There is no Peace without Justice

The following statement was released to the media October 28 in response to Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald’s announcement of indictments against White House aide Lewis “Scooter” Libby and the continuing investigation of President Bush’s advisor Karl Rove.

This is a sad day for American democracy.

The indictment of Vice President Dick Cheney’s chief of staff and announcement that the grand jury investigation of Karl Rove will continue not only demonstrate that the cover-up about the fabricated intelligence used for going to war reached right up to the White House.

They demonstrate that Congress failed to do its job to protect the American people.

If the House and Senate had acted two years ago to investigate the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame after her husband accused the Bush Administration of “twisting” the intelligence to make a case for invading Iraq, perhaps the deliberate falsifications for launching this war would have been exposed long ago.

If Congress had initiated impeachment proceedings as groups like Nebraskans for Peace for Peace had requested, perhaps we would not now be marking the deaths of 2,000 U.S. soldiers in a war that did not need to be fought.

And if Congress had performed its duties, perhaps the American people would not have voted as they did in November 2004 to reelect this administration to a second term.

But our congressional representatives reneged on their responsibilities and instead made Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald do their work for them.

Important as today’s announcement by Fitzgerald is, for 2,000 American soldiers and their families, it is too little, too late.

For the other 135,000 troops still in Iraq, however, there is still time to act.

Nebraskans for Peace calls on the members of Nebraska federal delegation—including U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel who has been a lone voice challenging the necessity and prosecution of this war—to launch a congressional investigation into the fabrication of intelligence used to promote this war, both to bring those responsible to justice and to try to rectify this tragic situation as quickly as possible.

One hundred and fifty people turned out in Lincoln the evening of October 26 for a candlelight vigil marking the death of the 2000th U.S. soldier in Iraq. Jointly sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace and MoveOn.org, the vigil featured Gold Star mother Becky Henderson reading the names of the 22 Nebraskans who have died so far in the war, including her own son, Matt. As NFP President Mark Vasina stated at the vigil, “Two thousand deaths would be a terrible milestone under any circumstances. But what makes these deaths particularly tragic is that these soldiers died in a war that did not need to be fought.” The above photo was taken by NFP supporter Matt Pearson.

**NFP Statement on the White House CIA Leak Indictments**

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Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraskans for Peace is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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Bolivia: Curiouser and Curiouser

Over the past few years, Bolivia has seen intense activism that has resulted in the resignation of two presidents and that now holds the electoral process hostage. In 2000, protestors in Cochabamba forced out the Bechtel Corporation, which had privatized the water and was charging exorbitant prices, raising rates so high that the poor could not afford water. Then, in 2003, Indians (60 percent of the Bolivian population) ousted president Lozada over his plan to export Bolivian gas to Mexico and California through a Chilean pipeline. Severe government repression during this “Gas War” led to over 50 deaths.

Finally, following a three-week blockade of La Paz by indigenous people protesting hydrocarbon and natural gas policy, President Mesa resigned June 6, 2005. Eduardo Rodriguez is interim president until elections can be held.

Existing contracts with foreign oil companies were signed by corrupt Bolivian leaders, without the approval of Congress. Privatization highly favored multinational oil corporations, giving the government less control over oil and gas revenues, increasing difficulties to service its international debt and bankrupt pension system, and to provide basic services. After privatization, exploration by multinational oil companies discovered massive deposits of natural gas; Bolivia now has the second highest reserves of gas in South America, after Venezuela.

The protesting social movements want a new constitution to re-establish state control over natural resources, increase indigenous rights, and ensure that state benefits don’t just accrue to the urban elites. There are also demands from the elite eastern part of the country, with much of the gas reserves, to accelerate decentralization, possibly turning the country into a federal state.

At issue is equality between departments: those in the west that have suffered economically, and therefore have decreased in size, are struggling against political invisibility and the loss of their voice in government. Meanwhile, the population of wealthy Santa Cruz, in the east, has grown because of an influx of poor people from the impoverished regions.

Elections were set for December 4, 2005, for new members of congress and the presidency. According to law, Congressional seats are to be based on population. Rapid population growth in the Santa Cruz department merits four additional seats in Congress. This growth also means that depressed areas, such as the mining centers of Oruro and Potosí, must forfeit seats. Most Bolivians live in poverty, but anomalous Santa Cruz is the nation’s economic stronghold, harboring much of its natural resources, the businesses controlling them and their revenue. A growing separatist movement thrives in the region. While no one wants to surrender seats, they particularly do not want to give them to Santa Cruz.

The leading candidate for president is coca farmer and activist Evo Morales, leader of the Movement to Socialism, who helped lead the protests in 2000 and 2003. A recent poll put Morales, in the lead with 33 per cent, six points ahead of his nearest rival, former president Jorge Quiroga. Mr. Morales’s pledges to nationalize the gas industry and legalize coca cultivation have caused alarm in Washington, which has conditioned the recent free trade pact (ATPDEA) on a country’s meeting coca eradication and other anti-drug objectives.

Under Bolivian electoral law, unless one candidate wins more than 50 percent, the election will be decided by the new Congress. Clearly, Santa Cruz wants more electoral votes in order to block Morales. So Santa Cruz legislators protested the Dec. 4 election, unsuccessfully demanding four new seats. Congress has been trying to find a compromise. President Rodríguez vowed to quit if elections were delayed. The October 29 deadline to find a compromise passed without an agreement (the Santa Cruz congressional delegation had stormed out of the session and returned home). So the Supreme Court has postponed the elections, because until the issue of seats is resolved, candidates can’t be named, and there will not be time to complete the process before December 4. Observers fear renewed violence before the issue is resolved.

Tired of Paying for War?

Make a Tax-Deductible Gift to the Nebraska Peace Foundation
A Breakdown of StratCom’s New Missions

Nationally known defense analyst Loring Wirbel was a guest speaker at the SOS 2005—Speak Out at StratCom—protest last August. Affiliated with the Colorado Springs-based “Citizens for Peace in Space” and author of Star Wars: U.S. Tools of Space Supremacy (Pluto Press, 2004), Loring Wirbel is one of the few people in the world who has kept up with the dizzying transformations taking place at StratCom. As a special favor to the Nebraska Report, he wrote the following descriptions for each of StratCom’s new missions, in order to help Nebraskans better understand what’s now going on in our own backyard.

**Nuclear Component Command**

**Global Strike Assets:**

Despite the recent integration of conventional-warfighting responsibilities and resources into StratCom, it’s important to remember that the primary mission of StratCom is still control of the nation’s strategic nuclear forces. These consist of intercontinental land-based missiles (reduced to Minuteman III missile fields with retirement of the MX/Peakkeeper), sea-based intercontinental missiles on Trident submarines, and bomber-based, gravity-dropped nuclear bombs.

The most recent tally by the Natural Resources Defense Council lists the U.S. in possession of approximately 5,300 operational warheads, including 4,530 strategic and 780 tactical warheads. (The tactical warheads are not specifically under StratCom control, however, as disappearing, reserved nowadays for only some leftover NATO missions, etc. The stockpile of 10,350 warheads currently not placed on weapons will be reduced to 6,000 by 2012.)

Approximately 1,150 warheads are on 510 ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles); 2,016 warheads are on 336 SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic missiles); and 1,050 are on 115 bombers.

This land-, sea- and air-based delivery system used to constitute the “nuclear triad.” In the most recent Nuclear Posture Review, however, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld talks about a “new triad.” The “offensive weapons” leg of the triad includes all nuclear weapons mentioned above, as well as conventional precision weapons used in “Global Strike.” The second leg of the triad is “defensive weapons,” which include defensive use of electronic jammers and radar, as well as missile defense. The final leg is infrastructure, including communications and intelligence.

**Functional Component Commands**

**Space and Global Strike:**

By putting together the elements of the former U.S. Space Command with new missions for “near-space,” StratCom in essence “manages the planet” by using all space-based intelligence satellites, navigation satellites, and communication satellites ready to support first-strike operations against any country at any time.

StratCom also helps the Air Force and DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) with the “National Aerospace Initiative” an effort to make very fast propulsion jet engines for new breeds of robot planes and near-space vehicles, and to control existing UAVs (robot planes) and microsatellites as a single unified network. The Pentagon wants to be able to send strike planes out from airfields, taking off as a regular airplane would, and reach any point on the Earth’s surface within two hours and then drop bombs, sensors, or robot vehicles at the target. StratCom’s Space and Global Strike Command, under Lt. Gen. Kevin Chilton, will help develop a space plane called FALCON (Force Application for Launch from Continental U.S.). Chilton’s command also will create a new stockpile of Minuteman III missiles, not counted under nuclear treaties, that will be used for instant assault on an adversary using an ad-hoc mix of conventional or nuclear weapons.

**Joint Information Operations Center (JIOC):**

This is a special sub-command operation under Space and Global Strike, operated out of Lackland AFB in Texas, but under Offutt control. According to defense analyst Bill Arkin, it is in charge of a mission called “Global Harvest,” where all kinds of intelligence from all the nation’s intelligence agencies is brought together in “data fusion” experiments, looking for patterns in the data.

When this was done outside StratCom, as with the Army’s Able Danger experiments in 2001, it caused all kinds of bickering among intelligence agencies like Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and National Reconnaissance Office. So on Jan. 10, 2003, President Bush signed a new order putting StratCom in charge of a special “Information Operations Roadmap” at JIOC at Lackland, and in charge of the Defense Intelligence Agency’s “Human Factors Analysis Center” and the National Security Agency’s “Electronic Space Analysis Center.”

In theory, this lets StratCom decide on its own how intelligence information will be “fused” and sent out to military and civilian agencies. Unfortunately, the job of linking JIOC with the intelligence agencies has fallen to Lt. Gen. William Boykin, the undersecretary of defense for intelligence and warfighting support, who was criticized two years ago for his fundamentalist Christian leanings. He did not leave the Pentagon, but remains in charge of JIOC work with intelligence, while Lt. Gen. Kevin Chilton manages this Texas office for Space and Global Strike.

**Integrated Missile Defense:**

That’s right, the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency may be in charge of developing missile defense, but the control of missile defense resources falls under StratCom. Most nuclear strategists will tell you that these weapons have nothing to do with ‘defending the homeland,’ but are involved in making strategic nuclear missiles more protected for the U.S.’s own ‘first-strike’ purposes.

The land-based missiles for the Missile Defense program that have recently gone into the ground in Alaska and California are not officially under StratCom’s control yet, because after 15 months in service they still have not been declared operational (which is another way of saying they don’t work!) However, if there were ever a situation where we wanted to shoot down a questionable space vehicle in orbit or low trajectory, StratCom could take control.

In the meantime, StratCom already oversees such missile-defense components as the sea-based missile-defense missiles based on Aegis cruiser ships, the Defense continued on page 10
Building Diversity within the Peace Movement

by A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon
NFP State Board Member

When we look around at those involved in the peace movement today, we find that most are white folks who are committed to various issues—from domestic issues to national and international issues of peace. At Nebraskans for Peace chapter and board meetings, as well as our Annual Peace Conferences, people of color are largely absent. Why is this? Can it change? Many are asking why the movement does not involve more people of color as leaders and participants. Some ask whether the issues raised and addressed within the movement fail to resonate with people of color. I wish to share my observations on this matter as an African American with many years of experience as an organizer and teacher in Nebraska.

Organizations often seek to broaden their membership by bringing in others as tokens or mascots without giving them any real voice or participation at the table. Malcolm X said 40 years ago that the mere act of sitting at the table does not make you a diner. His words describe the reality of many organizations. Black faces in high places, but voiceless as a toothless bulldog. Such actions, whether motivated by laziness, confusion or public relations, obviously accomplish nothing of value.

Engaging more people of color as active participants in the peace movement requires a fundamental change in the way issues are defined and prioritized within our organizations. It demands real reciprocity by the whites who belong to them. Whites must build political and social capital by joining groups and coalitions that seek to address issues confronting people of color, and then using their diversity network to engage in active listening with people of color and incorporate these issues into the agenda of their peace organizations.

What is needed is a recalibration of how the dominant (white) movement members define peace. Peace is about diversity and inclusiveness—not tokenism. As we strive to make this reality about peace in our societies at large a material fact tomorrow, this fundamental reality must be reflected today within the peace organizations themselves.

The 2005 Annual Peace Conference provided me with many opportunities to observe the need for NFP to expand its focus. During my workshop on diversity in the peace movement one participant suggested that police violence is a real and ongoing problem confronting the African American community, particularly African American males. What are so-called ‘good whites’ doing to address this issue? What is NFP’s organizational response to this most urgent concern of the African American community in Nebraska?

At another conference workshop (on the abusive policies and practices toward Palestinians carried out by the government of Israel), one participant refused to accept the handout provided by the facilitator and for the most part seemed to attend only to ask one question: “What about the suicide bomber?” All the Israeli atrocities cited, including Israeli snipers shooting Palestinians in their homes during specific occupations (as South African whites did to African leaders during the height of Apartheid), appeared not to matter to her. The whole episode reminded me of whites attempting to explain to African Americans the moral justification of lynching based on a black boy whistling at a white woman. Conversations go nowhere if there is no willingness to dialog and no common threads of understanding about the axiom of power.

If the leaders of NFP are serious about the lack of diversity or inclusiveness within the ranks of their organization, then they must take a close look at NFP’s structure and hierarchy. They must also examine their methods and practice of outreach to organizations which focus on issues of immediate concern to people of color. Do we (as whites) change our organizational climate so that people of color will easily recognize that they are welcome? Do we actively recruit people of color to our organization to help us change our faulty thinking? Do we seek out and participate in their groups to learn how to work in their struggles?

Sitting in the church pew during the Peace Conference, I found a songbook next to me titled The Faith That We Sing. I was reluctant to pick it up because I knew that it would include none of the songs with which I am familiar. I knew the songs it contained would bear no resemblance to those written years ago by Stevie Wonder for his Songs in the Key of Life album. Within this songbook lies the essence of the riddle posed by an organization which embraces diversity intellectually and spiritually, but which nonetheless fails to achieve it within its own institutional community. What, after all, can a predominantly white congregation do to speak to my needs and struggles as an African American when it can’t even sing my songs?

If peace activists are serious about involving people of color in greater numbers and at higher levels of commitment, they must change the songbook. They must include songs that address racism, the duality of education in public schools, and the painful frustration of leaders struggling to organize within communities which have no voice. They must recalibrate the movement’s focus so that peace is something that all of us can work on in our respective homes and communities.

We must start with ourselves and seek to engage others in this discussion. When all is said and done the movement can only be sustained by the constant flow of countless worker bees seeking to give peace a chance. If we are not able to discern the issues and ideas that bring us all together to join in this struggle, then our work is not peace work but piecework. Need I say more?

A’Jamal Byndon is the Senior Director for Public Policy at Catholic Charities in Omaha. The host of a monthly Nebraska Public Radio program dealing with issues of diversity and social and economic justice, he is also an Adjunct Professor at UNO.
In gratitude for their lifetimes of service to Peace & Justice, Weston and June Webb were recognized as 2005 Peacemakers of the Year.

L. June Webb has the longer tradition in peacemaking. She, her parents, and other family members have been part of the Central City Friends community since its founding more than a century ago. After a degree from Nebraska Central College, she studied and practiced occupational therapy in California, where she met and married Wes. They moved back to Nebraska in 1953.

Both have been active in a wide range of community activities including, Wes’s long-standing involvement in Veterans for Peace and June’s strong support of world Quakerism and UNICEF. They were an early part of that hardy band of Rural Nebraskans for Peace in the 1960s, when questioning the Vietnam War was even more controversial than opposing the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001-2003. They contributed generously to the initial pool that enabled NFP to hire Nick Meinhardt, NFP’s first full-time coordinator, and continuously active in both the state NFP and the Grand Island Chapter.

Wes represented NFP in the Clergy and Laity delegation to the 1971 Paris Peace talks. He and June later made several trips to Central America in the 1980s to protest U.S. policy there. They contributed for years to support a Quaker school in Belize. Wes died in 2002, after a long bout with cancer.

Always gracious in their bearing and tactful in their presentations, but rock-hard in their convictions, June and Wes have epitomized the best in peacemaking for many, many years. Their award was presented by Don Reeves, NFP’s first president.

Carol Windrum does something that few of us are able to do—she makes her living working for Peace & Justice. An ordained United Methodist minister, she has been the director of the denomination’s Peace with Justice Ministries in Nebraska for more than two decades. Feeling called to act after hearing anti-nuclear activist Dr. Helen Caldicott speak in 1983, she went to the United Methodist bishop in Nebraska with the idea of creating the Peace with Justice Ministries. Initially no more than a volunteer position, the directorship has grown to become a full-time job, regularly taking her across Nebraska to teach and lead workshops at United Methodist congregations. Earlier this year, Carol was recognized nationally for her peace activities when Bread for the World invited her to be an observer at the G-8 Summit in Scotland.

But she also lives a life of Peace & Justice. She and her husband, Tim Fickenscher, have chosen to live in Omaha’s inner city on the near-North side. She has been supported by her husband throughout her work—at times financially and always emotionally. Both Carol and Tim have been involved with NFP for many years. She has previously served on the NFP State Board and the two of them have long been active with the Omaha Chapter. As a person whose convictions and calling led her to dedicate her life to the work of peace, Carol does more than full-time what so many of us can only do occasionally. She was presented her 2005 Peacemaker of the Year Award by NFP State Board member and fellow Omaha Deirdre Routt.

**‘Founders Award’ Presented to First NFP Coordinator**

Mike Shonsey was a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1970 when he was tapped to be the coordinator of a newly formed, statewide anti-war organization that would eventually become “Nebraskans for Peace.” Thirty-five years later, NFP honored this now Cheyenne, Wyoming resident (but still dues-paying Nebraskans for Peace member) with a special “Founders Award.” Due to a family commitment, Mike was unable to personally accept his award at the Annual Peace Conference October 15, but he sent the following letter, which was read aloud by his friend and former NFP Human Rights Coordinator, Suzy Prenger. In the style of “at last, it can now be told,” Mike gives a first-hand account of those formative early days that makes for juicy reading.

Thank you for this recognition. I appreciate the important work done by Nebraskans for Peace and often fondly remember my days with the organization and the people with whom I worked. I am sorry I can’t be there today. I would love to see and talk to Larry, Marg, Kaye, Jack, Paul, Don and others who shared and share a passion for justice and peace.

It was 35 years ago that Fred Schroeder and I met with Don Gall and started putting together the first board. Although I opened the first office, hung up the first sign and did some of the early “heavy lifting,” it was really those who stayed and those who came later who made the organization what it is today. I thank them for their expansive hearts, boundless energy, clear vision, and rooted, solid convictions.

I understand NFP struggles today with where to put its energy. As possibly the first proponent of the idea that NFP should be chiefly about ending a war, specifically Vietnam, I look back at NFP’s history and know it was a good decision to focus the organization on a broader set of issues. I often find myself saddened that the world is not a better place, today. Over these 35 years, because of all the good folks I have known and all the good work they have done, I have optimistically thought the world would be better. Although it is better in many ways, there’s still much to do and NFP’s work in justice, human rights as well as ending another destructive and senseless war is important, vitally so.

So, it has been 35 years, here are some secrets: On the first board we had a spy, who was likely planted by the Lincoln Police Department. I just forgot to tell anybody because it seemed that it wasn’t that big a deal. Maybe even a badge of honor that someone thought we were dangerous and needed watching. Next, for all those who wished Nebraskans for Peace had a different name, it is my fault. I got tired of the wrangling about the name and just had NFP put on the sign. And, most importantly, as a supposedly wild campus radical who was sometimes called an outside agitator because he was from Omaha, I now only dream of long hair.

A last thought. I think NFP is about creating possibilities. Wonderful ones! Thank you for this honor.
Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate


Reviewed by NFP Member Curtis Bryant

This collection of short essays and speeches by University of California at Berkeley linguist George Lakoff is the most useful and fascinating text on politics that I have ever read. As progressive-minded candidates for the Nebraska Legislature and their supporters get ready for next May’s election, I fervently hope they will read “Don’t Think of an Elephant.” Since it is available in libraries and because five of the book’s ten short chapters were previously published on the Web (on www.alternet.org and www.press.uchicago.edu), they may not even need to buy the book.

Of particular interest to Nebraskans for Peace members might be the chapter, “How to Respond to Conservatives.” This offers several practical techniques for talking to conservatives about issues. These are useful for letters to the editor and politicians and maybe even for talks with your Southern Baptist uncle.

What makes Lakoff’s ideas so important is his analysis of the dynamics of political language. Right-wing candidates win not by moving their platforms toward the political center (as many Democrats do— without succeeding), but by speaking the political language. Right-wing candidates get ready for next May’s election, I fervently hope they will read “Don’t Think of an Elephant.” Since it is available in libraries and because five of the book’s ten short chapters were previously published on the Web (on www.alternet.org and www.press.uchicago.edu), they may not even need to buy the book.

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What makes Lakoff’s ideas so important is his analysis of the dynamics of political language. Right-wing candidates win not by moving their platforms toward the political center (as many Democrats do—without succeeding), but by speaking the language of values. This, Lakoff argues, is part of what progressives must learn to do.

Lakoff’s key concept is framing and reframing issues. He defines issue frames as “mental structures that shape the way we see the world” (p. xv). Two examples of frames used by the Right are “tax relief” and “free trade.” Both are tersely phrases but connotate a great deal of meaning. For example, “tax relief” suggests that taxes are an unjustifiable burden to everyone and that those who reduce taxes must be heroes. Because the phrase implies this meaning, the candidate who invokes this frame does not have to say this explicitly. This fact makes frames very effective soundbite material. Alternatively, an opposing candidate who tacitly accepts this framing of taxation stands to lose the election if he or she states opposition to tax relief.

Lakoff’s alternative is reframing the issue in terms of one’s own values. For example, supporters of social services can present taxes as an investment in our nation’s people and their health, education and protection. He points out individuals could not build highways or maintain armed forces with tax refunds.

Another important contribution is Lakoff’s overarching framework of two basic worldviews broadly associated with conservatives and liberals: “strict father” morality and the “nurturant parent” model. Archetypes of these worldviews might be Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., respectively. Although I will not go into Lakoff’s theory in detail, these models helped me understand why the Right can implacably support the growth of corporate power while maintaining a clean conscience. It also helped me understand the logic behind Bush’s appointment of John Bolton as ambassador to the UN; before reading this book, the appointment of a man known for contempt of both the UN and diplomatic tact made no sense to me. I now listen to the news with this framework in mind and find that it often deepens my understanding of policy decisions and politicians’ statements.

Vital tasks for progressives, according to Lakoff, include articulating our values and a compelling moral vision for our country rather than merely listing positions on issues; mastering ‘reframing’ issues; developing a media machine to counter that of the Right; formulating policy strategic initiatives (legislation that would advance progressive values in many domains at once); and remembering—as Thomas Frank observed in his book What’s the Matter with Kansas?—that citizens tend to vote their identities rather than their self-interest.

Which of these tasks could Nebraskans for Peace take on?

The New American Militarism

by Andrew J. Bacevich, Professor of International Relations, Boston University

Oxford University Press, 2005, 272pp., $28.00

Reviewed by NFP State Board Member Jay Schmidt

In the Preface, Professor Andrew Bacevich tells us that he believes both political parties are obsessed with power for its own sake. And that the president has been elevated to the status of a demigod. These are clues to a common theme in the book that no single administration or factor is to blame for our militarism. In the Introduction he states that, “Today as never before Americans are enthralled with military power.” He asserts that this is who we are and what we stand for as a nation. We discount the possibility of other solutions. He agrees with Michael Sherry in his book, In The Shadow of War, that our military action has reshaped every realm of American life. Bacevich seeks in this book to explain why this has happened. He dates our new militarism from the 1960s and our reaction to Vietnam and cultural shifts. He sees several groups who have little else in common contributing to our militarism: military officers, intellectuals, religious leaders, politicians and purveyors of pop culture.

The book then covers these topics. The development of the professional military’s thinking is sufficiently examined. The neoconservative intellectuals are a critical part of our movement to the new militarism. The book covers their concerns from the 1960s as an outside movement reacting to the cultural shift of the time. They are the people who developed these ideas. We are then brought up to the present neconservatives who are now the establishment. There is a summary of the contribution of the militant evangelicals as they give a religious blessing to our militarism. Lacking is the contribution of the mainline churches by their silence on peace issues and such things as celebrating our military personnel. On the political side, President Wilson’s American exceptionalism is noted as landmark doctrine. Then the contributions of administrations from Reagan to the present are well covered. We are also reminded that our government officials are driven by Americans’ lust for ever more affluence and, thus, our ‘need’ to control the Gulf States’ oil. Pop culture’s contribution to our militarism is discussed mostly in terms of movies, but music is a powerful medium among our youth and its has had its militant patriotic and violent lyrics as well as protest songs. The author also mentions the myths we tell ourselves to cover up the failures of war to solve problems and the failings of our economic system.
We will endanger our security at home. We will risk the forfeiture of all that we prize. But then we will rob future generations of their rightful inheritance. We will wreck havoc abroad. The Bush Doctrine stands for ‘first strike’—invasion of other nations, reorganization of military for national defense, and enhancement of alternatives of statecraft. In this context, the Pentagon budget adjusted for inflation is 12 percent larger than the average of the Cold War era. The neoconservatives assert that nothing can be done to stop the Bush Doctrine.

The Porto Alegre Alternative: Direct Democracy in Action

In the May 2005 UN Environment Report, UN Environment Programme, he asked that economic democracy might mean. A partial answer is underway in Brazil. 'We can make these forces “more manageable” and thus save our democracy. The helpful actions and possibilities historically have failed to bring further conflict. But present-day policymakers are not daunted by this historical record; they believe they can transcend it.

The Porto Alegre Alternative: Direct Democracy in Action

Edited by Iain Bruce. London: Pluto, 2004. 161pp. $20.95

Reviewed by最好是我们的城市和国家的人们共同行动，才能改变我们的命运。
Military Recruiters & High School Students
What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Children

by Barbara A. Baier
Lincoln Board of Education Member

Recently, I was contacted by a constituent who was concerned that many of Lincoln’s high school students are being or will be heavily recruited by the military. She asked that I find out what Lincoln Public Schools policy regarding sharing student contact information with the military is. I did conduct that investigation. I share what I found out in the following brief article.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires that the names, addresses and phone numbers of students be provided to military recruiters and institutions of higher education. Additionally, the act gives parents and high school students the ability to request that local school districts not share this information, unless there is parental consent.

The Lincoln Public Schools follows the NCLB Act, and thus, provides a waiver to parents and high school students allowing the school district to keep student contact information from military recruiters and others. LPS has placed information regarding how to access the waiver in each student’s “Important Information” book or student handbook. Verbal announcements regarding the waiver were also given to students at the beginning of the school year.

Generally, you may contact your school’s principal to secure the waiver form.

Be sure to send it as soon as possible to Deb Wilkins, Lincoln Public Schools District Office, Attention: Deb Wilkins, Box 48, 5901 “O” Street, Lincoln, NE 68510 so your child’s name can be tagged on the computer so no information is released.

As an aside, there have been several reports from across the nation of military recruiters aggressively seeking out high school students for recruitment purposes. There have been reports of children being called at home. You wish to consider completing a waiver to prevent this from happening.

Ms. Baier can be reached at 402-475-7291 or bbaier@neb.rr.com.

Meeting Eleanor Roosevelt

Writer and actress Elena Dodd performed a segment of her one-woman show, “Meet Eleanor Roosevelt,” at the 2005 Annual Peace Conference in Lincoln, October 15. Covering the post-World War II period when Mrs. Roosevelt worked on the drafting and adoption of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Dodd’s dramatization gave the audience a feel for the kind of challenges and obstacles she faced in helping to create this landmark document.

Hearing of her struggles more than half a century ago served as a valuable reminder of how critical it is that we ourselves persevere in promoting international cooperation and rule of law, particularly now, in the face of a White House that has shown nothing but contempt for the United Nations.

The “Meet Eleanor Roosevelt” impersonation at the Annual Peace Conference, however, also served to remind Wiltwyck School for Boys in Esopus, New York, Hyde Park was across the river and I was invited to the Roosevelt’s home for a family picnic on one occasion. This picnic included her children and was given for staff and residents at Wiltwyck. Mrs. Roosevelt is pictured here with some of my Mennonite cohorts in Voluntary Service. I was fulfilling my alternative service and Mrs. Roosevelt was very supportive and encouraging of this service to God and Country.”
by Jason Nord

“Pulling Energy out of Thin Air” became the tag line of the Lincoln Electric System’s advertising campaign after the public utility built two wind turbines in Nebraska’s capital city in the late ’90s. Under relentless pressure from the Sustainable Environment and Economic Development (SEED) coalition (of which Nebraskans for Peace was a member), LES finally consented to finance the construction of the turbines but only by means of a voluntary “green tax” assessed against ratepayers who agreed to pay extra on their bill to underwrite the project. The first turbine was erected in December 1998, with the second coming on line in October 1999.

Six years have now passed. America’s energy and environmental problems have worsened. Even oilmen like President Bush have been forced to concede that humans (and the burning of fossil fuels) are contributing to global warming. Privately owned power utilities (like MidAmerican Energy in Omaha) are seizing the opportunity to put up wind farms with hundreds of turbines in neighboring Iowa. But LES still has just two turbines—still being financed by a green tax on willing ratepayers. The Blue Stem Sierra Club Group decided it was time to know why.

This past October, the Blue Stem Group hosted a panel discussion on wind energy development in Nebraska, entitled, “Where Are We now? Where Are We Going?” Panelists included W. Don Nelson, State Director for Sen. Ben Nelson’s office; State Sen. Chris Beutler; John Hansen, President of Nebraska Farmers Union; Mary Harding, Director, Nebraska Public Power District; and Todd Hall, Vice President of Consumer Services at Lincoln Electric System.

Acknowledging Nebraska’s long and proud history of being a one-hundred-percent public power state, W. Don Nelson and John Hansen said that, by developing the state’s wind potential, Nebraska can further ‘democratize’ energy generation in the state. Individual farmers or landowners, they pointed out, could install a wind turbine on her or his property and make an estimated three to four thousand dollars a year in income. To finance a turbine on their property, they could conceivably use federal tax credits or team up with an ‘equity partner,’ presumably a corporation with money to invest. In addition to developing local wind resources throughout the state, such a program would represent an economic bonanza for the state’s ailing rural economy.

Both Todd Hall and Mary Harding concentrated their remarks on the need to continue developing renewable energy within the state’s public power system. Hall noted that LES currently buys extra wind energy produced by a Lincoln resident who operates his own turbine, though the local utility has no official policy saying that they will buy extra energy. The bulk of his remarks, though, centered on the two wind turbines that LES currently operates. He described the special green tax program LES has been using to finance the wind turbines, and the high level of public support the venture originally generated. Despite a massive advertising campaign by LES, interest in the program, he reported, had been steadily waning. Currently, fewer than two percent of LES customers (or about a thousand ratepayers) are opting to pay the extra fee.

The other panelists, however, promptly questioned why a customer should have to pay extra to get cleaner electricity. The public “shouldn’t need a different program,” Harding said, citing that by all accounts there is a vast amount of public support for renewable energy. John Hansen took it a step further, flatly calling LES’s green tax program (in which he, as one of those rare thousand ratepayers, personally numbers) a “dumb way of doing it.” Lincoln’s publicly owned electrical utility also came in for criticism for its record on state energy policy. Throughout his 20-year tenure in the Legislature, Sen. Chris Beutler noted that LES had repeatedly stood in the way of promoting renewable energy development.

Hall, in defense, stated that LES is there to represent the people’s interests, and that if the people disagree with how their money is being spent, the people need to let LES know. That comment, however, seemed to ignore all of the evidence presented by the other panel members about broad public support for wind energy. All polls cited showed a majority of Nebraskans in support of increasing wind technology, with the most commonly cited poll showing public support at being above 90 percent. It is only when people are asked to pay extra—for no noticeable progress—that support tends to fall. If, as Hall asserted, LES is there to protect the public’s interest, perhaps they should pay more attention to respecting the public’s wishes, and less to the revenue generated by their special program.

All this talk of green tax financing schemes and market price per kilowatt, however, ignores the core importance of renewable energy. Far more than economics must be considered if we are to truly serve the public interest. Our dependence on fossil fuels for electricity pollutes the air and the water that all of the species of this earth depend on for survival. Coal and nuclear plants require large amounts of water to cool their machinery; wind turbines, on the other hand, use no water. We still have no truly safe way to process, transport, or store nuclear waste. Furthermore, our climate is changing and, as Mary Harding pointed out, there is no longer any credible doubt that human actions are playing a large part in this change. Our current dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear energy is a destructive habit that our culture dearly needs to kick. And soon.

Sen. Beutler appropriately noted that these negative effects of fossil fuel consumption and nuclear production (termed “externalities” by the industry) are not factored into the costs that are banded about when considering energy policy. Until decreased water and air quality, the physical ailments they cause, plant and animal extinctions, acid rain, and natural calamities caused by our changing climate are added to the ‘cost’ of the fossil energy we use, we are fooling ourselves, harming our environment and cheating our children of their inheritance. Those in positions meant to serve the public, such as Todd Hall, have a responsibility to be proactive about securing a more sensible and safe future for ourselves, our descendants, and the other creatures we share this planet with.

NPPD Director Mary Harding appears to be the type of representative the public deserves. Harding praised the new 60-megawatt wind power station that NPPD has constructed near Ainsworth, though she lamented that few people at NPPD are truly dedicated to promoting renewable energy. Harding did observe that one of the major obstacles standing in the way of significant progress on renewables is state statute, commonly referred to as LB 901. This law mandates that public power in Nebraska must remain cheaper than the power in surrounding states. “Externalities” are, of course, not taken into account when calculating the cost of power. LB 901 therefore hampers any change that might increase energy costs, even if only for the short term. Until LB 901 is removed from the books, Harding warned that serious energy reform in the public sector will be constantly thwarted.

All of the panelists were in agreement that greater public involvement would help speed up Nebraska’s move toward renewable energy. Little positive change is ever carried out until the people force it to happen. Or, as Mary Harding stated, “Democracy works if people get involved.” These changes may include being a local renewable energy entrepreneur, as Nelson and Hansen urged, or putting more pressure on the people who are trusted with making the energy decisions that affect our communities. In the end, the public at large will also need to address this issue on a personal level, by evaluating how our lifestyles can be amended to produce less of a footprint on this world we inhabit.
Letters to NFP . . . Israel/Palestine

As a long-time member of Nebraskans for Peace, I know better than to expect that, in an organization as diverse as ours, everybody is going to agree on everything all the time.

Two recent events though the Peace & Justice Workshop at the October 15 Annual Peace Conference entitled “Occupation and Apartheid: Israeli Policy Toward Palestine” and the recent statement by the Iranian prime minister calling for Israel to be “wiped off the map” compel me to question some parts of NFP’s official position on the Israeli-Palestinian issue published in the January 2005 Nebraska Report.

Position Statement #10

“We call upon the U.S. government to make all military and economic aid to Israel contingent upon conformity with U.N. resolutions and international law.”

Response: The Israeli government is anxious to abide by international law and U.N. resolutions, but there must be an assurance that its citizens will be safe from attack. International law needs to protect Israelis as well as Palestinians. International law has not protected the state of Israel in any of the six wars launched against it since its statehood was granted by the U.N. in 1948. On the very day statehood was declared, Egyptian bombers were already roaring overhead to fulfill the promise to “destroy this infant State.” Palestinians, supported by other Mideast countries, were attempting to do the same on the ground.

The primary obligation of any democratic country is to protect its citizens. Israel prefers with the approval of the international community, but if necessary without will always do that. It has no choice. Its existence is a stake, and it cannot afford to make a mistake.

Supporting statehood for the Palestinians is now official Israeli government policy. But for statehood to set the stage for peaceful coexistence and prosperity, the Palestinian people must repudiate the encouragement and training of suicide bombers. More than that, the Syrians and our so-called ‘friends’, the Saudis, must cease financially rewarding the families of suicide bombers (some of whom have been no older than 14 years of age).

Hundreds of innocent Israeli men, women, children and even infants have been murdered in these attacks. And I can assure you, the Israeli government will continue taking a ‘hard line’ toward the occupied territories as long as these attacks continue. As long as Palestinians and their supporters (like Iran) are teaching their children it is patriotic and devout to hate Israel and to “push the Jews into the sea,” Israel will continue a policy of self-defense. Israel’s “right to exist” (whether biblically, historically or legally based)—take your pick—will not be abrogated.

No one is trying to discount the plight of the Palestinians and their just desire for a homeland. They have suffered too much already. But Israel must have a “partner for peace” that it can negotiate with in good faith. People who deny their right to exist and utilize suicide bombings against civilians to advance their cause are not viable partners with whom you can sit down at the negotiating table. There is no basis for establishing a social compact.

If the suicide attacks end, and Israel’s existence is generally acknowledged, the Israeli government will have no reason for retaliation. Continued conflict holds no reward for Israel; nor is there any desire for land aggrandizement. Israel will thrive with peace, and it desires to live side-by-side with peaceful neighbors. With peace, the fences, walls, check points and costly military expenditures will be unnecessary.

Now that Yassir Arafat is gone and the Palestinians have elected a new leader in Mr. Abbas, the Israeli people are hoping that a true “peace partner” has emerged. Although Jews around the world were deeply troubled by the new Iranian president’s statement that Israel should be “wiped off the map,” we were heartened to read the response of the Palestinian Authority’s Senior Negotiator, Saeb Erekat, that “This is unacceptable to us. We have recognized the state of Israel and we are pursuing a peace process with Israel, and... we do not accept the statements of the president of Iran. This is unacceptable.”

This is a far cry from the duplicity so characteristic of Mr. Arafat, who at international peace conferences was legendary for pleading to curb the violence against Israelis, but when subsequently speaking to his supporters in Arabic would invariably reiterate the same old cry that Israel must be destroyed. It was Mr. Arafat, it must be remembered, who refused Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s offer to return 98 percent of the West Bank land seized by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, stormed out of the room and did not return. Mr. Arafat angrily rejected the proposal because, he said, the land was not “contiguous.” That may well have been a legitimate point and, one would have hoped, a starting place for further negotiation.

His failure to return to the negotiating table and subsequent call for an “intifada” or uprising, however, convinced Prime Minister Barak that the PLO leader did not want peace. It has been frequently said of the man that, “Arafat never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity.” Despite his long tenure as leader of the Palestinian Authority, what really did he accomplish other than to perpetrate hatred and violence against Israel from one generation to another? Considering the many opportunities to have peace with Israel that he squandered, one could convincingly argue that the real enemy of the Palestinian people was Mr. Arafat and his clique.

Mr. Abbas, on the other hand, appears to be authentically desirous of peace. To date, however, he has not demonstrated he has the power to control the two main terrorist groups, Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which have expressed views similar to the Iranian president’s.

Now that Israel has given the Palestinians all of Gaza, we will learn something of their ability to peacefully govern themselves under Mr. Abbas’s leadership. The initial reports, however, do not appear encouraging. There have already been firearms and rioting between rival groups in Gaza, and terrorist factions have been using the area as a base from which to lob mortar shells into Israel. If that continues, there will again be severe retaliation.

Position Statement #11

“We call upon the investment companies, business companies, public and private pension funds, universities and any institutions with investments in Israel to divest their funds until there is a peaceful resolution of the issues.”

Response: Based on what I’ve explained above, this statement is so onerous it hardly merits a reply. It is a misguided attempt to ‘punish’ only one party in a dispute while ignoring the historical and political realities. Whether you approve of all of the Israeli government’s actions or not (and I do not), Israel is a democratic nation supporting statehood for the Palestinians and their just desire for a homeland. They have suffered too much and utilized suicide bombings against civilans all of Gaza, we will learn something of their ability to peacefully govern themselves under Mr. Abbas’s leadership. The initial reports, however, do not appear encouraging. There have already been firearms and rioting between rival groups in Gaza, and terrorist factions have been using the area as a base from which to lob mortar shells into Israel. If that continues, there will again be severe retaliation.

StratCom’s New Missions, continued

Support Program infrared satellites, and the sea-based traveling X-band radar, situated on a moving oil platform in the Pacific Ocean. The Navy sends the Aegis ships directly into territorial waters of China and North Korea, and has been doing this since late 2004. That means that if China got upset about us using the PAC-3 missile on Aegis cruisers to protect Taiwan, StratCom would decide when and if to pull the trigger.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR):

The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency serves as commander of this StratCom functional command. StratCom, accordingly, can tell the national intelligence agencies, as well as service agencies like Air Intelligence Agency, how to collect electronic intelligence, what sensors to turn on, and where to go. If an intelligence aircraft like the one piloted by Nebraskan Shane Osborn that was shot down by China in 2001, or the one that crashed on the Afghanistan border last summer, had to make a decision to illegally cross a national border to collect radar information, StratCom would be the one giving the order. Maj. Gen. Mark Welsh of the Air Force is the local head for ISR at Offutt.

Network Warfare:

The director of the National Security Agency (NSA) also serves as commander of this StratCom command. During the Clinton Administration, the U.S. Space Command was put in charge of all “computer defense and computer attack,” formerly overseen by NSA and the Defense Information Systems Agency. When U.S. Space Command was merged with StratCom in 2002, StratCom took over this very secret operation of the federal government.

For computer defense, this is very similar to the virus protection and protection against “denial of service attacks” that most U.S. corporations implement against hackers. But for computer attack, this means that StratCom, with the help of NSA, is in charge of secret efforts to bring down the computer systems of our adversaries, or to put those systems under secret U.S. control through the use of what are called “Trojan Horse” technologies.

Who knows? By the time the U.S. was ready to invade Iraq in March 2003, Saddam Hussein’s air defense computers may already have been under the direct control of conclusion on next page
a group at Offutt. Capt. Forbes MacVane of the U.S. Navy helps run this operation in concert with StratCom and NSA.

Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction:

This is a new office at StratCom, designed to pull together resources to look for adversaries’ nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. It’s uncertain how it will work with the CIA, Department of Homeland Security, etc., but hopefully it will be less political than the Pentagon offices created by Vice President Dick Cheney such as the “Office of Special Plans,” which as we now know essentially “made up” intelligence to justify the WMD case against Iraq.

Service Components:

The service-specific branches that work directly with StratCom include Air Force Space Command, U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command, Fleet Forces Command (Navy), and Marine Corps Forces U.S. Strategic Command.
Sally’s Last Column

This January will mark ten years since I began to write “From the” columns. Beginning January 1996, “From the Left,” intended as counterpoint to Bob Valentine’s “From the Right,” ran for 18 improbable months, every other Sunday in the Lincoln Journal Star.

In the summer of 1997, I wrote of Senator Ernie Chambers that he “all too often, more or less single-handedly prevent[ed] a lot of ignorant white people from harming themselves and others.” I’m still proud. Friends begged me not to submit that column, insisting the paper would not print it. They were wrong. The column ran, but the newspaper made a business decision and relieved me of “From the Left,” in a letter referring to the problem of my marginal political views.

Nebraska Report editor Tim Rinne immediately offered me a spot on the back page of the Nebraskans for Peace newspaper and “From the Bottom” was born. I hope I have given Tim reason to regret his offer only a few times. I have loved writing the column, and I am mighty grateful for the kind comments from readers over the years. In fact, I have never held any job as long as I was NFP columnist.

I have come to feel, though, over the past year, that this project was drawing to a close. I feel that I am preaching to the choir and casting my pearls, so to speak, before oysters. So, this is the last edition of “From the Bottom.” I cannot yet tell what form my writing will take next. I trained as a poet, then for ten years found myself writing short fiction and an unfinished play; I never hoped or expected to become an editorial columnist.

Maybe I will try to write a novel or a screenplay. One way or another, I trust I will find my way back into print. In the meantime, Gentle Readers experiencing Dr. Herrin withdrawal may visit the Blog for Nebraska at www.nebraskademos.org where I will post on Wednesdays, starting in January.

I still have so much hope for Nebraska, but I fear for us and our flatwater country too. Unless a miracle occurs, Senator Chambers will be term limited out of the Unicameral, and his long and mighty Defense of the Downtrodden will walk out the door behind him. There are some good folks in the Unicameral yet, but the pool of political experience and expertise is hemorrhaging away, while the ranks of the ambitious and the boosters swell. Let’s face facts—even in God’s country, moral giants don’t grow on trees.

Still, there are all kinds of miracles, and in closing, I’d like to share my own wish list. (Santa, I feel sure, reads The Nebraska Report.)

For Christmas, I want Peace on Earth. I ask for this one every year, and every year I am disappointed, but I’m not giving up.

I want U.S. Senator E. Benjamin Nelson to introduce legislation to make the renewable energy production tax credit permanent. I want U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel to stop talking like Jesse Jackson, when anyone who is paying attention knows he is planning to vote like Jesse Helms.

I want anti-trust enforcement and transparency in U.S. livestock markets, including mandatory price-reporting and country of origin labeling. I want an end to captive supply.

I want you to order milk instead of soda when you go out to eat, and I want protections for U.S. dairy farmers.

I want to see corn sell for the parity price (which would put income to farmers on a level playing field with other folks’ incomes) of $7.02 a bushel, rendering irrigated farming and subsidy payments unnecessary.

I want agriculture out of the WTO.

I want the voters to prevent the further forced consolidation of Nebraska’s public schools and to realize that convention centers don’t create the kind of growth which pays for itself, any more than Wal-Marts do. Development at the cost of giving away your tax base is a cruel trick on the poorer states and mid-sized towns, and statewide, it is often our children who pay the biggest price.

I want to see the Missouri River recognized for what it is—the great heart of the Great Plains and one of the keys to sustainable economic development for the centuries to come.

I want Republican leadership at every level to stop using any problem (from hurricane disasters to higher diesel prices) as an excuse to roll back environmental protections, or cut services to the poor, or both.

I want my people to care as much for democracy as they do for freedom. I want to see a renaissance in union membership. Anybody can join the Steelworkers (I myself am a card-carrying associate member). Everybody should.

Finally, I want Senator Chambers to run for governor. Even if he cannot defeat “The Winningest Coach in College Football,” the Senator would certainly make the contest well worth watching. He could raise the level of the debate by miles, and he would inspire a state full of minority young folks to educate themselves and to make their voices heard.

And so at last, with cringing apologies to Ludwig Bemelmans, who wrote Madeline,

Good night, Gentle Readers. Pray for those are erring. I’ll talk to you later, Said Dr. Herrin.

Then she turned out the light, And she closed the door, And that’s all there is. There isn’t any more.