvyn Bragg, *The Times Online/UK*, 18 May, 2008

At 82, Gore Vidal has reached an enviable position: he is an influential man of letters, a political activist, a scion of the New World aristocracy and a friend of the powerful and famous, including the Clintons.

So what does he think of Hillary Clinton's stated intention to fight on to the bitter end for the Democratic presidential nomination? The reply is instant and searing: "I think her strategy is more or less insane." He continues: "I'd always rather liked her. She's a perfectly able lawyer . . . But this long campaign, this daily search for the grail, has driven her crazy."

In his view Barack Obama has won; and if the nomination is taken away from him, "I fear what our black population might do. There has never been a revolution of blacks—yet".

During the Clinton administration, Vidal admired Bill's understanding of the poor and of black people. His devotion to the Clintons has now been laid aside, however. By clinging on to her campaign, waiting for the small chance that Obama will make a terminal mistake, Hillary has crossed a line, he believes.

As for Obama, Vidal has taken time to warm to him. "I liked the idea of him, but he never managed to get my interest. I was brought around by his overall intelligence—specifically when he did his speech on race and religion." In Vidal's opinion, "he's our best demagogue since Huey Long or Martin Luther King".

I ask if he thinks Obama has a similar charisma to that of John F Kennedy, whom Vidal got to know because he was related to his wife, Jackie. "I never believed in Jack's charisma," Vidal says shortly. JFK, he believes, was "one of our worst presidents"; Bobby, his brother, was "a phoney, a little Torquemada"; and their father, Joseph, was "a crook—should have been in jail".

So much for Camelot. "But Jack had great charm," he adds. "So has Obama. He's better educated than Jack. And he's been a working senator. Jack never went to the office—he wanted the presidency and his father bought it for him."

There's no guarantee, of course, that the Democrats will triumph later this year, even if Obama does win the nomination. Does he think Obama can beat John McCain?

His views on the man the Democratic candidate will have to beat are even more brutal than his views on Hillary: "You could beat McCain! I've never met anyone in America who has the slightest respect for him. He went to a private school and came bottom of his class. He smashed up his aeroplane and became a prisoner of war, which he is trying to parlay into 'war hero'."

In his view, McCain is "a goddamned fool. He was on television talking about mortgages, and it was quite clear he does not know what a mortgage is. His head rattles as he walks".

However, in Vidal's eyes, McCain is just a symptom of the real malaise affecting America today: the cynical subversion of the US constitution. "The Bush people", he says, "have virtually got rid of Magna Carta and habeas corpus. In a normal republic I would probably have raised an army and overthrown them. It will take a hundred years to put it all back."

By now he has worked himself up to a crisp fury: "Those neocons, lawyers, the big corporations—worse than that, extremists—want to get rid of the great power of oversight of the executive. See what they'll try to do to Obama. They're crooks. They're just gangsters. They are the enemy of the United States.

There's no such thing as a war on terrorism. It's idiotic. There are slogans. It's advertising, which is the only art form we've invented and developed. It's lies."

Vidal has never been less than fully engaged with the politics of his country—but he seems angrier than I have ever seen him before. This may be because he has returned to live in the States only recently, after spending more than 30 years in Italy. He seems revived and refreshed by his furious reengagement with American politics.

For him, the biggest lie has always been to keep quiet; and the best life-enhancer is to provoke, unsettle, rile—in short, to make people face the truth. He remains a rarity.

Bring the Guard Home VT, RI, Others Challenge Illegal Deployment

by Ben Manski, *Liberty Tree*, Vol 2/4, May 2008

The debate over the Iraq War changed this spring in a simple but profound way. State representatives and senators in Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island have joined Vermonters in drafting and introducing legislation to keep their state Guard units where they belong. With the latest news out of Iraq and Washington DC—that the troop escalation has failed to end the violence and that the Bush administration will attempt to issue additional call-up orders for Guard units this summer and fall—the time is ripe for state action to keep the Guard in the United States.

Liberty Tree has taken on a leadership role in coordinating this new national campaign demanding that state governments "Bring the Guard Home! (It's the law.)". Together with Cities for Peace, Military Families Speak Out, and other key organizations joining weekly, our efforts are already bearing fruit. Media outlets from *Topeka Capital Journal* to *CBS national news* to the *Houston Chronicle* have covered the debate. For the first time Americans are becoming aware of the illegality of National Guard deployments to Iraq. The Vermont debate is educating all of us. We are learning that:

* *The president may call the Guard into National service only after Congress has granted him/her that authority; otherwise the Guard remain under the command of state officials.*

* *The 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force in Iraq (2002 AUMF) was the act of Congress under which the National Guard call-ups for deployment in Iraq have occurred until now.*

* *The 2002 AUMF set a clear mission for the invasion of Iraq, and that mission is over. Saddam Hussein and Iraq are no longer a threat to the U.S. or the region (if they ever were), and the U.N. Security Council resolutions on which the 2002 AUMF was based are no longer relevant.*

* *Some state elected officials are willing to stand up and defend the constitutional guarantee of a federal government of limited powers, and a military designed for national defense, not empire.*

All of this is already coming to light with a simple legislative push that doesn't even challenge the unconstitutionality of the war itself, or challenge the deployment of the Guard for purposes other than those spelled out in the Constitution. All this legislation says is, "Federal government, we're not even telling you that your laws are unconstitutional. We're just insisting that you obey your own laws." Is that such a radical thing to ask? Let's find out. ●

UNASUR—South American Union No Longer Uncle Sam's Backyard Servant

by Xinhua [Chinese news agency], 27 May 2008

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Monday that South American nations will seek a common currency as part of the region's integration efforts following the creation of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) last week.

"We are proceeding so as, in the future, we have a common central bank and a common currency," said Lula in his weekly radio program, noting that this process will "not be fast."

The president highlighted the importance of helping the group's more "economically fragile" members, such as Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. "We have to help them because the stronger the countries in South America economically are, the more tranquility, peace, democracy, trade, companies, jobs, incomes and development," he said.

The Brazilian leader said the creation of Unasur will allow cross-nation construction of railroads, highways, bridges and transmission lines connecting the region, while the alliance will make negotiations with other blocs easier. *[For example, high-speed vehicular corridors are already planned to connect land-locked countries, over formidable Andes mountains, to outside population centers and Pacific and Atlantic port areas. —Ed.]*

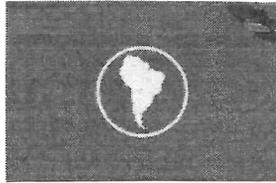
The president said changes will be made on the proposal to create a regional defense council, which the South American leaders failed to agree during a summit in Brasilia on Friday. A working group is expected to analyze the revised proposal in August, he said.

Lula plans to visit Colombia in July and meet Colombian President Alvaro Uribe. Colombia was the only member that opposed the plan to build the regional defense council designed to resolve regional conflicts, promote military cooperation and possibly coordinate joint weapons production in the region.

Uribe has said Colombia is experiencing a difficult time in its fight against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the largest rebel group in the country, and such a regional defense body would not offer solutions to Colombia's problem. *[Surprisingly to Uribe, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is asking FARC—the long-term Marxist insurgents in Colombia—to surrender all hostages and end hostilities. Chavez had negotiated with the FARC during the last three months of 2007. —Ed.]*

The heads of state of 12 South American countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela—signed a treaty last Friday in Brasilia on the creation of Unasur aimed at boosting economic integration and political cohesion in the region.

Ed Comment: Like the European Union (EU), UnaSur includes a parliament which will meet in Cochabamba, Bolivia—the site of masses of poor people driving out Bechtel, the US water privatizers. Unasur headquarters will be in Quito, Ecuador, and its bank in Bogotá, Colombia. Unasur sounds "modern"—similar to the EU—but not "leading"—which would feature for example participatory budgeting, sustainable energy development, and



UNASUR Flag
Yellow on Deep Red

nonviolent security. But we shall see. It may already have a lead over the EU in inclusiveness—integrating indigenous peoples and descendants of European conquerors.

The Protein Myth

Breaking the Beefeater/Milk Complex

by Kathy Freston, Huffington Post. 3 June 2008

When I tell people that I'm a vegan, the most popular question, by far, inevitably follows: "But, how do you get enough protein?"

There it is again—the meat industry's most potent weapon against vegetarianism: the protein myth. And it is just that—a myth. In fact, humans need only 10 percent of the calories we consume to be from protein. Athletes and pregnant women need a little more, but if you're eating enough calories from a varied plant based diet, it's close to impossible to not to get enough.

The way Americans obsess about protein, you'd think protein deficiency was the number one health problem in America. Of course it's not—it's not even on the list of the ailments that doctors are worried about in America or any other countries where basic caloric needs are being met.

What is on the list? Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity—diseases of affluence. Diseases linked to eating animal products. According to the American Dietetic Association, which looked at all of the science on vegetarian diets and found not just that they're healthy, but that they "provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases."

They continue: "Well-planned vegan and other types of vegetarian diets are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including during pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood and adolescence ... Vegetarians have been reported to have lower body mass indices than nonvegetarians, as well as lower rates of death from ischemic heart disease; vegetarians also show lower blood cholesterol levels; lower blood pressure; and lower rates of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and prostate and colon cancer."

Dr. Dean Ornish writes of his *Eat More, Weigh Less* vegetarian diet—the one diet that has passed peer-review for taking weight off and keeping it off for more than 5 years—that in addition to being the one scientifically proven weight loss plan that works long-term, it "may help to prevent a wide variety of other illnesses including breast cancer in women, prostate cancer in men, colon cancer, lung cancer, lymphoma, osteoporosis, diabetes, hypertension, and so on"

So when people ask me about protein, I explain that protein is not a problem on a vegan diet, that the real problems that are plaguing us in the West can be addressed in part with a vegetarian diet, and that I get my protein the same way everyone else does—I eat!

Beans, nuts, seeds, lentils, and whole grains are packed with protein. So are all vegetables as a caloric percentage, though they don't have enough calories to sustain most people as a principal source of sustenance. And these protein sources have some excellent benefits that animal protein does not—they contain plenty of fiber and complex carbohydrates, where meat has none. That's right: Meat has no complex carbs at all, and no fiber. Plant proteins are packed with these essential nutrients.

Plus, since plant-based protein sources don't contain chole-

terol or high amounts of saturated fat, they are much better for you than meat, eggs, and dairy products. It is also worth noting the very strong link between animal protein and a few key diseases, including cancer and osteoporosis.

According to Ornish, "high-protein foods, particularly excessive animal protein, dramatically increase the risk of breast cancer, prostate cancer, heart disease, and many other illnesses. In the short run, they may also cause kidney problems, loss of calcium in the bones, and an unhealthy metabolic state called ketosis in many people."

The cancer connection is spelled out at length in a fantastic book by Cornell scientist T. Colin Campbell, called *The China Study*. Basically, there is overwhelming scientific evidence to implicate that animal protein consumption causes cancer.

And just a few quick anecdotal points: Olympian Carl Lewis has said that his best year of track competition was the first year that he ate a vegan diet (he is still a strong proponent of vegan diets for athletes).

Strength trainer Mike Mahler says, "Becoming a vegan had a profound effect on my training. ... [M]y bench press excelled past 315 pounds, and I noticed that I recovered much faster. My body fat also went down, and I put on 10 pounds of lean muscle in a few months."

Bodybuilder Robert Cheeke advises, "The basics for nutrition are consuming large amounts of fresh green vegetables and a variety of fruits, to load yourself up with vibrant vitamins and minerals."

A few other vegans, all of whom sing the praises of the diet for their athletic performance: Ultimate fighter Mac Danzig, ultramarathoner Scott Jurek, Minnesota Twins pitcher Pat Neshek, Atlanta Hawks Guard Salim Stoudamire, and Kansas City Chiefs tight-end Tony Gonzalez. And let's not forget about tennis star Martina Navratilova, six-time Ironman winner Dave Scott, four-time Mr. Universe Bill Pearl, or Stan Price, the world-record holder in bench press. They are just a few of the successful vegetarian athletes.

Basically, vegans and vegetarians needn't fret about protein, but many Americans do need to worry about their weight, heart disease, cancer, and other ailments—many of which can be addressed by healthier eating, including a vegan or vegetarian diet.

Vegetarians and vegans get all the nutrients our bodies need from plants, and will thus, according to the science, be more likely to maintain a healthy weight and stave off a variety of ailments, from heart disease to cancer.

ACTION ALERT

Comprehensive Fair Trade Bill Huge Bang for Your Lobbying Effort

by Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, 5 June 2008

Key labor, environmental, consumer, family farm and faith groups have endorsed landmark legislation that launches a fair way forward to a new American trade agenda.

The Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act, cosponsored by fair trade champions Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Rep. Mike Michaud (D-Maine), was introduced Wednesday with over 50 House and Senate original cosponsors! This landmark legislation sets forth in concrete, detailed terms a progressive vision for good trade agreements in the future and criteria to renegotiate existing failed pacts like NAFTA and the WTO.

Fifteen years of the NAFTA/WTO model has led to massive job loss, downward pressure on wages and the loss of nearly 300,000 family farms. It's given broad, expansive new rights to foreign corporations to challenge our environmental and public health standards and flooded the U.S. with unsafe imported food and products. And it has devastated developing nations, where millions of family farmers have been forced off their land, and where poverty, despair and desperation-driven mass migrations have grown.

The TRADE Act lays out in detail a new path forward for U.S. trade policy to achieve societal goals such as good jobs, safe food and promotion of basic human rights, healthy communities and environmental protection.

Specifically, the TRADE Act lays out what must and must not be in all U.S. trade pacts. What must be included are strongly enforced labor, human rights, environmental, health and national security standards so that corporations can gain the benefits of trade pacts only if they follow the rules needed to ensure trade works for all of us. This will also create incentives to improve conditions in poor countries. What must never again be included are extreme foreign investor protections that promote offshoring and expose our domestic public interest laws to attack, or requirements to privatize or deregulate essential services such as health care, education or social security.

The TRADE Act also requires a review and renegotiation of harmful existing trade pacts, such as NAFTA, CAFTA and the WTO. Additionally, the TRADE Act lays out a new system to replace Fast Track for negotiating and approving trade agreements so Congress and the public have the leverage necessary to ensure future agreements meet the new criteria provided in the legislation.

Please take action today and ask your representative to sign onto the TRADE Act and to replace the NAFTA/WTO model once and for all.

http://action.citizen.org/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=24836 .
[Keep checking www.theAllianceForDemocracy.org]

Regional Note: Original cosponsors (57 plus Sherrod and Michaud) include 6 New Englanders: Reps Tom Allen (ME), Carol Shea-Porter (NH), Bill Delahunt (MA), Stephen Lynch (MA), Rosa DeLauro (CT), and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (RI). Others include Reps Dennis Kucinich, John Conyers, Jesse Jackson Jr., Marcy Kaptur, and Sen. Russ Feingold.

Ed. comment: *Maine's Congressman Mike Michaud—along with Ohio's Senator Sherrod Brown—have recognized that the time is ripe for change affecting both Americans and people everywhere in the world. Both hail from working-class districts. Michaud's sponsorship of the TRADE bill is auspicious because he is a conservative "Blue Dog" Democrat—possibly therefore gaining broader support from the House majority.*

Apart from all the good features mentioned by Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, above, your editor likes the nonbinding provision in the bill which allows states to opt out of various requirements of the bill, apparently moving toward state or regional autonomy while not hurting the progressive impact of the bill across the country and the world:

Section 8 (6): "It is the sense of Congress that if Congress considers legislation to provide for special procedures for the consideration of bills to implement trade agreements, that legislation shall include....a process by which (A) a State may give informed consent to be bound by nontariff provisions in a trade agreement that relate to investment, the service sector, and procurement; and (B) that prevents a State from being bound by the provisions described in subparagraph (A) if the State has not consented."

ENDGAME (Continued from Page 1)

they think it's a real shame that they can't use that play-book. They'll probably have to live with, you know, smearing and demonizing Obama.

But let's understand something about the race to come. Let's assume it's going to be Obama. There will be all kinds of racist innuendo and outright lying about him. The purpose of that stuff is not to get John McCain elected. The purpose of that kind of dark propaganda is not to woo voters to McCain's side. The purpose is to provide a rationale to explain how it is that John McCain could win, you know, to everybody's amazement. This is a guy who—I will say with confidence—can't win an election legitimately in this country. He can't—not with the economy in the shape it's in. And here's a guy who practically wears a sandwich-board that says "I don't know anything about economics." People aren't going to vote for that. Not with the war we're in, which he staunchly champions. And not with a candidate who has a "senior moment" at least once a day, although those moments tend not to get reported.

Rigging the Election

He can't run legitimately, which means that the Republican party will have to steal the election yet again, and they're in a very good position to do this. If the media were doing it's job, they would have made clear to us by now that the election system in this country is in even greater shambles than it was in the last election, and the Republican party, which is pretty much the same thing as the Bush regime, has been taking a lot of very meaningful steps to prevent a Democratic victory in the fall—or at least let's say this—to make it that much less likely that enough Democrats could either register to vote or have their votes counted for a Democratic victory to emerge.

We all know about the Indiana photo ID law, that the Supreme Court upheld, which will significantly narrow the franchise in Indiana by requiring people to have state-issued photo IDs which a lot of poorer Indianans can't afford. Now there's talk in Missouri about a law requiring people to have proof of citizenship in order to vote. All this stuff represents a return to some of the worst exclusionary practices of the 19th Century, but the fact is that they do these things—the Republicans—for a reason. They do them because they work.

The Department of Justice has been pressuring states nationwide to conduct voter purges in Democratic districts only. This has been ongoing. The DOJ has also been pressuring the states to be much stricter in their acceptance of provisional ballots. We have electronic voting machines—the same old machines—in most of the country now, and I could go on. The fact is they're in a very good position to steal it. This means that people must be prepared to get out there and vote. If there's a high turnout it's that much harder to overcome through fraudulent means.

And people must also monitor the election wherever they live really, really aggressively, and make a tremendous amount of noise when things go wrong. In order to monitor the election effectively you have to know your rights and you have to know the election laws—the regulations. First of all, make sure you're duly registered and that you have proof of your own registration. You also ought to bring a cell phone or a video camera and collect visual evidence of whatever it is that's going on there. You might want to stand outside the polling place and jot down people's accounts of what they've gone through, because I suspect you're going to be with a lot of people who show up to vote expecting to vote and are told they can't. We need records of

that sort of thing.

We have to be psychologically prepared for yet another Republican win, because if we are thus prepared, we'll be that much less likely to collapse when it happens. Remember 2004, after Kerry's very swift concession, a whole lot of people in this country just kinda collapsed. They just threw in the towel and slunk away defeated and felt outnumbered by the far right—which was a big mistake, because it wasn't true. And worse yet it just sapped everybody's willingness to resist or protest. This time I think the fight will start on election day, not end then. Therefore people have to be fit for that.

Now, I wish that were the end of this commentary. I wish I could stop there. But I have to open it out onto further and darker territory. Because the fact of the matter is that this regime cannot afford to give up power—they can't. Not only do they crave power—you know, as all power-mongers do—but they can't afford to give up power because they are extremely vulnerable to prosecution on many fronts. These people have broken a lot of major laws. I mean, they are multiple felons and they're looking at serious jail time. I mean they've committed war crimes. It's arguable that they have committed treason, you know, by outing Valerie Plame and so on. Any thorough investigation of what these people have been up to is going to reveal, I think, staggering lists of crimes that will probably surprise even people like me, once they've seen the light of day. So they have a very good reason to try to steal the election. However, you can't steal *any* election. If they can't get within 10 points of "winning" over Obama, they're going to have to do something else. I wish I were only speculating, but if you've been following the news as carefully as one should you will know that this regime has lately been taking some very serious steps in the direction of martial law. (END OF PART 1)

Martial Law

Bush recently signed National Security Presidential Directive 51 which now concentrates the responsibility for planning continuity of government after a catastrophic attack in the White House. Since the Reagan years that kind of planning was the responsibility of FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Administration. FEMA was, back in the '80s through the '90s, a very competent agency. We all know what it's become under Bush—how it performed in New Orleans—and it's been folded into the Department of Homeland Security. Well, what Bush has recently done is to give the responsibility for planning after a catastrophic attack to himself and his close aides.

Representative Peter DeFazio, Democrat from Oregon, is on the Homeland Security Committee in the House, and he asked to see the plan that the White House has drawn up. He has a security clearance—he is supposed to be allowed to see things like that, and the White House said "No, you can't see it." What reason did they give for refusing to let a congressman see this? They didn't give a reason. I guess when you're emperor you don't have to give reasons. We don't know what they're planning, but whatever it is, it's bad enough so that a congressman wasn't allowed to see the details.

And in fact there have been martial law exercises carried out over the last couple of months. Just some weeks ago in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee the military, along with local law enforcement officials, carried out what a sheriff's deputy described as martial law planning. There was a big mock evacuation exercise just carried out near Washington DC. You may have heard about a big surge of mass arrests in Iowa recently. The INS among other entities raided a kosher butchery and

arrested hundreds of people. I've seen reports of 300 people arrested; I've seen reports of 800 people arrested. The fact that FEMA was one of the agencies present for the mass arrests in Iowa along with a whole lot of other federal agencies suggests that the government saw this as an exercise, a drill, in how to process hundreds of suspects. The same thing is the case with these martial law exercises in the three states I mentioned earlier these ought to be understood as preparatory drills by law enforcement teams that aren't necessarily experienced at working together and that aren't used to conducting these kinds of police operations on American soil. They also serve to some extent to get people used to this kind of thing. Which violates the Posse Comitatus law: you're not supposed to use the American military to conduct police operations on American soil. This has been the law of the land for about 130 years. But routinizing these kinds of operations and reporting them in the local media makes people more inclined to sorta shrug them off.

Now Kellogg Brown & Root has long completed its contract for building detention facilities in rural areas of the country. And the official reason given for all that is that in the event of an "immigration crisis", as they put it, they're gonna want to put people in those facilities.

Now there's more. Rush Limbaugh has lately called for riots in Denver, you know, outside the Democratic national convention. He's harking back to the good old days of 1968 when we all know happened in Chicago at that Democratic national convention. Here is one of the party's top propaganda mouthpieces calling for riots, you know, tongue in cheek. I can easily picture *agents provocateurs* rioting in Denver 1968, at the very least to create a very discordant spectacle that can play endlessly on the news, and that will then function as another rationale for why Obama "loses" in November.

Prepare for "Emergency"

But I don't know why we should stop there. We've heard from way out on the right wing—like the furthest fringes of the right wing—a line that Obama will contest the election and that this will lead to race riots coast to coast. Well, that could simply be a right wing fantasy. But it could also be a glimpse into the strategy of how it is that they will—I dunno, you know—crack down. Postpone the election. These people are eminently capable of striking at Iran for example sometime in October and then, I dunno, maybe having to suffer through a major terrorist attack on American soil. Some people have talked about assassination. These are things that I take no pleasure in talking about. And they do indeed sound like crackpot ravings. But understand this:

This is a regime whose leaders are capable of anything. They're capable of stealing elections. They're capable of lying us into a war. They're capable of letting a whole major US city drown, and then do nothing about it, to this very day. They're capable of outing a crucial CIA officer who was tracking weapons of mass destruction that were headed for the United States. What is it that they would not do?

Now, I don't say this because, you know, I want people to freak out or stay home and lock the door. On the contrary, I say this because it's crucial for us all to keep our heads, and have our eyes wide open. If these things take us by surprise we are that much more vulnerable to being manipulated—pushed around—maybe with fatal consequences. If however, we can be well aware of the nature of the people in charge, and not be surprised by the steps they take, we'll be strengthened by that kind of preparation and we'll be able to resist. And I'm afraid

that at this point resistance is something that we should all be thinking about very seriously.

Mark Crispin Miller is professor of media studies at New York University, and author of Fooled Again: How the Right Stole the Election (2005) and Cruel and Unusual: Bush Cheney's New World Order (2004).

Hunger Strikers vs. Star Wars

Maine Joins Czechs in Chain Resistance

by Bruce Gagnon, space4peace.blogspot.com, 2 June 2008

Recognizing that the U.S. is determined to twist the arm of the Czech government into submission to accept the deployment of the provocative "missile defense" radar, Jan Tamas and Jan Bednar are urging others around the world to help expand this effort.

They say, "Today at midnight we will suspend our hunger strike; however, a chain hunger strike will start in our country at the same time, when various people covering the whole social spectrum will be symbolically fasting for 24 hours. Tomorrow, a dissident, former Charter 77 and Independent Movement Activist, Peter Uhl will strike for us. In the following days the relay will be taken over by, among others, the sociologist Jan Keller, artist Anna Geislerova, Senator Alena Gajduskova, member of the Czech Academy of Science Petr Pokorny, Member of Parliament Olga Zubova, journalist Jakub Patocka, artist Lenka Vlasakova, radio editor Jeronym Janicek, and many others."

"On an international level, for example Dennis Kucinich, member of the U.S. House of Representatives, continues fighting, as well as the U.S. Green Party presidential candidate, Cynthia McKinney. Here in the EU we have a meeting on this topic with the vice-president of the European Parliament, Luisa Morgantini next Thursday, who has promised to open a discussion on this topic in the European parliament. Today, Giorgio Schultze, the spokesperson for New Humanism in Europe, who is starting an open-ended hunger strike with the aim of getting a clear EU statement on this U.S. plan, takes the relay baton from us into Europe. Apart from this, hunger strikes to support our struggle are on going in Australia, the USA, Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria."

"All of you, who agree with our protest, can help us to spread it further and **join the 22nd June one-day worldwide hunger strike** against the Star Wars system, part of which is the planned base in the Czech Republic. This protest is the reaction to our hunger strike, and it is its strong follow-up on a world-wide level. It is already clear that people from all continents will participate."

So our Czech friends are challenging all of us to step up. It is obvious that instead of winding down, this effort against the radar is expanding and each of us can now play a role by joining the hunger strike for one day or more and by helping to spread the word to our organizations and personal networks.

Last Sunday here in Bath, Maine, the Rev. Bill Bliss spoke about the hunger strike as the theme of his sermon at his United Church of Christ. Others have been urging people to sign the on-line petition at <http://www.nonviolence.cz/> Still others are writing letters to the editor of their newspaper and planning to hold public vigils. [Bruce Gagnon continues his fast—box p.8.]

In the coming days the U.S. government will once again be debating their annual Pentagon spending appropriations. The

military budget will be well over \$600 billion in the coming year and the largest single project is for Star Wars "research and development." Now is the time for those who live in the U.S. to be calling on Congress to defund Star Wars.

This campaign is growing daily as people worldwide learn more about U.S. plans to move the arms race into space.

The aerospace industry often brags that Star Wars will be the largest industrial project in the history of the planet. But in order to make it so they must first drag other countries like the Czech Republic, Poland, Japan, South Korea, Britain, Italy, Canada, Australia, and others into the program.

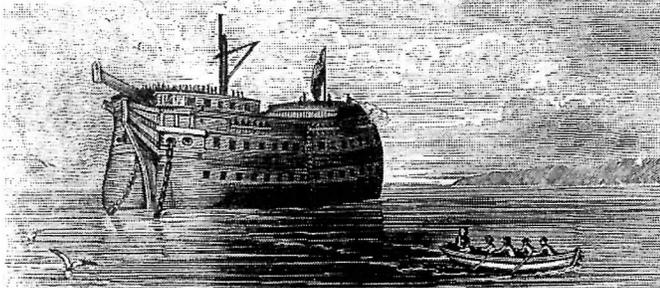
The resistance we are now seeing from the Czech Republic must be matched with similar efforts all over if we hope to have the resources to effectively deal with climate change and maintain social progress in our communities.

We must join the fight now to keep space for peace.

[I will join the 24-hour hunger strike on 22 June. —Ed.]

PRISON SHIP (Continued from Page 1)

If President Bush read a few history books, he would not be condemned to repeat so many of history's mistakes. He would know, for example, that prison hulks were one of the horrors of the American revolutionary war, when more American POWs died in British prison ships than in every battle in the war combined.



While it may take years for the US courts to reunite all the ghost prisoners with the rule of law, the issue is far clearer for the authorities in Europe: it is entirely illegal for the UK or any other European state to provide any support for kidnap ships. Indeed, in the waning days of the Bush administration, any wise European government will distance itself as rapidly and as publicly as possible from such repellent practices.

Clive Stafford Smith is the founder of Reprieve and has spent 25 years working on behalf of defendants facing the death penalty in the USA.

CHAPTER NEWS (Continued from Page 1)

BCA and the *Dispatch* welcome new members, many already friends of the Alliance for Democracy: **Mark Archambault** (Nashua NH), **Barbara Barbour** (Goffstown NH), **Karen Barker** (Laconia NH), **Warren Chamberlain** (Holliston MA), **Dallas Cline** (St. Johnsbury VT), **Ruth Harvey** (Cambridge MA), **Herb Hoffman** (Ogunquit ME), **James Kent** (Somerville MA), **Steve Kouzounas** (Saco ME), **Richard Krushnic** (Newton MA), **Cynthia & Hugo Liepmann** (Randolph Ctr VT), **Janet Mangini** (Boston MA), **Daniel Moore** (Newton Falls OH), **Ramsay Raymond** (Concord MA), **Kirkpatrick Sale** (Cold Spring NY), **Eleanor Simons** (St. Johnsbury VT), **Jon Walker** (Allston MA).

After a minor stroke, **Milt Raymond** is building a big tricycle to replace his motorized bike. **Felix Arroyo** was struck by a vehicle while visiting inlaws in Venezuela—we wish him a rapid recovery.

Day 12 of my solidarity hunger strike INVITING YOU TO FAST ON JUNE 22

I got an email this morning from a friend in Maine who I knew when we both used to live in Florida. She is asking her friends to join her in the June 22 day of fasting in solidarity with people in the Czech Republic. A second friend in Maine wrote me saying he was going to fast that day as well. A woman from Gainesville, Florida wrote today to say she will strike from June 16-23.

This hunger strike has been very hard for me but at the same time much easier than I would have expected. I don't think I could have ever come this far on my own. But having the inspiration of knowing that the strike is connected to something larger, something important that I really believe in, has made it almost easy for me at times.

If you decide to join this hunger strike against Star Wars on June 22, or even for longer, please just remember one thing. It is a political act. As you strike please find 1-2 things you can do to make public your reasons for acting. Write a letter to your newspaper, to the politicians, share your story with others, stand on a street with a sign, speak up at church or at a meeting and tell people what you are doing, climb to the top of the tallest building around and drop a 20-foot banner (just don't fall).

—Bruce Gagnon, Global Network, Brunswick ME.
(207) 443-9502 globalnet@mindspring.com

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.)

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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