

Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

APRIL 2004

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IRAQ: The Unnecessary War, Dishonestly Promoted and Incompetently Waged, while the Fight against al-Qaida Was Neglected before 9/11 and Sidetracked in 2003

by Bud Narveson

It is hardly necessary to review once again the false and misleading claims that the Bush Administration used to promote and justify its invasion of Iraq.

The "evidence" cited in the speech that Secretary of State Powell made at the United Nations detailing claims of Iraq's "Weapons of Mass Destruction" (which have never been found but which President Bush still as of April 13, 2004 insists are there somewhere) has been fully discredited.

President Bush's accusation that Iraq was seeking to buy uranium from Niger in

Africa was debunked even before the war began.

Claims of stockpiles of poison gas and of biological weapons have proved unfounded.

Yet this alleged "threat" to the U.S. from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was the major justification for the U.S. invasion.

What is only now coming to light is how lightly the Bush Administration took the threat of domestic terrorism from the time it took office until the devastating attacks on New York and Washington on 9/11 2001.

The reluctance of the Bush Administration to allow a full and free investigation of

what was known and done before 9/11 about the threat of terror attacks within the U.S. suggests fears of what may be revealed.

The revelations of former Secretary of Treasury Paul O'Neill and former national coordinator for security, infrastructure protection and counterterrorism Richard Clarke confirm that Bush et al. have good reason for their fears.

Instead of focusing on warnings about threats from al-Qaida, the White House was already looking toward an invasion of Iraq. On January 11, 2004, *CBS News* reported remarks by Ron Suskind, the author, with O'Neill, of *The Price of Loyalty*. "From the

very first instance, it was about Iraq. It was about what we can do to change this regime. Day one, these things were laid and sealed," Suskind told the network.

The same *CBS* report then quoted O'Neill: "It was all about finding a way to do it. That was the tone of it. The president saying 'Go find me a way to do this.' And that came up at this first meeting," said O'Neill, who added that the discussion of Iraq continued at the next National Security Council meeting two days later.

The report then quoted Suskind again:

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Nebraskans for Peace

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Frank Morrison Tribute

by *Becca Kaiser, NFP Outreach Coordinator*

As a young activist new to organizing anti-war events last January, my partner Josh and I looked to community members for support in choosing speakers for the January 18, 2003 March Against the War with Iraq.

Morrison answered his phone and quickly agreed to speak at both the press conference and rally itself, as if he'd been waiting for a platform to express his outrage at the growing imminent invasion of Iraq. And, indeed, he was waiting, for he had already written a 25-page treatise outlining the immorality of going to war with Iraq.

The first time I met Morrison, he arrived at the State Capitol for the news conference, familiar with the marble hallways, and maneuvered his way to the podium. I had been warned about his tendency to carry on at events, but when his turn arrived to speak, everyone listened intently. The strength of his words was only limited by the growing weakness of his aging body. But he stood tall and spoke with passion, his cowboy hat and cane his lone props.

Several days later, January 18, at the March Against the War, which would become one of the largest peace rallies in Nebraska's history, Morrison again arrived to continue spreading the truth. I had run ahead of the march, arriving breathless at the steps of Nebraska Union. As I paused and I looked down the street, I saw the silhouette of Governor Morrison, cowboy hat and cane, walking the two to three blocks to the entrance of the Union. The weather was well below freezing, but Morrison seemed all the more determined. When he addressed the bulging crowd in the Union Ballroom, he was the first speaker to receive a standing ovation. I was struck yet again by the wisdom this man had still to share with Nebraskans. He drew on his past, but was still very aware of the present and future. And he was acutely aware of the impact this war would have locally—talking of how local women's shelters were closing due to budget cuts, predicting the future budget crisis then and there.

As time went on, and the war did indeed start, Morrison's words and life continued to be an inspiration. His commitment to social justice unfolded before me as I learned of his impact and support in many of the organizations I now work with. And ultimately, his lifetime of work and his focused vision for the future will continue to spur this young activist (and her partner) far into the future.

Frank Morrison's Remarks at the January 18, 2003 Anti-War Rally

Future historians will no doubt regard American policy toward Iraq as ridiculous, illegal, immoral folly. First we subsidize a petty dictator who is using poison gas to put down a Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq. Then when he told us he was considering annexing the Emirate of Kuwait, which the British took away from his country, we said nothing till he did it. We then started dropping bombs on his public buildings killing thousands of innocent civilians in a terrorist attack on Baghdad. When the Secretary of State was asked what we were up to, he said it created jobs.

Now, some 12 years later, we decided to cut education, neglect our infrastructure and let thousands of children die of malnutrition and preventable disease to remove him from power. Nobody in his right mind thinks he is a threat to the U.S. We spend millions to send in weapons inspectors to find "weapons of mass destruction." McVey taught us that anyone armed with hate can convert a Ryder Truck and some farm fertilizer into a weapon of mass destruction. A bunch of criminals taught us that airplanes can be used as weapons of mass destruction. Anyone who can think knows that potential weapons of mass destruction exist in all nations on earth. Every chemical lab and disease center knows that they can create weapons of mass destruction. In the case of the ultimate weapon (nuclear), we inform the UN if Saddam does what we are doing, that we will invade his country and kill more people.

We attack people rather than the causes of hate, revenge, greed and violence, which are the parents of terrorism. Our threat of war, which is the ultimate terrorism, creates a more dangerous, irrational, unlawful, and unfair civilization. President Eisenhower gave us a formula to cure this madness and it is high time we used it. Our great nation stands at the crossroads of history. We can teach all humanity how to build a more rational, just and creative civilization or destroy the one we have. That decision is up to you, me and the mass media which control the thinking of our people.



Frank B. Morrison, Sr.
1905-2004

IRAQ: The Unnecessary War

“There are memos. One of them marked, secret, says, ‘Plan for post-Saddam Iraq.’” [<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/01/09/60minutes/printable592330.shtml>] Bush Sought “Way” To Invade Iraq]

This was in January and February of 2001, the Bush team’s first months in office. Worse (for the Bush Administration) was soon to come. On March 25 Richard Clarke appeared before the 9/11 Commission and stated that during their first months in office the Bush team had given terrorism threats a low priority.

Condi Rice Downgraded Anti-Terrorism Officer

Former CIA official Larry C. Johnson says of the Bush Administration’s response to Clarke:

“For starters, Clarke presented a memo to Condi Rice outlining the URGENT (this tag is on the document) threat presented by al-Qaida in January 2001. While Dr. Rice insists she made terrorism a top priority, one of her first decisions in the early days of 2001 was to downgrade Clarke’s position as the

A few days later (March 30), Johnson wrote in another article:

“Remember the furious attacks against Richard Clarke during the past month? Now that we have seen the content of the PDB [President’s Daily Briefing] we know he was telling the truth when he said that President Bush and Condoleezza Rice did not make fighting al-Qaida a priority prior to 9/11.

At a minimum, the details in the 6 August PDB should have motivated Rice to convene a principals’ meeting. Such a meeting would have ensured that all members of the president’s national security team were aware of the information that had been shared with the president. George Bush should have directed the different department heads to report back within one week on any information relevant to the al-Qaida threat. Had he done this there is a high probability that the FBI field agents concerns about Arabs taking flight training would have rung some bells.

There is also a high probability that the operations folks at CIA would

cfm/ID/10224, “Decoding The PDB.” Larry C. Johnson is identified as a member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity. “He served with the CIA from 1985 through 1989 and worked in the State Department’s office of Counter Terrorism from 1989 through 1993. He also is a registered Republican who contributed financially to the Bush Campaign in 2000.”]

Ashcroft Slighted Terrorism Threat

An article in the *Washington Post* reports: “Documents indicate that before Sept. 11, Ashcroft did not give terrorism top billing in his strategic plans for the Justice Department, which includes the FBI. A draft of Ashcroft’s ‘Strategic Plan’ from Aug. 9, 2001, does not put fighting terrorism as one of the department’s seven goals, ranking it as a sub-goal beneath gun violence and drugs.” [“Progress Report” gives source as *Washington Post*, 3/22/04 <<http://www.washington-post.com/wp-dyn/articles/A13541-2004Mar21.html>>]

Bush and Rumsfeld Focused on Iraq

According to the *Washington Post* 1/12/03, six days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President Bush signed a two-and-a-half-page document marked ‘TOP SECRET’ that “directed the Pentagon to begin planning military options for an invasion of Iraq.” This is corroborated by *CBS News*, which reported on 9/4/02 that five hours after the 9/11 attacks, “Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was telling his aides to come up with plans for striking Iraq.” [Progress Report: www.americanprogress.org/site/pp.asp?c=biJRJ8OVF&b=40729]

In an interview in *The Guardian*, Richard Clarke is quoted as saying:

“If you look at the so-called Vulcans group [Bush’s pre-election foreign policy advisors, they] talked about [plans to attack Iraq] publicly in seminars in Washington. They clearly wanted to go after Iraq and they clearly wanted to do this reshaping of the Middle East and they used the tragedy of 9/11 as an excuse to test their theories.”

The interviewer: “Do you think President Bush was already on board

conclusion on page 4

PNAC & IRAQ

“The ‘Project for a New American Century’ (PNAC) is a 90-page document that outlines a radical new strategy for American military and foreign policy. It was published in September of 2000—two months before the presidential election, and a full year before the events of 9/11.

The PNAC was commissioned by several individuals who later came to play key roles in the Bush Administration—including Rumsfeld, Cheney and Wolfowitz—and now guides current U.S. foreign policy. Anyone interested in understanding U.S. policy is sure to find a study of this document invaluable.

A full year before the events of 9/11, it described the need for a new “Pearl Harbor” if the monumental policy changes that it envisions were to quickly be put into effect.

To quote the PNAC: ‘The U.S. has for decades sought to play a more prominent role in Gulf region security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein’ (page 26). Indeed, this is the real reason behind the war in Iraq.”

Forced War: the Project for a New American Century
<http://www.e-thepeople.org/article/28571/view>

“It’s certainly one of the most disturbing and important indications that the government knew the attacks of September 11, 2001, were coming. On that morning, National Public Radio (NPR) was presenting live coverage of the attacks on its show Morning Edition. Host Bob Edwards went to a reporter in the field—David Welna, NPR’s Congressional correspondent—who was in the Capitol building as it was being evacuated. Here is the crucial portion of Welna’s report:

‘I spoke with Congressman Ike Skelton—a Democrat from Missouri and a member of the Armed Services Committee—who said that just recently the Director of the CIA warned that there could be an attack—an imminent attack—on the United States of this nature. So this is not entirely unexpected.’”

[<http://www.thememoryhole.org/tenet-911.htm>]

“If you look at the so-called Vulcans group... they clearly wanted to go after Iraq and they clearly wanted to do this reshaping of the Middle East and they used the tragedy of 9/11 as an excuse to test their theories.”

Richard Clark

National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism. How is that making terrorism an elevated priority? It is not.

Clarke also requested in January 2001 that President Bush convene a meeting of principal Bush officials (e.g., the secretary of state, secretary of defense and the attorney general) but this meeting was postponed by Dr. Rice until Sept. 4, 2001. That seven-month gap represents time that, in retrospect, could have been used to prevent the 9/11 attacks.”

Denver Post, March 25, 2004

have shared the information they had in hand about the presence of al-Qaida operators in the United States.

While Condoleezza Rice is correct that there was no ‘silver bullet’ in that PDB, she conveniently ignores the huge pieces of the puzzle that were in the hands of various members of the U.S. government.

None of these steps were taken. Bush was on vacation and Condi—the smartest woman in Washington, we are told—was asleep at the switch.”

[<http://www.tompaine.com/feature2>.



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when he came to office?"

Clarke: "I think he was. He got his international education from the Vulcans group the previous year. They were people like Richard Perle, Jim Woolsey, Paul Wolfowitz [see sidebar on PNAC & IRAQ on page 3]. They were all espousing this stuff. So he probably had been persuaded. He certainly wasn't hearing any contrary view during this education process." [http://rs.net-hh.de/archiv/22033.htm]

A former deputy coordinator in the State Department, Tom Maertens, now retired, corroborates Clarke's account:

"Clarke was a colleague of mine for 15 months in the White House, under both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Subsequently, I moved to the U.S. State Department as deputy coordinator for counterterrorism, and worked with him and his staff before and after 9/11.

My experience confirms what Clarke relates in his book. The Bush Administration did ignore the threat of terrorism. It was focused on tax cuts, building a ballistic missile system, withdrawing from the ABM Treaty and rejecting the Kyoto Protocol.

Clarke's gutsy insider recounting of events related to 9/11 is an important public service. From my perspective, the Bush Administration has practiced the most cynical, opportunistic form of politics I witnessed in my 28 years in government: hijacking legitimate American outrage and patriotism over 9/11 to conduct a pre-ordained war against Saddam Hussein.

That invasion was then misleadingly packaged as a war on terrorism and used to sell more tax cuts, the USA Patriot Act, oil drilling in ANWR, exemptions to environmental laws and other controversial programs. Those who have opposed the misguided invasion have been labeled appeasers and unpatriotic for failing to support 'the troops' — meaning the president's policies.

As Clarke has observed, the real war is against al-Qaida. Instead, the Bush Administration has involved us in a breath-takingly cynical, unprovoked war against Iraq, under false pretenses, which it now uses to justify the reelection of a president who has violated the public trust.

[Tom Maertens: "Clarke's public service" March 28, 2004 <http://www.startribune.com/stories/15194690189.html>. Maertens also served as a Naval officer during the Vietnam era and a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa. His views appeared in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.]

Bush Used Funds Voted for Afghanistan To Plan Iraq War

The new revelations just keep coming. *CBS News* broadcast an interview with Bob Woodward about his new book *Plan of Attack*, on Bush's secret plans for war on Iraq. The broadcast quotes Woodward as follows:

"And there's this low boil on Iraq until the day before Thanksgiving, Nov. 21, 2001. This is 72 days after 9/11. This is part of this secret history. President Bush, after a National Security Council meeting, takes Don Rumsfeld aside, collars him physically, and takes him into a little cubbyhole room and closes the door and says, 'What have you got in terms of plans for Iraq? What is the status of the war plan? I want you to get on it. I want you to keep it secret.'"

The *CBS* report continues: "Woodward says immediately after that, Rumsfeld told Gen. Tommy Franks to develop a war plan to invade Iraq and remove Saddam - and that Rumsfeld gave Franks a blank check."

In the *CBS* report, Woodward goes on to state:

"Rumsfeld and Franks work out a deal essentially where Franks can spend any money he needs. And so he starts building runways and pipelines and doing all the preparations in Kuwait, specifically to make war possible."

Gets to a point where in July, the end of July 2002, they need \$700 million, a large amount of money for all these tasks. And the president approves it. But Congress doesn't know and it is done. They get the money from a supplemental appropriation for the Afghan War, which Congress has approved. Some people are gonna look at a document called the Constitution which says that no money will be drawn from the Treasury unless appropriated by Congress. Congress was totally in the dark on this."

[http://truthout.org/docs_04/042004A.shtml: "Woodward Shares War Secrets" *CBS News*, Sunday 18 April 2004]

In the light of these revelations (and the absence of any evidence of a connection between al-Qaida and Iraq), what is left of President Bush's claim to have been a resolute leader in the fight against terrorism, either before or after 9/11? What of his claim that he turned to military force in Iraq only as a last resort?

Already we see evidence for what James Madison wrote in 1793: "War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement." (Quoted in Emma Rothschild, "Empire Beware!" *New York Review*, March 25, 2004, p. 37.) What will be the other longer range consequences for the U.S. of Bush's reckless war-making we cannot presently know. But there is ample cause for concern..

Former State Senator Files Lawsuit Over LB 775

John DeCamp Argues That The Tax Break Program Is Unconstitutional

The day before the 2004 legislative session ended, former state senator John DeCamp filed a petition with the Nebraska Supreme Court over LB 775, asserting that the corporate tax incentive program violated the Nebraska State Constitution. Exactly one week later on April 21, the Supreme Court rejected the lawsuit without comment, but DeCamp pledged to refile it in Lancaster County District Court before the end of the month. Printed below is the "memo" he released to the media the day he filed outlining the legal basis for the lawsuit.

Memo from: John DeCamp
April 14, 2004
To: Any who ask.
Re: Direct Action in S. Crt. challenging validity of LB 775

In response to a series of questions pro-pounded to me by various individuals & media as to why I am personally challenging Constitutionality of LB. 775 I respond thus:

FOUR REASONS:

(1) LB 775 is & has been the single most expensive venture ever created by the legislature & has the effect of granting freedom from taxation to entities who are big enough & powerful enough to buy legislation in the Unicameral while dramatically increasing ALL taxes for all other Nebr. taxpayers of modest or average means.

I don't like that—like THOUSANDS of other tax payers, we should say with ONE VOICE: WE ARE MAD AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE. Treat us EQUAL.

(2) Nebraska's financial situation is CRITICAL—with hundreds of millions of dollars of NON-ESCAPABLE obligations being ignored by the legislature while at the same time the legislature via LB 775 allows hundreds of millions of \$\$\$ of NEW obligations/STATE DEBT—to be added. It is all a time-bomb waiting to explode.

Contrary to what the public hears or reads in the press the true 775 story is that just as certain as it is that credit card debts must be paid by individuals, the BILLION DOLLAR PLUS of OBLIGATIONS ALREADY OWED BY NEBRASKA TO THE PRIVILEGED CORPORATIONS in form of "Tax Credits" WILL HAVE TO BE PAID—by YOU & ME.

Thus, the real SHORTFALL is not 3 or 4 hundred million \$ THIS STATE IS OBLIGATED FOR, BUT CLOSER TO TWO

BILLION DOLLARS OF DEBT TAXPAYERS ARE IN DEBT.

Nebraska's founding fathers did a most unusual thing when they created Nebraska's Constitution. They put a special provision in the Constitution forbidding the state from EVER EXTENDING ITS CREDIT OR GOING INTO DEBT—EXACTLY OPPOSITE OF our Federal Government & most other states. If ever the State has gone into DEBT & EXTENDED IT'S CREDIT, IT IS TO THE BIG CORPORATIONS OF THIS STATE VIA A BILLION \$\$ PLUS IN TAX CREDITS. That "Ain't" Right. And it violates our Nebr. Constitution.

(3) Why Me, John DeCamp?

I learned over years as a senator, businessman & human being the truth of that old saying: "All that is necessary for EVIL to SUCCEED, is for Good Men to do NOTHING." Yes, some will condemn me for this action, but they can not accuse me of doing "nothing."

LB 775 has been inflicting super pain & punishment on ALL average & even fairly big-sized & small Nebraska taxpayers for 17 years. All attempts to POLITICALLY modify, correct, or eliminate this pain inflicted on ALL Nebraska TAXPAYERS—except for the Privileged Few—have been to no avail. Neither the GOVERNOR nor enough Legislators have the courage or will or both to undo this horrible sin against Nebraska Taxpayers. So, others must.

To paraphrase a former President: "If not me, then WHO? If not NOW, then WHEN?" For the 17 years of 775's life, I have personally employed all over Nebraska in small & large towns & in a host of businesses from feed mill to livestock production to restaurants & lounges & motels & construction & LEGAL & banking, etc. a yearly average of 30 to 50 NEBRASKANS who live IN Nebr. & help keep the small towns alive; who PAY taxes & raise their families here. Their & my REWARD for this, is to be forced to pay the Big Corporations' taxes also. That hurts.

And I have personally paid what I consider too much in OUTRAGEOUS & EXCESSIVE property taxes, sales taxes, lodging taxes... you name it. At the same time I & half a million other Nebraskans are doing this, a few selected & super-rich giant corporations pay little or no taxes & the taxes they would & should pay are SHIFTED to ME & that half million other Nebraskans. So, I'm mad & I'm not going to take it anymore. And if the legislature & governor will not step up to the plate, then maybe I & others must. It really is that simple.

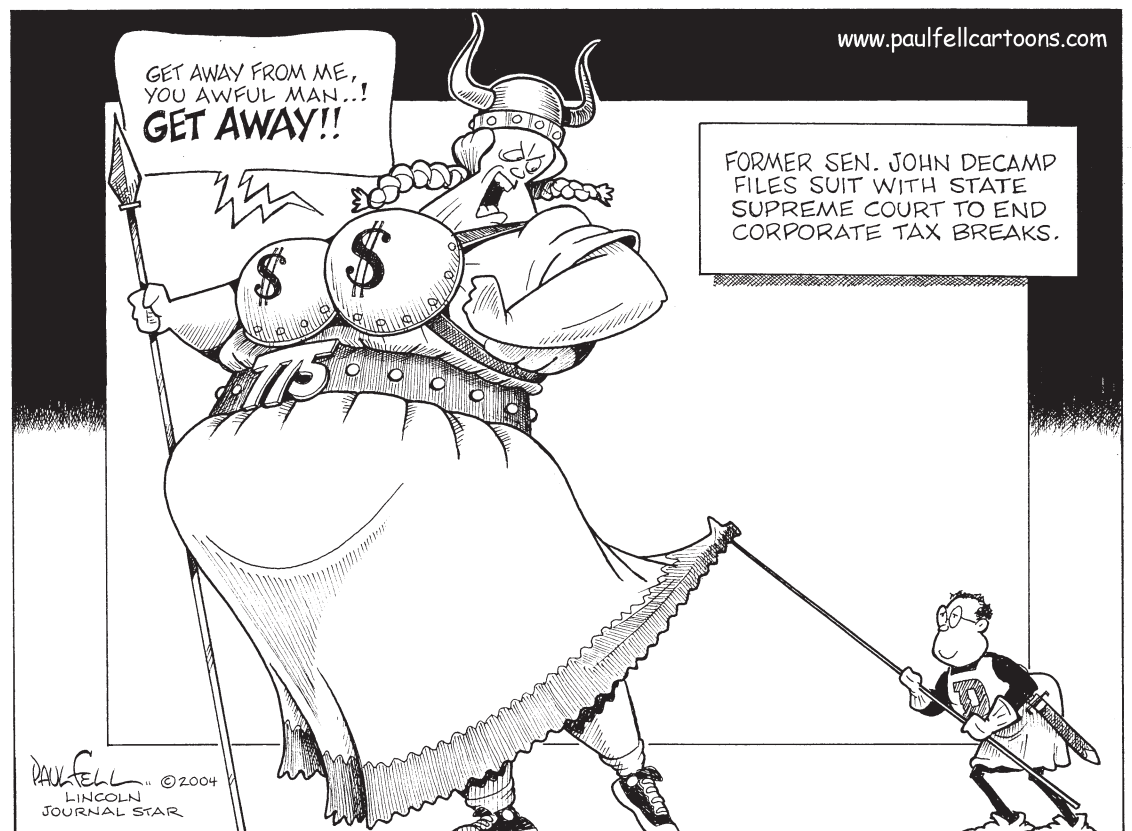
Yes, I know the ALLEGED great achievements of LB 775, but legitimate analysis by truly unbiased & competent ANALYSTS will tell you that the PROMISES & ALLEGED 775 BENEFITS ARE FAR, FAR LESS THAN CLAIMED & THE COSTS TO NEBRASKANS FAR, FAR MORE THAN WE OTHER TAXPAYING NEBRASKANS WERE PROMISED OR TOLD—both in DOLLARS & integrity for our Ne. Political system....and it is time to correct it.

(4) My political & life experience has shown me that when POLITICIANS CREATING ANY TAX SYSTEM allow ABUSES to occur, then the natural consequence is that ABUSES SPREAD

THROUGHOUT ALL THE TAX SYSTEMS. From the politicians the abuses spread to the officials who ENFORCE & IMPLEMENT our VARIOUS TAX SYSTEMS.

My best "PERSONAL" example is abuse in the PROPERTY tax system to make up for lost property taxes. A few years ago, I bought a property in Creighton, Nebr. at public auction attended by approx. 300 people. For 3 years, the County Assessor insisted this property must be assessed at 500 percent or 5 times what I paid publicly for the property. Why, I asked? "The schools need the money because they lost too much already," assessor said. Yes, it is a single example & a small example... but it is what public officials vested with responsibility to get tax money feel free to do when they see creators of the tax system committing horrible abuse. This isn't good.

TODAY, I ATTEMPT THIS ACTION DIRECTLY IN THE NEBR. SUPREME COURT. If S. Crt. decides to not accept the case directly, I will pursue the matter up the chain via the District Court & then to wherever it must go—and believe me, all Nebraskans should also. Because, as goes 775's future, so also goes Nebraska's future—good or bad.



NUKES ARE BACK!

The Bush Administration Plans for the Next (little) Nuclear Wars

by William Adler

This coming fall, downtown Omaha will again be the site a national security space conference—Strategic Space 2004. The sequel to last year's inaugural event, the October 5-7 conference is presented "in support of U.S. Strategic Command" by Space News and the Colorado Springs-based Space Foundation ("a national non-profit organization, which vigorously advances civil, commercial, and national security space endeavors and educational excellence"). Participants will include senior leadership of StratCom, appropriate component and support commands, the aerospace contractor community, federal officials and other leaders.

An exhibit hall and more networking events have been added on the heels of last year's "sold-out" attendance. But, as the advance publicity stresses, "the primary objective remains the same: fostering relationships and understanding among the command and its constituencies in support of America's strategic forces."

Relationships and understanding will undoubtedly be fostered during the Opening Ceremony co-sponsored by the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce; during the Opening Reception co-sponsored by Northrop Grumman; during a Wednesday Networking Luncheon co-sponsored by The Boeing Company and Booz Allen Hamilton; during a Continental Breakfast co-sponsored by Raytheon Company; and during the Keynote Luncheon co-sponsored by Lockheed Martin. Additional sponsors include ATK Alliant Tech Systems, Analytical Graphics, Inc., Computer Sciences Corporation, Honeywell, Space.com, and Space News.

William Adler, a free-lance writer living Austin, Texas, covered the Strategic Space 2003 conference last September and wrote the following account of this "Strangelove-in" in StratCom's backyard. The article originally appeared in the January 16, 2004 Austin Chronicle.



Illustration by Jason Stout/www.jasonstout.com

1830 hours. All are in uniform: the military brass, their crew cuts periscoping above their dress whites or blues or greens; the retired military brass turned defense contractors, in dark suits with American-flag lapel pins, pivoting around the three- and four-star admirals and generals like so many schools of fish; the astronaut in his royal-blue NASA jumpsuit; Miss Nebraska, who teeters winningly, even with aplomb, between high heels and a silver tiara. Several hundred conferees are mingling and mixing over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres on the

ground floor of the Strategic Air & Space Museum, a monument to military aviation on the Nebraska prairie, conveniently located (if you're a cornfield) between Omaha and Lincoln. Across from the two- and three-deep bar, tucked near the escalator well, a trio hangs jazz wallpaper. Over at a corner cocktail table, the wholesome (think young Kevin Costner), teetotaling Nebraskanaut autographs 8-by-10 glossies. "Aim High!" he exhorts.

Welcome to Strategic Space 2003, a three-day Strangelove-in devoted — deeply, hopelessly devoted — to touting the latest and greatest innovations in space warfare.

We're in Omaha, a well-scrubbed town on the west bank of the Missouri River, the fabled Heartland of America. Agribusiness remains front-page news, particularly during the ongoing drought, but the biggest cash crop is not corn or beef or soybeans; it's the military. The largest employer is Offutt Air Force Base, 10 miles south of town. Deep within Offutt, in 14,000 square feet of reinforced steel and concrete, is the nerve center of the U.S. Strategic Command, or StratCom, arguably the world's most important and powerful military installation. StratCom, a co-host of the conference, has long been the command-and-control center for the U.S. military's nuclear-weapons capabilities. In 2002, as part of a Defense Department reorganization, it also assumed responsibilities for U.S. Space Command, giving StratCom control over all U.S. strategic forces. Whether from land, air, sea, or, as these 500 glad-handing conferees would have it, space, if the United States launches a strategic attack, it will do so a grenade's throw from the stage on which Miss Nebraska — a digital flag flapping in the digital breeze on the digital-video screen behind her — belts out "America the Beautiful."

The Pentagon reorganization signifies more than a promotion for the StratCom commander, Adm. James O. Ellis Jr. It also positions StratCom at the center of the Bush Administration's efforts to overhaul nuclear America. Those efforts center on developing a new generation of "usable" nuclear weapons, a topic about which I aspired to learn more during panel discussions on "The Warfighter's Toolkit" and "From [Operation] Iraqi Freedom to Tomorrow's Battlefield." One thing I already knew from the opening reception. War planners not only are rethinking the unthinkable — how and when to use nuclear weapons — they're discussing it. Out loud. Over drinks and cheese balls.

Nukes First, Questions Later

Their discussions are based on the "Nuclear Posture Review," the blueprint for

continued on page

Catholic Workers Challenge Us To Live Out Dorothy Day's War Resistance at StratCom

by John Krejci

Dorothy Day's belief that the Christian Gospel demands not only prayer, but an uncompromising opposition to war—expressed in acts of non-violent protest—was the theme of the Second Annual Midwest Catholic Workers' Resistance Retreat and Witness. I was privileged to join this group of 30 gentle but determined Christian people on March 12 at Holy Family Church in Omaha. The retreat helped me reaffirm why I am still working for social justice as a member of the Catholic Church. Dorothy Day and her contemporary radical Catholic followers are, to me, the faithful remnant that restores some of the credibility that is so lacking in institutional churches today.

The "remnant" who met to prepare themselves spiritually and psychologically to "cross the line" at Offutt AFB in Bellevue (aka StratCom), were a tattered lot. Their appearance was characterized by old flannel shirts, stocking caps, torn jeans, a few body rings, tattoos and hair that would not get the Good Housekeeping Seal. They brought their own food for the weekend, complete with a large chunk of goat cheese. You might call them God's misanthropes or his simple children or perhaps his bold but gentle prophets. I found them to be insightful students of Scripture, who have a passion for justice and the courage to live out their Liberation Theology interpretation of the Gospel. When a scruffy old guy, clad in faded flannel with a soiled ball cap and a guitar slung over his beer belly, began eloquently interpreting John's Gospel in the light of the poor and their struggle for justice, I knew I was participating in something quite spiritual and powerful.

The Catholic Workers completed their weekend retreat with a Sunday morning Mass and a line crossing at Offutt, resulting in eight arrests. My wife, Jean, and I were among the supporters of the eight who risked jail by putting their bodies on the line and making the sacrifice of freedom and reputation to say: "War, particularly nuclear war, is not the way!"

I'd like to augment my brief observations with some extensive quotes from a Sunday, March 21, 2004 feature story by Greg Jarrett that appeared in the *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil* entitled "100 years of peace: Human equity and person sacrifice, Catholic Workers and the peace move-

ment go back nearly a century." He observed the retreat and interviewed participants for his story.

"Every few months, members of the Des Moines Catholic workers go to Offutt and cross the line at the Kinney Gate. Nearly every time, southwest Iowa priest, protest organizer and spokesman Frank Cordaro is there. These people protest in the hopes of showing those in authority as well as the public that war is not a necessary evil, but simply evil. It is not a popular position to take, but one they are willing to stand up for..."

"[At the retreat] members gathered to share insights and philosophy as well as practical tips on living in accordance with Catholic Worker principles and what to do when you are arrested for trespassing on a federal facility to protest for peace.

"Many members of the Catholic Worker Movement would not describe themselves as liberal at all. They are devout believers in the Gospels. They believe strongly in the message of Jesus as delivered in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' They follow the teachings of the Catholic church, particularly the writings of the early fathers and the social encyclicals of the modern popes.

"In short, they are working to bring about what they call in their website (www.catholicworker.org): 'A new society within the shell of the old, a society in which it will be easier to be good. A society with these teachings would have no place for eco-

nomic exploitation or war, for social, gender, religious discrimination, but would be marked by a cooperative social order without extremes of wealth and poverty and a nonviolent approach to legitimate defense and conflict resolution.'

"Yet the Catholic Worker Movement is not so much an organization with a central leadership as it seems to be a general philosophy around which like-minded people tend to gather..."

"Community workers run soup kitchens, plant gardens, build parks, and make no bones about opposing war, militarism, discrimination, and extremes in wealth and poverty. They often get their point across through the American tradition of civil disobedience. They cross lines frequently, bang on planes occasionally, and they do hard time for it in federal prisons..."

"'We're commissioned by the Gospel to do these things and follow in the footsteps of Dorothy Day.' Cordaro said... 'The price of peace-making is the same today as it's always been: loss of good name, loss of reputation, loss of job, loss of property, loss of freedom, loss of life. If you name any of our heroes, they've all gone through that, and that's why it's unpopular...'

"Cordaro takes a firm stance on right and wrong as it is preached in the Gospels and sees modern Christianity as failing in its essential purpose. 'It is heretical Christianity that preaches from the top where you have power, oppression and wealth,'

Cordaro said, 'And that's no fair reading of the Jesus of the New Testament, but it's the acceptable one because the kind of Christianity that George W. Bush espouses is the one that's been justifying the empire for as long as I remember all my life.'

"'Look at this [Omaha] community. The archdiocese raises its money for Catholic Charities at the SAC Museum. They hold a banquet. They bless and glorify the bomb as if it were a peace-maker and raise money for the poor. That's completely off base. It's idolatry, but nobody speaks to this. So when people come in to speak about what the Gospels are rally all about, they don't like it...'

"Following in the footsteps of Day means a commitment to voluntary poverty, working with street people and the homeless. '[Cordaro continued] 'All of us come from privilege. We're no different from anyone else. We're just trying to make right for ourselves, just a little integrity is all we're looking for...'

"It is not a conventional life, but that is the point. To a member of the Catholic Workers Movement, conventional life is aiding and abetting..."

"Rejection of consumerism is a common theme among Catholic Workers, who see it as part of the American life that adds to what they refer to as our lives of privilege..."

"But it was co-founder Dorothy Day who found herself in the outs with common ideology when she opposed World War I. Frank Cordaro and the other members of the Catholic Worker acknowledge that wanting peace is not enough, that peace takes work.

"'Until people who believe in peace start putting up a little human equity and personal sacrifice behind their words, ain't nobody gonna listen to 'em.' Cordaro said."

I hope that you have been as inspired and encouraged by these words and the Catholic workers as I have been. They present a challenge to us in Nebraskans for Peace. Several of us have begun to accept this challenge by continuing a vigil of protest at the Kinney Gate of Offutt on the 6th or the 9th of each month. On May 9, we will be there from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. to add to the other Mothers' Day protests against war. Join us. For more information call John Krejci at 402-466-8460.



Catholic Workers assembled at StratCom outside Kinney Gate



Jane Goodall

Nebraskans for Peace & the Sandhills Cranes

by John Krejci, President
United Nations Association
Lincoln Chapter 100

What do Jane Goodall, Nebraskans for Peace and the Sandhills Cranes have in common? I learned the answer to that question last month when the most famous chimp expert came to Nebraska Wesleyan and passionately challenged us to join her in her vision of the future.

To relieve your curiosity, what Jane shares with "the oldest statewide Peace & Justice organization" and our annual winged visitors is hope. Hope for the future of the chimp, for the welfare of all animals, (including the human animal), and the survival of the planet which we share.

Jane inspired me to return again to view the migration of the Sandhills Cranes. Every spring for millions of years they have passed through on their journey to breeding and nesting grounds in Canada and Siberia. They fly thousands of miles with the hope of producing a new generation of cranes. I recall about 20 years ago when some of us "Nebraskans" for Peace devotees thought we needed a fresh symbol of hope for our organization. The dove, although still a revered symbol, seemed a bit weary, perhaps due to the long struggle of the Vietnam War. We needed something that would inspire Nebraskans to continue to work for peace and disarmament. I am not sure who came up with the crane—maybe it was former NFP State Coordinator, Larry Zink—it doesn't matter. But when the idea of a Nebraska peace crane was mentioned, it struck a chord. The Hiroshima/Nagasaki peace efforts of Japan and the thousand crane legend harmonized perfectly with our hope for a non-violent world in the future. We adopted the Sandhills crane.

That was 20 years ago. But symbols become routinized. So I was delighted that Jane Goodall refreshed my memory and re-

stored my hope by reminding us of the connection between the crane, world peace, and Nebraska. As the local president of the United Nations Association Chapter, I was further pleased that Jane Goodall was appointed by Kofi Annan as a U.N. Messenger of Peace. I see the United Nations as another sign of hope, battered as it has been in the last year.

I found Goodall's journey as fascinating as it was compelling. I taught anthropology for many years at Kearny State College (now UNK) and used the powerful films made in the 1960s by Jane's then husband. They documented her first observations of chimps in the Gombe Stream Reserve in Tanzania. Chimp social behavior was in many ways similar to humans. Then she stunned the scientific world by showing that chimps not only used tools but made tools—a trait once thought to be unique to humans.

Later we grieved with Jane when she learned that chimps were all too similar to humans in that they had a dark side. They killed other chimps and even ate them in social groups. She further saddened us when she learned that one group of chimps systematically killed another group of chimps in primate warfare. Over the years, she moved on to an intergenerational study of social relations, maternal care, family relations, their "promiscuous" sex life and their struggle with diseases such as polio.

Her love for their near relatives (chimps are genetically 99 percent identical to humans) led her to a great concern for the habitat and survival of chimp species. She founded the Jane Goodall Institute to advance the power of individuals to take informed and compassionate action to improve the environment for all living things. It was in the following decades that she became so committed to the insight that all life—not just that of chimp or endangered species—depends on the fragile environment of our planet for survival. Later she

founded the "Roots and Shoots" educational program for children, which is active in Nebraska. "Roots and Shoots" promotes awareness in children of the fragility of the environment and what each individual can do to ensure the future of both animals and humans by leaving a "light footprint" on our earth.

Goodall concluded her presentation by moving from the environment to the promotion of world peace. As United Nations Messenger of Peace, she reminded us that September 24 is World Peace Day. She urged us to make a large dove and fly it. (Instructions can be found on her website: janegoodall.org.) I promised that we would fly a large peace crane in Nebraska this year.

Evidence of the impact of her "Roots and Shoots" effectiveness in Nebraska was demonstrated by the number of young children who attended her lecture and had the courage to step up to the microphone and asks questions before the 1400 people in the audience. They were living proof that Jane is a role model for young girls who want to become scientists and make their mark in the world.

Jane demonstrated that she lives her vision by promoting dialogue on the environment. The following day, she traveled to rural Nebraska and met with farmers and environmentalists in an attempt to initiate a dialogue between parties interested in the Platte River. This conversation paralleled those she had in Africa between the farmers who need firewood and agricultural production, and environmentalists who want to protect the rainforests. Through communication problems seem less insoluble. She is still seeking a solution to the actions of the logging companies, who are unable to see beyond immediate profits, and continue to decimate the forests.

At Wood River, Nebraska, she initiated a dialogue about the mutual benefits of water being available for both farmers and Sandhills cranes. If the Platte River goes dry,

no one benefits. She repeated what is becoming more and more clear to all of us. Today we make war for oil; in the future war will be waged over water. This led to a brief discussion of our Oglala Aquifer and how we need to protect and preserve it. Like the migration of the cranes, it is one of the wonders of the world.

The dialogue moved from the problems created by "crane tourism" to the benefits that the cranes bring the rural economy. This year I saw a number of viewing blinds that generate some income of the farmers along the Platte River.

In the end, Jane Goodall is a scientist and has faith in humans as problem solvers. She might say that, while we have brains three times the size of chimps, we have created most of the problems and it is up to us to solve them. She also pointed out the resiliency of nature as another reason for hope. She gave the example of a tree in Nagasaki that survived the terrible nuclear bomb of 1945. Nature has been attacked, plundered and polluted, but it has survived and continues to renew itself.

As a backdrop of the presentation was a huge screen on which were projected slides of chimp life. The most moving and comforting one was that of a chimp mother lovingly holding her frightened infant. This is an example for us.

We are holding a vulnerable world in our hands. We have the power to nurture it and help it grow. Jane would say: "We can do it, we must." She is leading the way by example. At age 69, she travels 300 days a year, talking to all those who will listen and raising money for chimps, for habitat, for peace and environmental education. She sees how all these are intimately intertwined. To save the planet we must protect the environment, save the animals and, of course, survive ourselves. We cannot do this without a commitment to peace. Like our symbol, the Sandhills crane, we need to be around each spring "doing our peace" thing.

NUKES ARE BACK!

continued



Illustration by Jason Stout/www.jasonstout.com

the Bush Administration's overhaul of nuclear America. The classified document (portions of which were leaked, initially to the Los Angeles Times, and now reside online at www.globalsecurity.org) urges a fundamental, radical shift from the principles of deterrence and restraint that date to the early days of the Cold War, when a superpower not named the United States also roamed the globe with visions of empire. In August 1949, four years after Harry Truman incinerated the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic bomb. So began the long-lived era under the Cold War cloud of mutually assured destruction: We got nukes, you got nukes; let's do nothing stupid. Non-proliferation treaties, bilateral and multilateral, were signed; nuclear test bans implemented; arms reductions agreed to. But the Soviet Union fell off the map in 1991, and a decade later, 19 men armed with boarding passes and box cutters brought the U.S. to its knees.

Three months after the 9/11 attacks (although clearly in preparation much earlier), the Bush Administration delivered its "Nuclear Posture Review" to Congress. The Pentagon-authored text is couched in recommendations, but its tone and direction are unmistakable. It buries alive all those quaint Cold War holdovers — diplomacy, arms-control treaties, test bans — in some figurative fallout shelter, never to be heard from

again. In their stead, war planners bellow and yearn for a doctrine that strikes first and evades questions later. "The need is clear," the posture review states, "for a revitalized nuclear weapons complex that will be able... if directed, to design, develop, manufacture, and certify new warheads in response to new national requirements."

Every president since Truman relegated the bomb to a category unto itself, to be locked away unless the nation's very survival were at stake. Not so George W. Bush. In the introduction to his Administration's "National Security Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction," Bush wrote that the U.S. "will continue to make it clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force — including potentially nuclear weapons — to the use of WMD against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies" [emphasis added].

In addition to 9/11, two major factors account for the nuclear revival. One is the stream of intelligence indicating that the remaining axis of evildoers (Iran, North Korea) as well as the other Usual Suspects (Syria, Libya) are going deep — building and storing weapons of mass destruction in hard, underground bunkers. Such facilities, the posture review claims, are impervious to conventional weapons. At the top of the weaponeers' wish list, then, are Robust

World Says NO to War

Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha and Scottsbluff join more than 700 cities and towns worldwide

by Malcom Miles

On January 18, 2003 more than 1200 people gathered at the Nebraska Capitol in an attempt to stop the impending invasion of Iraq. That rally was one of many around the world that day linking the pleas of millions for peaceful solutions to governmental conflicts. While the rallies did not stop the United States' stubborn push to invade Iraq, they did help frame an international discourse about the necessity that invasion which continues to this day. As our nation further reflects on what we have done in Iraq, more of our fellow citizens are coming to realize the deceptions used to justify that war and its costs.

In an attempt to continue framing the international discourse, upwards of two million people took to the streets on March 20, 2004, the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. According to United for Peace and Justice, a national peace coalition that helped sponsor the international call to action, over 300 events took place in the United States alone and more than 60 countries held demonstrations.

Nebraska had events in four cities: Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha and Scottsbluff. In Lincoln the rally was sponsored by the Nebraska Coalition for Peace, a group who formed in order to plan the January 18, 2003 rally. The *Lincoln Journal Star* stated that 100 people were on the steps of the capitol but the count I took from the elevated stage was closer to 200.

Following peace songs from local musician Brian "Pickle" Gerkinsmeyer, Becca Kaiser of Nebraskans for Peace kicked off the day by saying "It is clearer than ever that we were right to oppose the war in Iraq." Citing deception, financial costs and, most importantly, the cost in human lives, she called on Americans to continue to stand in opposition to our governments foreign policy. "Not one more day, not one more death, not one more deception," Kaiser told the crowd.

Recognizing that the invasion of Iraq is only one opportunity for peace activists to work for peaceful solutions, three other speakers took turns at the microphones addressing a variety of issues. Farida Ebrahim, a graduate student at UNL who is from Afghanistan, spoke of the ongoing needs of her home country. She pointed to a desperate need in Af-

ghanistan for basic resources, from medicine to food to clothing. The invasion of Iraq has only distracted the United States from helping that country in a humanitarian way.

Chuck Lippsteu, a Lincoln Southeast High School student, spoke of the need for young people to stand up for their beliefs. In his rousing style, he encouraged the many high school students in the audience to become active in their schools and community by speaking out.

Ahmed Ismail, spoke of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. He pointed to the United States support of Israel while they continue to occupy land which has been identified as belonging to Palestinians by treaties and UN resolutions. He told of homes destroyed, jobs lost and farms divided through illegal settlements, the building of a wall and racist checkpoints.

The rally closed with my reading of Allen Ginsberg's anti-war poem "Hum Bom," accompanied by Annie Aspegren on cello. About 50 people from the rally moved to the Women's Club nearby in order to further educate themselves. At the Women's Club was an exhibit of anti-war art by local artists. After contemplating the artwork people broke into four simultaneous workshops. The topics were the so-called USA PATRIOT Act, Nuclear Weapons, Palestine and How to Work for Peace. The workshops were followed by a First District Congressional Candidate Forum. Two anti-war candidates accepted our invitation to talk about why they opposed the war. The candidates were Charlie Matulka and Janet Stewart.

The day was a great success with excellent print, radio and television coverage. It is vital that we all continue to work in our communities on an ongoing basis, not only to oppose war but to promote peace. The Nebraska Coalition for Peace meets every Saturday at 5:00 pm at the Crescent Moon Coffee Shop in Lincoln's Haymarket. The Act to Stop War group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the First United Methodist Church, 69th and Cass, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. For information about the Central Nebraska Peace Workers, contact Charles Richardson at ceryf@alltel.net. If you can't make any of these groups, feel free to start your own community peace group.

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NUKES ARE BACK! continued

Nuclear Earth Penetrators, commonly known as "bunker-busters." These are supposed to burrow where no conventional weapon can — down, down, down through hundreds of feet of hard rock tunnels and reinforced concrete to the presumed command-and-control centers of rogue leaders, and to their stashes of WMDs and ballistic missiles. Only then would they explode, theoretically annihilating only the targeted bunker. But there seems to be a physics conundrum: A low-yield nuke will not burrow deep enough, and a high-yield behemoth, say, anywhere from 100 kilotons (almost five times the force of the Hiroshima bomb that immediately killed 140,000 people) to a megaton, "would likely shower the surrounding region with highly radioactive dust and gas," Robert W. Nelson, a Princeton University physicist, writes in a report for the Federation of American Scientists.

Call it a midlife crisis. When the U.S. nuclear stockpile looks in the mirror, it sees a dowdy, obsolete 20th-century arsenal in need of a 21st-century face lift. That is the second factor driving the Administration toward proliferation. It gets no respect; rogues pay the once fearsome stockpile no mind.



*Teetotaling "Nebraskanaut"
Clayton C. Anderson autographs
8-by-10 glossies with "Aim High!"*

There is no obvious flaw with the 2,000 warheads StratCom maintains on hair-trigger alert, 15-minute launch time. Or with the other 10,000 intact warheads, or the 5,000 more in "strategic reserve." It's just that they're big boppers: high-yield, limited-precision, doomsday nukes that can reduce Moscow to mincemeat but couldn't hit the broad side of a bunker in broad daylight. "If we want to deter an opponent from attacking, the opponent must actually believe our

threats to some degree," Keith B. Payne, an architect of the Bush nuclear blueprint, has written.

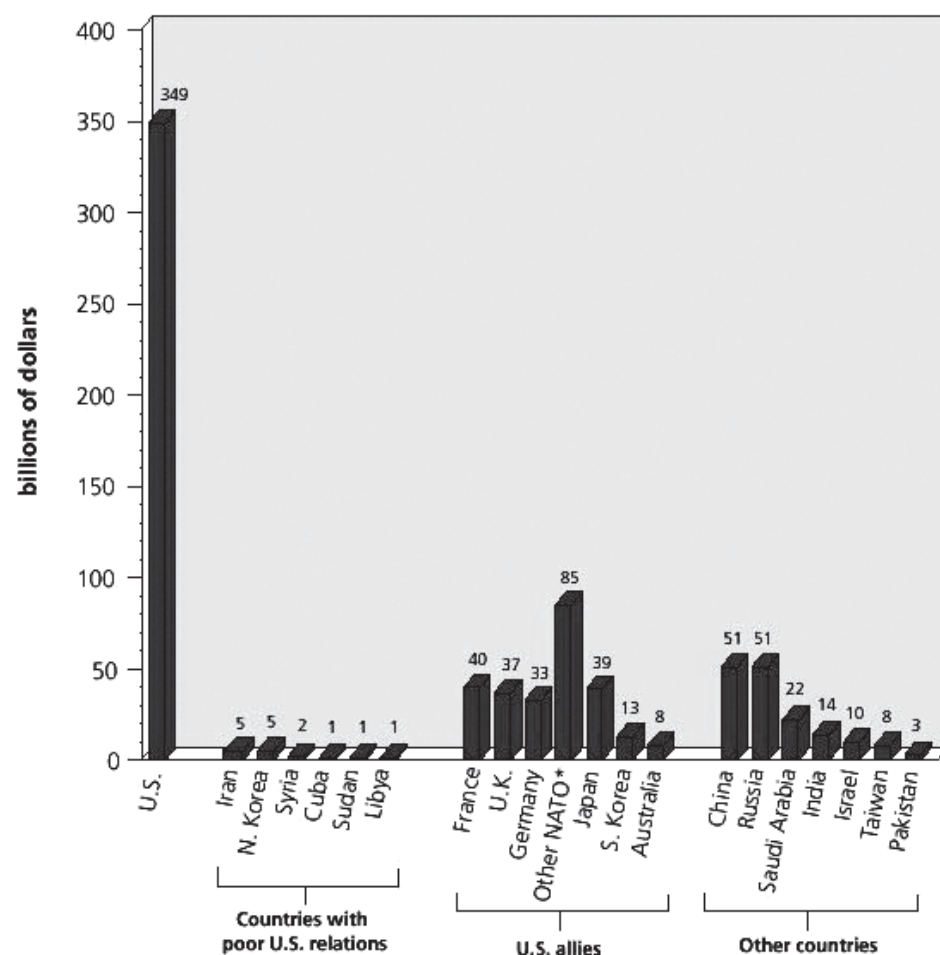
Get 'Em by the Gross

So is smaller better, or at least a more credible deterrent?

"The world of nuclear weapons policy is kind of Alice in Wonderland," says Jay Coghlan, director of Nuclear Watch of New Mexico. "In many ways, the lower the yield of the weapon, the more dangerous the weapon, because it is more likely to be used." That's where mininukes come in. A one-kiloton mininuke (a kiloton equals 1,000 tons of TNT) may sound cuddly — and it is relatively low-yield: about one-13th the force of the Hiroshima bomb. But a one-kiloton warhead would generate a crater roughly the size of the Ground Zero site where the World Trade Center used to stand, and would spew a million cubic feet of radioactive fallout, estimates Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the nonprofit Arms Control Association.

The "Nuclear Posture Review" gives short shrift to such drawbacks. It advertises mininukes (defined as no more than five kilotons) as precision weapons capable of "surgical strikes" that would reduce "collateral damage" from blast, heat, and radiation. A grab bag of uses is envisioned: in retaliation for the use of nuclear weapons, or as reprisal against non-nuclear states for biological or chemical weapons, or, vaguely, "in the event of surprising military developments." That sort of hazy language pervades the document. It may be helpful in preparing for "immediate, potential, or unexpected" contingencies, but critics say it also is a ploy that affords war planners and weapons designers great latitude to take out of it whatever they wish. "It's kind of like a fundamentalist reading the Bible," says Greg Mello, director of the Los Alamos Study Group, a watchdog organization.

In one respect, however, the posture review is unambiguous: It considers the new generation of nukes potential weapons of first resort. Not only does that lower the threshold for using them, it blurs the line between nuclear and conventional weapons. And it vaporizes the international principle, based on nearly 60 years of diplomacy, law, practicality, and morality, that nuclear weapons are exponentially more lethal. "A nuclear weapon is a unique entity," says Jon Wolfsthal, deputy director of the Non-Proliferation Project of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "There is no such thing as a tactical nuclear weapon in the eyes of 99 percent of the world's population."



GLOBAL MILITARY spending comparisons 2002

* Other NATO includes Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey.

Sources: The Military Balance 2003-2004, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003. Budget of the United States Government, FY 2004, Office of Management and Budget. Center for Defense Information.

The problem for nonproliferation advocates and the rest of the world is that the U.S. Congress is at the forefront of the other 1 percent. Despite a summer and fall of hemming and hawing on both sides of the aisle, just before Thanksgiving Congress passed two spending bills that granted virtually every new nuclear weapon program Bush asked for (with some token budget reductions). This includes \$7.5 million to study bunker-busters; \$6 million to research mininukes (last spring, Congress repealed a 10-year-old ban on such research); \$24.9 million to expedite plans for the resumption of underground nuclear testing in Nevada (there have been no such tests since the first President Bush declared a moratorium in 1992); and \$10.8 million to develop the Modern Pit Facility — fedspeak for a new nuclear bomb factory.

During Senate debate on a Democratic amendment to slash funding for nuclear weapons research and development, Dianne

Feinstein, D-Calif., reminded her colleagues that next year the U.S. will spend "more on our military than all of the other 191 nations on the planet combined." She let that astounding statement sink in, and then added: "If we can't protect ourselves without thinking about nuclear weapons, who can?"

The senator's question cuts to the heart of the concern over the Administration's nuclear ambitions. It also demands a further one: By what moral authority can the U.S. expect to stop international proliferation even as it readies record spending — \$6.38 billion in the 2004 fiscal year — for core nuclear weapons research, development, and production programs? As Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., quipped during House debate last spring on nuclear weapons spending, "We are like those that would preach temperance from a barstool."

Feinstein and Markey, both veteran members of Congress, surely understand that

conclusion on next page

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NUKES ARE BACK! conclusion

questions of reckless military spending, immorality, and hypocrisy are irrelevant on Capitol Hill during times of war, even manufactured war. So how about one question more: Do George Bush's nuclear ambitions make for a safer, more secure nation and world?

Staying on Message

I figured by now I knew what I'd hear from the president's oft-quoted proponents and critics, some of whom I spoke with, too. But as the country marches inexorably toward building "usable" nukes, I wondered what the uniformed military — the front-line folks who would actually use the weapons — might be thinking. And so it came to be that StratCom commander Adm. James Ellis' hand, which normally rests on the nation's nuclear button, is squeezing mine.

We are standing in the lobby of the Embassy Suites in downtown Omaha, where the space-cowboy conferees have just emerged

from rousing panels on ballistic missile defense and defense-contractor prognostications on the future of strategic space. It's nearly lunchtime on the final day of the confab, cheer is in the air, and yet this embedded reporter, after three days of exchanging pleasantries about "full-spectrum domination," "global-strike capability," "flight-kill vehicles," "blue force tracking," and so on, cannot escape the voice of George C. Scott's nuke-lovin' Gen. Buck Turgidson in the 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove*. "Mr. President," he began, briefing his commander in chief on the benefits of nuclear war, "I'm not saying we wouldn't get our hair mussed. But I do say... no more than 10 to 20 million killed, tops."

Just as the admiral and I get reacquainted (we'd said hello at the opening-night reception) a Navy captain who keeps a close eye on the admiral pulls him away. Ellis is the luncheon speaker, and even though I'll be late for my flight and am ripe

to kiss Omaha goodbye, I want another crack at him, one of the few people on the planet whose job description includes the capability to destroy it.

Following Ellis' platitude-larded speech, a military flack hustles me and several fellow scribes to a small room for a brief "press availability" with the admiral. Now, finally, was my chance. A local reporter beats me to the punch, asking Ellis if he sees mininukes as part of the solution to fighting terrorism. He ducks. "This conference is not about the 'Nuclear Posture Review,'" he says. "I'd like to stay on message here." He calls on a reporter from a defense industry publication, who lobs a softball. I raise my hand again, but the admiral appears not to notice. After another question or two, the watchful Navy captain thanks us for coming. And then, poof, Adm. Ellis is whisked away, returned, no doubt, to his secure, underground bunker.

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BULLETIN BOARD

Office Hours for the Nebraskans for Peace State Office in Lincoln, at 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on weekdays.

- May 2** "Peace and Justice Expo." An exposition showcasing the wide variety of organizations working for social and economic justice in Nebraska will be held Sunday, May 2 from 1:00-5:00 p.m. at the Milo Bail Student Center on the UNO campus. The expo will offer a great opportunity for organizations to do outreach to the public as well as network with other like-minded groups. The event is free. Contact Steve Thyberg at 402-593-1810 for information on how to participate.
- May 9** Monthly vigil at Kirby Gate at Offutt (StratCom) on the 9th from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. These vigils protest the continued threats of nuclear war and the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. Sponsored by the Catholic Worker house of Des Moines.
- May 11** Nebraska Primary Election

To list an event, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event.

Send to: Nebraskans for Peace, 941 "O" Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508 nfpweb@redjellyfish.net

Like President, Like Governor

Team Bush stalwart Governor Mike Johanns just doesn't know how the heck the state is going to pay for the \$151 million judgment against Nebraska, if the Supreme Court upholds the District Court ruling that the state acted in bad faith when it denied a license to build a low-level nuclear waste dump in Boyd County.

Keeping Nebraskans focused on this judgment serves two purposes for the Governor. First, it allows him to chisel away at U.S. Senator Ben Nelson (Nebraska Governor when the license was denied), whom Johanns wants badly to replace in Congress.

Second, it allows Governor Johanns to turn public scrutiny away from the real source of Nebraska's budget crisis: a lack of a fair and balanced tax policy. In particular, Governor Johanns does not want Nebraskans to understand how Republican tax policy—of giveaways and shelters for the largest corporations—means that the rest of the

working families of the state and the nation are on the hook for way more than our fair share of the cost of supporting state and local government, including public education.

That priceless national treasure, the General Accounting Office, released figures this April indicating that more than 60 percent of U.S. corporations paid no federal taxes at all from 1996 through 2000. About the same percentage of foreign corporations operating in the U.S. also paid no taxes.

The GAO also reported that corporate tax payments as a percentage of federal revenue are the lowest in 20 years, down from 24 percent in 1960 to just 12 percent in 1996. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) reports that share fell further in 2003 to 8 percent and will reach 7.4 percent for 2004.

The GAO study also found that in 2000, 94 percent of U.S. corporations paid taxes amounting to less than 5 percent of their total incomes. You and I, on the other hand, paid about 17 percent of our income in federal taxes. According to Bill Moyer on PBS, some of the very largest, most profitable U.S. corporations paid considerably less.

Giants like GE and IBM paid 13.3 percent and 12.4 percent of their income in

federal taxes, while Microsoft paid just 1.8 percent. No doubt one of the perks of monopolistic practices is a certain tax "efficiency." Automaker Ford paid 5.7 percent in taxes, while competitor GM actually paid received tax credits of 1.2 percent. Arguably two of the worst-run U.S. corporations, WorldCom (now MCI) and Enron were both rocked by accounting scandals, fraud and loss. Worldcom paid just 2.9 percent in corporate income tax; Enron received a 39.5 percent credit.

To make a novel into a comic book, you and I pay about \$4.50 in federal taxes for every \$1 paid by U.S. corporations. According to the CBPP, the downturn in the economy explains only a part of the decline in corporate tax liability. More significant—and growing, according to internal IRS studies—may be aggressive tax avoidance strategies; the IRS indicates that tens of billions of dollars are being "improperly avoided." Meanwhile, the Bush Administration pushed cuts in 2002-2003 primarily benefiting corporations and reducing taxes for businesses by more than \$50 billion.

Enormous deficits, like global warming, aren't just coming. They're already here. A joint study which included the far right Com-

mittee for Economic Development (the Chicago School of thought economists and captains of industry who provided most of the theory to support corporate farming and globalization, to name just two) is projecting deficits totaling \$5 trillion through 2013, and Brookings Institute and Goldman Sachs economists agree.

If the GAO report doesn't scare you, it should. If it doesn't make you mad, it better. Like Republican President, like Republican Governor. Bush defends his tax cuts and Johanns defends LB775. Neither one will give a straight answer or take responsibility for the problems caused by his party's policies. Neither one is interested in either long-range planning for the public good or in addressing the real problems—corporate concentration in markets and in the halls of power—that are gutting our domestic economy and mortgaging our children's future with record deficits for decades to come.

If the GAO report doesn't prompt you to exercise your right to vote Team Bush out of office, you may already be dead.



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin
The real political spectrum isn't right to left... it's top to bottom.