



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

MARCH 2008

VOLUME 36, NUMBER 3

Retired Army Colonel Ann Wright to Address StratCom Conference April 11-13

Col. Ann Wright (Ret.), author of *Dissent: Voices of Conscience—Government Insiders Speak Out Against the War in Iraq (2008)*, will be the featured speaker at the *Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space Conference—“StratCom: The Most Dangerous Place on the Face of the Earth” April 11-13 in Omaha.* (See page 3 for registration information.) As the online website, *truthout*, put it when honoring Wright with its 2007 Freedom and Democracy Award, “Ann Wright is an American hero.” Reprinted below is the statement by *truthout* editorial chair Victoria Harper recognizing this “hero” for her principled conduct.

As one of several high-ranking State Department officials to resign in protest of the Iraq War, she has worked tirelessly as a peace activist since her departure from the department in 2003.

Ann Wright served in the U.S. Army for 16 years, and then in the Army Reserves for 13 years. She earned Master’s and

Law degrees from the University of Arkansas and a Master’s degree in National Security Affairs from the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Joining the U.S. Foreign Service in 1987, Ann Wright served as Deputy Chief of Mission of U.S. Embassies in Sierra Leone, Micronesia and Afghanistan, and on overseas assignments in U.S. Embassies in Grenada, Nicaragua, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. She was a member of the first State Department team to go into Kabul, Afghanistan, to reopen the American embassy in December 2001.

During her time in the State Department, she received the “Award for Heroism” for her work in the largest evacuation since the U.S. departure from Saigon in 1975, coordinating the evacuation of 2,500 people from Sierra Leone.

Ann Wright resigned from the U.S. Foreign Service on March 19, 2003, in protest of Bush Administration policies and determination to initiate a pre-



Colonel Ann Wright

emptive war in Iraq. In her letter to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell on that date, one day before the onset of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, she wrote that she could no longer represent the policies of the Bush Administration regarding war in Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, North Korea, and the curtailment of civil liberties in the U.S. itself, and that these policies were making the world a more dangerous place.

Since her resignation, Ann Wright has worked with other peace activists to protest the War

in Iraq and the torture of prisoners held without rights at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. She has demanded the closing of the detention facility at Guantanamo and accountability for the illegal actions that occurred there.

Working with groups like Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War, Ann Wright has spoken out, calling for the closing of the School of the Americas and condemning its practices.

In August 2005, Ann Wright gave her support to Gold Star Mother and peace activist Cindy Sheehan in organizing the “Camp Casey” demonstration near President Bush’s home in Crawford, Texas. She continued with other veterans and peace activists on the “Bring Them Home Now” bus tour, traveling from Camp Casey to the White House. She has willingly been arrested to demonstrate her resolve against the War in Iraq and has worked to lend support to others such as Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned military officer to publicly refuse

service in Iraq.

In support of soldiers who are actively resisting service in the Iraq War, Ann Wright demonstrates her own commitment to peace and justice. Standing shoulder to shoulder with other veterans who have taken an anti-war position, she has said that if recalled to serve, she would rather be court-martialed than participate in an “illegal war of aggression.”

Ann Wright has shown immense bravery and resolve in her quest for peace and her efforts to restore the reputation of the United States around the world. She has worked continuously to resist the War in Iraq. She has fought against the destruction of constitutionally guaranteed human rights under the Bush Administration and has been a steadfast supporter of other activists. For her energy and commitment to peace, justice and strengthening democratic principles, Ann Wright has earned the first annual *truthout* “Freedom and Democracy Award.”

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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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Ann Wright's Resignation Letter Protesting the Invasion of Iraq

On March 21, 2003—the eve of the preemptive attack on Iraq—deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Ann Wright submitted her formal letter of resignation to Secretary of State Colin Powell. Excerpts from this letter are printed below.

Dear Secretary Powell:

When I last saw you in Kabul in January, 2002... I could not have imagined that I would be writing a year later to resign from the Foreign Service because of U.S. policies. All my adult life I have been in service to the United States. I have been a diplomat for 15 years... I was 26 years in the U.S. Army/Army Reserves... This is the only time in my many years serving America that I have felt I cannot represent the policies of an Administration of the United States. I disagree with the Administration's policies on Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict... and curtailment of civil liberties in the U.S. itself... I feel obligated morally and professionally to set out my very deep and firm concerns on these policies and to resign from government service as I cannot defend or implement them...

I wrote this letter five weeks ago and held it hoping that the Administration would not go to war against Iraq at this time without United Nations Security Council agreement. I strongly believe that going to war now will make the world more dangerous, not safer. There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein is a despicable dictator and has done incredible damage to the Iraqi people and others of the region. I totally support the international community's demand that Saddam's regime destroy weapons of mass destruction.

However, I believe we should not use U.S. military force without U.N. [Security Council] agreement to ensure compliance. In our press for military action now, we have created deep chasms in the international community and in important international organizations. Our policies have alienated many of our allies and created ill will in much of the world.

Countries of the world supported America's action in Afghanistan as a response to the September 11 al-Qaida attacks on America. Since then, America has lost the incredible sympathy of most of the world because of our policy toward Iraq. Much of the world considers our statements about Iraq as arrogant, untruthful and masking a hidden agenda. Leaders of moderate Moslem/Arab countries warn us about predictable outrage and anger of the youth of their countries if America enters an Arab country with the purpose of attacking Moslems/Arabs, not defending them. Attacking the Saddam regime in Iraq now is very different than expelling the same regime from Kuwait, as we did ten years ago...

Military action now without U.N.S.C. agreement is much more dangerous for America

and the world than allowing the U.N. weapons inspections to proceed and subsequently taking U.N.S.C.-authorized action if warranted... I strongly disagree with the use of a "preemptive attack" against Iraq and believe that this preemptive attack policy will be used against us and provide justification for individuals and groups to "preemptively attack" America and American citizens...

We should give the weapons inspectors time to do their job. We should not give extremist Moslems/Arabs a further cause to hate America, or give moderate Moslems a reason to join the extremists. Additionally, we must reevaluate keeping our military forces in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Their presence on the Islamic 'holy soil' of Saudi Arabia will be an anti-American rally cry for Moslems as long as the U.S. military remains and a strong reason, in their opinion, for actions against the U.S. government and American citizens...

I strongly urge the Department of State to attempt again to stop the policy that is leading us to military action in Iraq without U.N.S.C. agreement. Timing is everything and this is not yet the time for military action.

Likewise, I cannot support the lack of effort by the Administration to use its influence to resurrect the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. As Palestinian suicide bombers kill Israelis and Israeli military operations kill Palestinians and destroy Palestinian towns and cities, the Administration has done little to end the violence. We must exert our considerable financial influence on the Israelis to stop destroying cities and on the Palestinians to curb its youth suicide bombers...

Further, I cannot support the Administration's unnecessary curtailment of civil rights following September 11. The investigation of those suspected of ties with terrorist organizations is critical, but the legal system of America for 200 years has been based on standards that provide protections for persons during the investigation period. Solitary confinement without access to legal counsel cuts the heart out of the legal foundation on which our country stands. Additionally, I believe the Administration's secrecy in the judicial process has created an atmosphere of fear to speak out against the gutting of the protections on which America was built and... we encourage other countries to provide to their citizens...

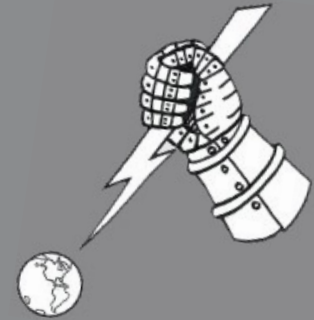
I have served my country for almost 30 years in the some of the most isolated and dangerous parts of the world. I want to continue to serve America. However, I do not believe in the policies of this Administration and cannot defend or implement them. It is with heavy heart that I must end my service to America and therefore resign.

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space 15th Annual Organizing Conference

StratCom

The Most Dangerous Place on the Face of the Earth

April 11-13, 2008 • Omaha, Nebraska



The Global Network Protests StratCom

The U.S. Strategic Command (StratCom) for years has been the site from which a nuclear war would be controlled. Since 9/11, its mission has expanded. It is now also command central in the U.S. "War on Terror" and for the U.S. plans to dominate space militarily. This "New StratCom" is responsible for overseeing any Global "First Strikes," the National Security Agency's "warrantless wiretaps," and Ballistic Missile Defense. StratCom (at Offutt AFB) today is the most dangerous place on the face of the earth. It is secretive. Its mission is destabilizing. It operates outside the law. And its transformation has occurred so quickly, most of the world is completely unaware of its missions and dangers. The Global Network brings together world citizens who will, for the first time, gather to shine a light on what StratCom has become. Building global awareness is essential if we are to get StratCom to back away from the brink. The conference will be hosted by Global Network affiliate Nebraskans for Peace.

Event Endorsers

- After Downing Street
- Bite the Bullet Campaign
- Codepink
- Committee for the Rescue & Development of Vieques
- Des Moines Catholic Worker
- Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Grandmothers for Peace
- International Network Against Foreign Military Bases
- Nebraskans for Peace
- No Nukes North-Alaska
- No To Bases Initiative-Czech Republic
- Nukewatch
- Omaha Catholic Worker
- Peace Action
- Peace Majority Report
- People's Action for Clean Energy
- Stop the War Machine
- United for Peace & Justice
- Veterans for Peace
- Women for Peace Iowa
- Women's International League for Peace & Freedom

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 11

- 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Rally at StratCom's Kinney Gate at Offutt A.F.B., Omaha, Nebraska
- 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Dinner at Creighton University (St. John's Parish basement)
Welcome by nationally known Native American activist Frank LaMere of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and Native American drumming group.

Saturday, April 12

- 8:00 am
Registration coffee/bagels, tabling at Creighton University (St. John's Parish basement)
- 9:00 – 9:15
Welcome and Purpose of Conference
- 9:15 – 11:00
Plenary Panel Discussion I: StratCom's New Mission: From Waging the War on Terror to the Domination of Space
- 11:15 – 1:00 pm
Plenary Panel Discussion II: U.S. Bases Worldwide & Their Connection to Space Technology
- 1:00 – 2:00
Lunch at St. John's Parish Basement
- 2:15 – 3:45
Workshop Session I
- 4:00 – 5:30
Workshop Session II
- 6:00 – 9:00 Saturday Night Event
Dinner and Speakers/Music

Sunday, April 13

- 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Global Network Membership Meeting (All are welcome to join us on Sunday for our annual meeting for local grassroots reports, Board elections, the coordinator's report, and to participate in our strategy discussion for the coming year.)

Saturday Workshops

- Wars of the Future: Military Transformation
- StratCom and U.S. First-Strike Policy
- Mission Moon & Mars: U.S. Bases on the Planetary Bodies
- Anti-Bases Network: Building Alliances to End the Empire
- Space Command: Military Arm of Corporate Globalization

- Missile Defense Developments in Europe: U.S., NATO and a New Cold War
- Missile Defense: Deployments in U.S. & Asian-Pacific Region
- Converting the Permanent War Economy
- Organizing around Campus Militarization
- Space Law-fare as New Weapon of War
- Echoes from Other Lands: Voices of People Displaced By U.S. Bases
- Creative Nonviolent Disobedience to Empire

Conference Speakers

- Bob Anderson, *Stop the War Machine*, New Mexico
- Olivier Bancout, Republic of Mauritius *Chagos Refugees Group*
- Brian Bogart, *Student Activist*, University of Oregon
- Jackie Cabasso, *Western States Legal Foundation*, California
- Leslie Cagan, *United for Peace & Justice*, New York
- Frank Cordaro, *Des Moines Catholic Worker*, Iowa
- Stacey Fritz, *No Nukes North*, Alaska
- Bruce Gagnon, *Global Network*, Maine
- Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Michigan
- Regina Hagen, *International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation*, Germany
- Dud Hendrick, *Maine Veterans for Peace*
- Frank LaMare, *Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska*
- Tamara Lorincz, *Halifax Peace Coalition*, Canada
- Elizabeth McAlister, *Jonah House*, Maryland
- David Meieran, *Bite the Bullet*
- Greg Mello, *Los Alamos Study Group*, New Mexico
- Agneta Norberg, *Swedish Peace Council*
- Lindis Percy, *Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases*, England
- Bal Pinguel, *American Friends Service Committee*, Pennsylvania
- J. Narayana Rao, *All India Peace & Solidarity Organization*
- Tim Rinne, *Nebraskans for Peace*
- Joanne Sheehan, *War Resisters League*, Connecticut
- Alice Slater, *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*, New York
- Mary Beth Sullivan, *Global Network*, Maine
- Bill Sulzman, *Citizens for Peace in Space*, Colorado
- David Swanson, *After Downing Street*, Virginia
- Jan Tamas, *No To Bases Initiative*, Czech Republic
- Carol Urner, *Woman's International League for Peace & Freedom*, Oregon
- David Webb, *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, England
- Loring Wirbel, *Citizens for Peace in Space*, Colorado
- Col. Ann Wright, *Retired U.S. Army & U.S. State Department*, Washington DC

See the Registration
Form on Page 11



THE FOLLY

TIME FOR REAL DIPLOMACY OF ATTACKING IRAN

*Longtime New York Times correspondent and author Stephen Kinzer stopped in Omaha last month on a 22-city national tour spotlighting the folly of a military attack on Iran by the Bush/Cheney Administration. Noting that such an attack would originate just down the road at U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Kinzer warned that a preemptive strike against Iran was still very much an option, that it would be disastrous politically and economically for the U.S., and—most importantly—that there are diplomatic alternatives to military action. Diplomacy, the author of the critically acclaimed *All the Shah's Men* and *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* told audiences at Creighton and UNO, is in fact the only viable option. The following article, which Kinzer wrote last fall, lays out his compelling case for negotiation, not military force. His February 18 stopover in Omaha was sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace and the Omaha Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility. For more information, visit: FollyofAttackingIran.org*

More than half a century has passed since the United States deposed the only democratic government Iran ever had. As militants in Washington urge a second American attack on Iran, the story of the first one becomes more urgently relevant than ever. It shows the folly of using violence to try to reshape Iran.

If the United States had not sent agents to depose Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh (right) in 1953, Iran would probably have continued along its path toward full democracy. Over the decades that followed, it might have become the first democratic state in the Muslim Middle East, and perhaps even a model for other countries in the region and beyond.

Before great powers take far-reaching decisions that can reshape the world, their leaders normally consider the lessons of history. Any serious discussion about modern Iran, and certainly any debate about whether the United States should intervene

there, must include an assessment of what happened after the last intervention. In 1953, eager to achieve short-term goals, the U.S. launched an operation that brought calamity on both Iran and itself. Some in Washington, however, reject the idea that this history has any relevance to the present era. They believe that this time, the United States can attack Iran and emerge triumphant.

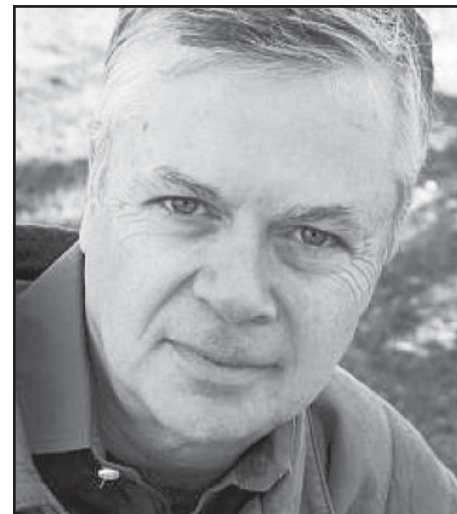
Attacking Iran now, however, would turn that country's oppressive leaders, who are now highly unpopular at home, into heroes of Islamic resistance; give them a strong incentive to launch a violent counter-campaign against American interests around the world; greatly strengthen Iranian nationalism, Shiite irredentism and Muslim extremism, thereby attracting countless new recruits to the cause of terror; undermine the democratic movement in Iran and destroy the prospects for political change there for at least another generation; turn the people of Iran, who are now among the most pro-American in the Middle East, into enemies of the United States; require the United States to remain deeply involved in the Persian Gulf indefinitely, forcing it to take sides in all manner of regional conflicts and thereby make a host of new enemies; enrage the Shiite-dominated government in neighboring Iraq, on which the U.S. is relying on calm the violence there; and quite possibly disrupt the flow of Middle East petroleum in ways that could wreak havoc on Western economies.

These two countries are not fated to be enemies forever. In fact, they share many strategic goals and may even be seen as potential allies. Both desperately want to stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan. Both detest radical Sunni movements like al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Both, for different reasons, seek to assure a steady supply of petroleum to Western markets. Iran's oil industry is in a parlous state and needs tens of billions of dollars in investment; the United States has huge reserves of capital and a voracious appetite for oil.

A new American approach to Iran should be based on direct, bilateral, and unconditional negotiations. Beyond that, it is in the urgent interest of the United States to

promote all manner of social, political and economic contacts with Iranians. In a new climate, American businesses would no longer be forbidden to trade with Iran, but encouraged to do so. Rather than tightly restricting the number of visas issued to Iranians, the U.S. would do the opposite: invite as many Iranians as possible to the United States, and flood Iran with Americans.

Unlike other countries in its neighborhood, Iran has been advancing toward democracy since adopting its first constitution more than a century ago. Iranian constitutions have not always been observed, and Iranian elections have not always been fair. Over this long period, however, the Iranian people have developed a deep understanding of what democracy means. Many thirst for it. There is more fertile ground for democratic change in Iran than in almost any other Muslim country.



The chance that Iranians might use their technological know-how to pass weapons of mass destruction on to terrorist groups would be far greater after an attack than it is now.

— Stephen Kinzer

Some in Washington argue that any new regime in Iran would be an improvement over the repressive and xenophobic mullahs. They are dangerously mistaken. An attack on Iran might well throw that country into chaos like that which has enveloped Iraq. In such an anarchic environment, there would be no central authority to control violent radicals. Most frighteningly, those radicals might include enraged nuclear technicians and scientists. The chance that Iranians might use their technological know-how to pass weapons of mass destruction on to terrorist groups would be far greater after an attack than it is now.

Bombing nuclear facilities in Iran—assuming they could all be found and destroyed—would be at best a temporary solution. It would almost certainly lead to the emergence of more terrifying threats than those Iran poses today. As the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohammad alBaredei, likes to point out, buildings can be attacked and destroyed, but “you cannot bomb knowledge.”

By violently pushing Iran off the path to democracy in 1953, the United States created a whirlpool of instability from which undreamed-of threats emerged years later. A long American campaign of isolation, pressure and threats has produced no change in Iran's behavior. Continuing it will mean a steady increase in tension that some in Washington believe should culminate in a military attack. Such an attack would usher in another era of upheaval in Iran and the surrounding region, this time with the overlay of nuclear-tinged terror.

Operation Ajax, as the CIA plot to depose Prime Minister Mossadegh was code-named, brought immeasurable tragedy to Iran, contributed to the rise of anti-American terror and, in the end, greatly weakened the security of the United States. Few episodes of 20th-century history more perfectly epitomize the concept of “blowback.” Today, as anti-Iran rhetoric in Washington becomes steadily more strident, it is more urgent than ever for Americans to understand how disastrous the last U.S. attack on Iran turned out to be. They might also ponder the question of what moral responsibility the U.S. has to Iran in the wake of this painful history.

Are You a Homegrown Terrorist?

by John W. Whitehead

At first glance, the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 may not seem dangerous. Yet nothing is ever what it seems, and this bill is no exception.

On its face, the act, which was approved in the House by a 404-6 vote, would establish two government-appointed bodies (one, a national 10-member commission; the other, a university-based Center for Excellence) to study, monitor and propose ways of curbing homegrown terrorism and extremism in the U.S. However, as journalist Jessica Lee points out, the legislation could actually succeed in “broaden[ing] the definition of terrorism to encompass both First Amendment political activity and traditional forms of protest such as nonviolent civil disobedience.”

The danger is the legislation’s vague definitions of violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism and the commission’s power to label individuals and groups as possible terrorists. Violent radicalization, for example, is defined as “the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change.” Note that you don’t actually have to commit violence to be labeled a violent radical. You just have to adopt or promote a belief system that differs with the government, which is easy enough in these times of economic instability, expansive gov-

ernment powers and endless wars.

The definition for homegrown terrorism is equally vague: “the use, planned use, or threatened use, of force or violence by a group or individual born [or] raised... within the United States... to intimidate or coerce the United States, the civilian population... or any segment thereof.”

Would abortion protesters or anti-war organizers be accused of using “force” to “intimidate or coerce” others? What about people who promote immigration views that are considered “extremist”? By Congress failing to define what an “extremist belief” is, what would constitute “ideologically based violence” or the use of “force,” it could mean anyone who expresses a belief contrary to that held by the occupants of the White House.

The concern, as Lee points out, is that the law will be used “against U.S.-based groups engaged in legal but unpopular political activism, ranging from political Islamists to animal-rights and environmental campaigners to radical right-wing organizations. There is concern, too, that the bill will undermine academic integrity and is the latest salvo in a decade-long government grab for power at the expense of civil liberties.”

The Senate version of this legislation, which finds that domestic threats “cannot easily be prevented through traditional Federal intelligence or law enforcement efforts,” requires the creation of what would essentially join federal agents and local police together in a single paramilitary entity.

“This sounds like part of the same continuum we’ve experienced in the last seven years, which is the effort to depute local law enforcement to work with the FBI and national agencies without local accountability, as we have seen with the establishment of joint-terrorism task forces across the country,” said Hope Marston of the Bill of

ing of radicals—first Trotskyists during the war and Communist party leaders after the war, for organizing literature, etc., interpreted as conspiring to overthrow the government by force and violence.”

The true targets of this bill may be the anti-globalists and radical environmentalists who pose a

Note that you don’t actually have to commit violence to be labeled a violent radical. You just have to adopt or promote a belief system that differs with the government, which is easy enough in these times of economic instability, expansive government powers and endless wars.

Rights Defense Committee. “When you talk about working with local law enforcement to possibly spy on groups and individuals to try to find the so-called ‘needle in the haystack,’ this definitely poses a threat to local autonomy.”

To Howard Zinn, author of *A People’s History of the United States*, H.R. 1955, as it is referred to, is just one more in a long series of laws passed in times of foreign policy tensions. He points out that the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, for instance, sent people to jail for criticizing the Adams administration. And “During World War I, the Espionage Act and Sedition Act sent close to a thousand people to jail for speaking out against the war. On the eve of World War II, the Smith Act was passed, harmless enough title, but it enabled the jail-

threat to the corporate powers. Jane Harman (D-Los Angeles), the congresswoman who introduced the bill, has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the RAND Corp., a California-based think tank with close ties to the military-industrial-intelligence complex.

“Trends in Terrorism,” a 2005 study by RAND, contains a chapter titled “Homegrown Terrorist Threats to the United States.” In that study, RAND maintains that “homegrown terrorism” will come from anti-globalists and radical environmentalists who “challenge the intrinsic qualities of capitalism.” RAND also claims that anti-globalists and radical environmentalists “exist in much the same operational environment as al-Qaida” and pose “a clear threat to private-

sector corporate interests, especially large multinational business.”

Any thought, speech or action that threatens corporate hegemony and profit under this law—however protected it might be by the Bill of Rights—could be considered an act of homegrown terrorism.

This is not unlike the government’s Red Scare tactics used during the 1950s McCarthy era when thousands of Americans were accused of being communists or communist sympathizers simply for disagreeing with the government or associating with those who did so.

We are the descendants of a long line of dissenters dating back to the early days of this nation, from the Pilgrims fleeing religious persecution and our founders standing up to King George’s acts of tyranny to civil rights activists staging sit-ins to protest segregation and peace activists protesting the armaments industry.

As long as there are individuals speaking out against what they see as injustice, oppression or corruption, there will always be those in high places attempting to silence or suppress them. But we must not be intimidated or silenced. Instead, we need to raise our voices even louder or our constitutional rights will be obliterated.

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute, dedicated to the defense of civil liberties and human rights.

Safe and Free: Restore Our Constitutional Rights

by Laurel Marsh
Executive Director, ACLU Nebraska

There has never been a more urgent need to preserve fundamental privacy protections and our system of checks and balances than the need we face today, as illegal government spying, provisions of the Patriot Act and government sponsored torture programs transcend the bounds of law and our most treasured values in the name of national security.

On Saturday April 12, ACLU Nebraska members and friends will gather at the DC Centre in Omaha to hear the personal story of Barbara Bailey. Barbara Bailey is President of Library Connection, Inc. and Director of the Welles-Turner Memorial Library, Glastonbury, Connecticut. She was also a prominent figure in the case *Doe v. Gonzales*: Fighting the FBI’s Demand for Library Records.

Barbara Bailey was awarded the 2007 ACLU “Roger Baldwin Medal of Liberty

Award” for standing up against the U.S.A. Patriot Act and for her refusal to violate the privacy of her patrons and clients at the Wells-Turner Memorial Library in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Her passion to protect her clients and her desire to stand up against injustice were evident as she spoke during her acceptance speech at the 2007 ACLU Membership Conference.

As Barbara put it, “We showed our fellow Americans that this was not just some theoretical political debate. The

Patriot Act affects real lives and even an ordinary American like me can end up being targeted by the FBI.”

Now Congress is considering another troublesome measure.

Late last year the House passed H.R. 1955, the “Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Act of 2007.” The act, which was approved in the House by a 404-6

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402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
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Sen. Ben Nelson

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202-224-6551
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402-441-4600 (Lincoln)
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Rep. Lee Terry, District 2

1524 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
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202-226-5452 (FAX)
402-397-9944 (Omaha)
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Rep. Adrian Smith, District 3

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Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6435
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Capitol Hill Switchboard

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Pacifying the Public on Uranium Pollution Clean-up

by Charmaine White Face

The USDA Forest Service out of Billings, Montana is responsible for the Custer National Forest, which stretches into the northwestern corner of South Dakota. The Cave Hills and Slim Buttes sites exhibit some of the most unique and beautiful landscapes in the state. In the 1960s, this area was also, however, a prime target for uranium mining... 'open-pit' uranium mining. Not only was this environmentally destructive form of mining routinely practiced, there were no laws at the time requiring land reclamation. When the uranium-mining industry subsequently collapsed, 89 mines and prospects in the area were, according to information from the U.S. Forest Service, simply left abandoned.

On November 13, 2007, in the nearest community to the Cave Hills area—just a blink-of-an-eye place known as Ludlow—the Forest Service held an open house “to update the public on the activities happening at the site.” It was advertised in the region’s daily newspaper a few times, and flyers were sent to interested individuals.

Under the federal “Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act” (CERCLA), the Forest Service operates a program that presumably “cleans up hazardous substances from abandoned mine lands and other sites to protect human health and the environment (such as watershed soil, water, and vegetation).” Good as that sounds, the Forest Service can only implement its clean-up program if it has enough money, or if there is a “Potentially Responsible Party.” In this case, the Potentially Responsible Party is Tronox Worldwide LLC—formerly Kerr-McGee Corporation, which mined at least six of the bluffs in the North Cave Hills area at the Riley Pass site.

More than 150 acres were disturbed from 1962-64 when Tronox pushed a million-plus cubic yards of overburden over the edges of the rimrocks surrounding the plateau at the Riley Pass site, spewing radioactive dust and destroying hundreds of petroglyphs, burials and sites sacred to many Native American nations. From these activities more than 28,000 tons of ore were removed which produced 150,000 pounds of uranium. The wastes left behind included poisonous arsenic, molybdenum which harms cattle, and the highly radioactive thorium, as well as other uranium-decay products such as radium and radon. The radon gas alone is still today being carried for hundreds of miles in

the air, causing lung cancer wherever the wind blows.

After more than 40 years of these radioactive substances being released into the environment, a settlement agreement has finally been reached between the Forest Service and Tronox on developing reclamation plans for one of the affected bluffs: “Bluff B.” However, one of the disturbing statements in the 38-page settlement agreement reads: “Respondent shall prepare, perform and submit to the Forest Service for review and approval the *non-time critical* [italics mine] removal action...” Having allowed

To my question of:
“When will all 89 mines
be cleaned up?”
The answer was:
“Not in your lifetime.”

these radioactive contaminants to harm the environment—and its human inhabitants downwind and downstream—for more than four decades, the Forest Service and Tronox probably don’t in fact view the situation as particularly “time-critical.” Yet, the risk of more delay could be harmful, and potentially deadly.

“Bluff B” was chosen since tests have shown it contains the highest amount of gamma radiation. This is the deadliest form of nuclear radiation in comparison with alpha and beta radiation which is also found at the Riley Pass site. The material containing the most gamma radiation will be scooped up into “containment cells.” In other words, this radioactive material will be wrapped up like a burrito in a manufactured synthetic wrapper. How long the wrapper will hold the material remains to be seen, since uranium can take billions of years to decay to its non-radioactive final state while the wrapper will fall apart long before. Even worse, the reclamation plans are only for one bluff at the Riley Pass site. This raises the question, what about the other 88 mines? Are all 89 mines going to be reclaimed? Or is only one bluff at one mine going to be reclaimed?

When I asked this question of Laurie Walters-Clark, the U.S. Forest Service On-Scene Coordinator, she quickly deflected the question and never gave an answer. However, there is another entity watching this

whole course of action—a ‘quality assurance’ body called Millennium Science and Engineering, Inc. Maybe it’s because they are the watchdog that I was able to get a more honest answer. To my question of: “When will all 89 mines be cleaned up?” The answer from MSE was: “Not in your lifetime.”

It wasn’t an answer I wanted to hear. I kept thinking of all the people in the village of Bullhead, 100 miles away, who are downstream from these mines. I kept thinking of the abandoned mines just west of the Pine Ridge Reservation. I kept thinking of all the people in South Dakota affected by the radioactive dust and radon gas as the winds blow across this northwest corner to the rest of the state. But at least the answer I got was an honest one that treated me like an intelligent, responsible adult. Millennium Science and Engineering, Inc, should be proud that they have employees who are not afraid to give an honest answer.

After going through the large amount of written material made available on the plan, my conclusion was that this massive amount of paperwork is only a ‘pacifier for the public.’ It is an insult to the courage and the right of the people living downwind and downstream from these mines to be duped into believing that the situation is being remedied, when work will only be completed on one bluff at one mine, with the result of that work not guaranteed.

People have to right to know when something harmful is (or has been) coming to them. With the proper information, choices can then be made to remain and take chances with the ‘known’ danger, to move to a different location, or to do something to help lessen the danger.

It is estimated that there are more than 1,000 abandoned uranium mines located in this region, which also includes the southern Black Hills in South Dakota, parts of Montana, and a major portion of Wyoming. How much radioactive dust has been carried by the wind from all these mines in the past 40 years? How much radioactive runoff from 40 years of rain and snow has collected in the Missouri River? What will it take to wake up the country and the world to this deadly “silent Chernobyl” in the middle of the United States?

Charmaine White Face, (Zumila Wobaga) is a member of the Oglala Tetuwan, a former college instructor, writer, and coordinator for Defenders of the Black Hills. She can be reached at bhdefenders@msn.com.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

The Skiing Industry Faces a Future with Less Snow

Around the world, ski resorts have found themselves threatened by warming temperatures that turn snow to slush and shorten their seasons. The largest ski resorts in the United States have found their average seasons shortened from an average of 158 days a year in 1997 to 146 days in 2005-2006. Even artificial snow doesn't work if temperatures are above freezing. As a result, many ski resorts are offering activities that do not require snow, such as golf and mountain biking. In Europe, some resorts have turned into aquatic parks and shopping malls planning for a snow-less future.

Higher-than-usual European temperatures interfered with the Alpine skiing World Cup in 2006, raising fundamental questions about the future of a sport that depends on snow and ice. "It will very quickly be a big crisis for us if we continue canceling races in December," said Atle Skaardal, who supervised the women's portion of the tour for the International Ski Federation. "I think it's very critical, not only for racing but for public skiing, which also has a big impact on racing. We all have to hope for colder temperatures and snowfall in Europe." The event took place on a pristine strip of artificial snow, on a race course otherwise notable for vegetation and rocks. Some ski resorts in the Alps have wrapped glaciers and snowfields with foam insulation in an attempt (usually futile) to shelter glaciers in the summer.

The Warming Alps

The Alps are the warmest they have been in at least 1,250 years. A few more degrees of warmth will melt nearly all the snow that Al-

pine resorts require. Bruno Abegg, a researcher at the University of Zurich, said low-lying resorts faced an insuperable problem. "Let's put it this way," he said, "I wouldn't invest in Kitzbühel"—a resort that sits in a low Tyrolean valley, at an altitude of only 2,624 feet. Val d'Isère, in France, and St. Moritz, in Switzerland—which are twice as high—were forced to cancel World Cup races during 2006, lacking

“The Alps are the warmest they have been in at least 1,250 years. A few more degrees of warmth will melt nearly all the snow that Alpine resorts require.”

snow. The Alps are warming twice as quickly as the global average. In 1980, 75 percent of Alpine glaciers were advancing; now, 90 percent are retreating.

St. Moritz, Switzerland, canceled World Cup races scheduled for December 9 and 10, 2006, because temperatures were too high even for artificial snow. A month earlier, a race in Sölden, Austria, had been canceled because of persistent rain that melted snow off the Rettenbach glacier. "Of course we're all very worried about the future of our sport," said Anja Paerson of Sweden, the gold medalist in slalom at the Olympic Winter Games in Turin, Italy. "Every year we have more trouble finding places to train." Indoor skiing venues have opened in countries such as Germany, Japan and the United

Arab Emirates. Some Scottish Highlands ski areas are being redone as mountain-biking destinations. In the United States, resorts in the Pacific Northwest received a harbinger last season when a warm winter led to a 78-percent drop in skier visits.

At the bottom of the Hahnenkamm, a downhill course in the Austrian Alps, the slope ended in a grassy field during mid-December

2006. Artificial snow was abandoned because temperatures remained persistently above freezing. "Of course I'm nervous about the snow, but what am I supposed to do?" said Signe Kramheller-Reisch, as she walked in a bare field near a hotel her family owns. "We have classic winters and we have non-classic winters."

Ski Lifts to Swimming Pools

As snow becomes scarcer in Europe's Alps, resorts are transforming ski resorts into spas and shopping centers, advertising them as escapes from sweltering low-land cities. In Davos, Switzerland, the InterContinental Resort will by 2010 become a huge spa with 186 luxury hotel rooms, residential apartments, shops, and conference rooms. "A lot of people are telling

us: you guys are doing fine because you're far above the critical height line where ski areas will have a problem," said Armin Egger, former director of Davos Tourism. "But we know if about 40 percent of skiing areas in the European Alps will be gone in 50, 100 years, then we will have a problem as well." Davos earns money hosting United Nations conferences on climate change.



Atop Little Matterhorn, the highest point in the Alps that tourists can reach on cable cars (at 13,120 feet above sea level), the featured attraction has become indoor swimming pools. A new "Aqua Dome" has opened near the Austrian ski resort of Sölden, which a *New York Times* account described as "hard to miss" with its three enormous concrete bowls that resemble outdoor birdbaths. Each contains a different soaking experience: one is a super-size whirlpool tub, the second has a battery of massage jets, and the third is filled with saltwater and has piped-in underwater music. Inside, a dome-topped spa has two more pools and a waterfall."

A Green-Skiing Movement

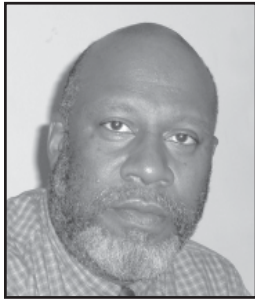
Ten years ago, radical environmentalists torched ski operations at Vail to emphasize the industry's role in environmental destruction. That event, Auden Schendler, environmental-affairs director for the Aspen Skiing Co in Aspen, Colorado, said was a "wake-up call" that has led to the formation of the "Green-Skiing Movement." Schendler told Daniel Shaw of *Grist* magazine that "Climate change should be driving everything we all do." His company has closely examined its operations to conserve energy and water, and is reducing its greenhouse-gas emissions by operating a small hydroelectric plant and slope groomer powered by biodiesel fuel and wind power. The National Ski Areas Association now operates a "sustainable slopes program" that has enrolled about 180 of 492 ski resorts in the United States.

Since 2000, the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, on the eastern slope of California's Sierra Nevada, has also gotten into the act, reducing electricity use 9 per cent and cutting propane use by 70,000 gallons per year. "All the people I talk to in this industry, they're scared," says Lisa Isaacs, the resort's environmental program director. "I'm scared. Global warming trumps everything. If it continues, we won't even be able to make snow."

Bruce E. Johansen, Frederick W. Kayser Professor of Communication at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, is the author of the three-volume Global Warming in the Twenty-First Century (2006).

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN NEBRASKA

...Ward Connerly is Coming!



by A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon
NFP State Board

In recent months, Affirmative Action advocates in Nebraska have been in an uproar over the prospect that Ward Connerly is coming to Nebraska to dismantle the state's Affirmative Action policies. Mr. Connerly, an African American businessman, is the former University of California Regent who in 1996 led a successful ballot initiative in that state (known as Proposition 209) to ban race and gender-based preferences in state hiring and state university admissions. The Nebraska effort, funded through Connerly's American Civil Rights Institute, aims to amend our state constitution through a petition initiative on the November ballot.

I have twice heard a local Hispanic advocate argue passionately that people of color in Nebraska will be seriously hurt if the state repeals its Affirmative Action provisions. Given the entrenched prejudice of those in power, the speaker argued, people of color will not receive serious consideration within academic institutions or in positions of corporate leadership. Taken somewhat aback by this advocate's passion and arguments, I decided to investigate the impact of Proposition 209 in California. I found that there was a decline in the use of Affirmative Action policies in certain state institutions, particularly higher education. Enrollment rates for African Americans and Latinos declined at University of California schools, while graduation rates for those groups rose. Despite an unquestionable diminishment of opportunity, it remains unclear to me whether the continuation of Affirmative Action policies would have provided significant real gains for people of color.

Last December the Nebraska State Auditor of Public Accounts published the salaries of the state's top earners on the public payroll. Many of them earn over \$200,000 annually. The number of African Americans on this list is abysmally tiny. The State Auditor also named the top contractors and companies that receive public funds. Where are the minority-owned firms? How effective have our Affirmative Action policies been in propelling our minority citizens into positions of esteem and wealth? These lists make clear that in spite of our state's Affirmative Action policies *effective Affirmative Action is not practiced in Nebraska*. So why, I ask, is the sky falling simply because Ward Connerly is bringing his attack on Affirmative Action to Nebraska? Why are our people of color who have achieved positions of prominence in the public and private institutions in our state not shouting from their rooftops about the 'unofficial' racist policies implemented daily in our public and private institutions?

Sadly, when we win the fight to get African Americans into key positions too often they are revealed as incompetent leaders, refuse to act in the public interest, or have something in their past (i.e., blackmail liability) that makes them ineffective challengers of the racist status quo. If we elect them to public office, how often do they meet with their constituents to address their

plight? Omaha has used district elections for school board, city council and county board for years. Yet ask constituents from low-income districts if conditions have improved for them, and they would be hard-pressed to point to serious political or social equality in their districts. Accountability to the interests of our minority communities is even more elusive in the case of those not elected but hired into positions of authority. Often these hires are made only as a result of strong grassroots efforts to get these positions filled with qualified people of color. Until recently Omaha had a police chief who is African American, yet the city experienced some of the most egregious cases of police brutality under his watch. What good is having someone of color in that position if he is prevented from carrying out the duties of his job with integrity? Where is the public outcry from our community leaders about the true nature of this outrageous situation?

One can concede that being a public official in a community with serious crime and violence problems is difficult. Yet, there should be focused community leadership to address the myriad factors destroying our community's quality of life, not inane claptrap from self-appointed local leaders intoning marriage as the solution for African American upward mobility. Marriage as an institution never liberated African Americans. In the years after the Civil War put an end to slavery, African Americans had the highest marriage rates in the nation but still suffered under the steel gates of racist laws and policies. Two-parent households tend to enjoy better economic conditions, but marriage is not a necessary condition on the road out of poverty.

The best solution for keeping and maintaining a position of leadership is to challenge those institutions that practice white people's 'affirmation actions.' Commonly called *nepotism*, this practice is widespread in Nebraska. Some time ago I was told a story about employment at the Omaha Public Power District and the Metropolitan Utilities District, the public utility in Omaha. Both institutions have internal policies which prohibit hiring the children of employees for summer jobs. However, employees circumvent those policies by developing contacts in the other company with whom they barter jobs for their children. Meanwhile, African American employees who could have exposed the practice failed to do so, and, as a result, many qualified African Americans did not gain employment in those public companies. This story is only one example—seemingly innocuous—of pervasive institutional practices that favor the established network of contacts over social, cultural or ethnic outsiders.

How does this relate to education? In our state's largest K-12 public school system, Omaha Public Schools, we have over 3,500 educators. Of that number only 200—less than 4 percent—are African Americans. How can this have been allowed to happen when over 56 percent of the student body in the 'OOPS' system are African Americans? We even have a superintendent of Human Resources in this school district who is an African American! Ward Connerly's ballot initiative will only aggravate practices that are already firmly entrenched in the universities, colleges and public school systems in this state. Surely it is not the threat of Ward Connerly's coming to Nebraska that should motivate our passion for justice, but the reality of the forces of injustice that operate here and now within our institutions 'committed' to Affirmative Action.

NFP Position on Rolling Back Affirmative Action

The Nebraskans for Peace Executive Committee has voted to oppose the initiative petition campaign that would essentially repeal Affirmative Action in Nebraska. We are backing up this public statement by actively working with the statewide coalition opposing this petition-gathering effort to place constitution amendment on the November ballot. State Board member Patrick Jones, Assistant Professor of History and Ethnic Studies at UNL, is representing Nebraskans for Peace on the coalition steering committee. Much of the leadership and impetus opposing repeal has in fact emerged from campus NFP chapters and student leaders like Nic Swiercek, who has been working closely with cultural advocacy groups such as the Afrikan Peoples Union at UNL.

Our first opportunity to defeat this petition drive is to keep the petition campaign from gathering the necessary number of signatures to qualify for ballot status. Tell your friends and neighbors who are approached to sign the petition that this initiative is not what it purports to be. It does not provide for equality of opportunity, as its deceptively titled name would suggest. The petition gatherers are mostly out-of-state 'hired guns,' originally sponsored by a California right-wing group, who are now seeking, through their 'front organization' in the state to undermine the minimal progress we've made towards diversity. Should this roll-back get onto the ballot—and then pass, NFP Executive Committee believes it will do enormous damage to the ongoing effort to promote equality for people of color and women, both in education and in the world of employment and entrepreneurship.

Use the information in the "Don't Be Deceived" article on the facing page to actively encourage your friends and neighbors not to sign. None of what we're proposing negates the criticisms of NFP board member A'Jamal Byndon that Affirmative Action has not been 'very real' in much of Nebraska. The answer, we believe though, lies in even more *affirmative action* on the part of our government—not less.

—Paul A. Olson, President of NFP

Don't Be Deceived

by the 'Nebraska Civil Rights' Ballot Proposal

What is the ballot initiative? The initiative petition currently being circulated is seeking to place a constitutional amendment on the Nebraska ballot for the November 2008 election. The proposed amendment would essentially ban practices in the state eliminating lawful and established measures now used to achieve diversity in the student body and workforce.

How could the constitutional amendment impact Nebraska? If the constitutional amendment is approved it would place many state and education services and programs at risk that are aimed at providing an equal opportunity, including:

- Minority-focused student recruiting, educational and mentoring programs
- Recruiting programs targeting international students
- Revenue realized from tourism and conventions
- Scholarships that consider gender, race and ethnicity
- Efforts to encourage and recruit students to pursue fields in which they have traditionally been underrepresented (such as minorities and women in math and science, or men in nursing)
- Efforts to recruit and retain a diverse faculty
- Representation of women and minorities on boards and commissions
- Support and outreach groups such as commissions on the status of women, commissions on multicultural affairs and women's centers

Is the constitutional amendment necessary? No. There are no quotas in hiring practices by the state or educational institutions. For example, the University of Nebraska has no caps on admissions for undergraduates; all qualified students are accepted. Some graduate and professional programs consider race and gender along with a number of other factors in their admission process.

Who is leading the proposed amendment? The primary sponsor is a national group called "Super Tuesday for Equal Rights" and is backed in Nebraska by a group called the "Nebraska Association of Scholars." The California-based Super Tuesday organization is led by businessman Ward Connerly, a former University of California Regent, a real estate CEO, a lobbyist for construction trade associations, and a political activist who has promoted and won a series of similar initiatives.

What has happened in other states? Along with the one in Nebraska, the Super Tuesday organization is also supporting drives for constitutional amendments in 2008 in Arizona, Colorado, Missouri and Oklahoma. Previous initiative campaigns have been successful in three states: California in 1996, Washington in 1998 and Michigan in 2006.

Why do we care about diversity? Diversity adds to the richness of the state. The consideration of diversity helps provide an equal opportunity for all. In educational institutions, the overall educational experience is improved, prepares and trains students to live and work in a global environment, and helps to meet the needs of a changing workforce.

What can you do? Remember that the language in the proposal appears civil rights-friendly, but is misleading and perpetuates inaccuracies about diversity programs. Support measures that strengthen diversity and Affirmative Action programs in Nebraska. Do not sign the "Civil Rights Initiative" petition.

The proposed constitutional amendment reads: *The state shall not discriminate against or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting by the state or any of its agencies, institutions or political subdivisions.*

This language is purposefully deceptive and would end measures taken by the State of Nebraska to act affirmatively to make opportunities available to all people and strengthen diversity.

— Prepared by Professor Anna Shavers, UNL College of Law

Immigrant Sanctuaries and Safe Havens

by Hendrik Van den Berg
UNL Professor of Economics

In 1798, just ten years after the writing of the Constitution, Congress claimed for itself the power to regulate immigration. Subsequent court cases have largely upheld Congress' authority. Recently, however, in response to public outcries about illegal immigration, many local communities and states have begun to enact ordinances and establish policies to, among other things, prohibit landlords from renting to someone who cannot prove their legal status, prevent immigrant day workers from assembling at pre-determined hiring locations, or require government and school officials to report unauthorized immigrants.

Not all local communities have actively sought to make life more difficult for unauthorized immigrants, however. Some communities have acted to make it harder for fed-

eral authorities to arrest and deport unauthorized immigrants. For example, in 1989 San Francisco's Board of Supervisors declared their city as a *sanctuary city*, a designation that has little legal meaning but effectively declared the city would not cooperate with federal immigration agents. Recently, when federal immigration agents complained of the city's lack of help with recent raids on several local employers suspected of hiring unauthorized immigrants, Mayor Newsom defiantly replied: "We are a sanctuary city, make no mistake about it." Other cities that have declared themselves as immigrant safe havens or sanctuary cities include New York City, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Tacoma, Washington.

To counter such local defiance, Congress included a provision in the 1996 Immigration Act that explicitly made it illegal for states and municipalities to take any action to prevent the reporting of illegal immigrants

to federal authorities. This federal law clearly conflicted with New York City's policy of prohibiting city employees from reporting illegal immigrants to federal authorities. When a federal court last year ordered the city to change its policy, Mayor Bloomberg instead instructed city employees to simply stop asking anyone about their immigrant status. He reasoned that city employees cannot be forced to report what they don't know. Similar measures have been taken in many other local municipalities that have declared themselves to be immigrant safe havens or sanctuaries.

Recent bills circulating in Congress contain wording that would force the federal government to withhold federal funds from communities that fail to monitor and report undocumented immigrants. Last year, Republican legislators in the California State

Assembly sponsored a bill that would have cut off state funds to local communities that enacted safe haven ordinances and policies. That measure failed to pass, however, causing right-wing commentators to label California as a *sanctuary state*.

Immigration is a complex phenomenon, with many different economic, social and political consequences. Congress has been unable to put together a majority to support any new legislation, even though almost everyone agrees that current policies are not working very well. Without leadership at the federal level, we are likely to see more local activism to deal with the growing immigrant population. In the current policy free-for-all, we must rise to the challenge to ensure that immigrants, their families and their children be treated justly and humanely.

Anti-Bullying Bill Passes Legislature

by Paul Olson

LB 205, the anti-bullying bill, passed the Legislature last month on the final-round vote of 41-0 with seven senators abstaining. The only serious efforts to oppose the measure came from Sen. Phil Erdman of Bayard, whose amendment to effectively take the teeth out of the bill was soundly defeated.

Nebraskans for Peace is especially grateful to Sen. Gwen Howard who carried the bill, to Tami Soper in her office who worked hard on it all along, to former Sen. David Landis who sponsored the legislation's first version, to Marilyn Mecham of Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska who spent many planning hours on the work, to Chuck Bentjen of Lutheran Advocacy Ministries who worked for the bill for many years, to Laurel Marsh who worked for the bill first as an aide to Sen. Landis and later scrambled to get it passed as a representative of the ACLU, to Michael Gordon of Citizens for Equal Protection who worked had for an earlier version of the bill, to Virginia Walsh who insisted that we keep fighting for the bill, to Nebraska Indian Commission Director Judi M. gaiashkibos, and Nebraska Mexican-American director, Cecilia Huerta, who fought for it, to the NAACP and the B'nai Brith, who represented other bullied groups, to a variety of educational



Sen. Gwen Howard of Omaha sponsored LB 205

and handicapped advocacy organizations and to the rank-and-file citizens who lobbied their senators. In the end the Nebraska Department of Education itself worked hard for the bill. We are grateful to all of these people.

NFP began work on this issue back in 2000 as a tribute to former State Coordinator Betty Olson, who up until her death in 1999 had been much concerned with the growth of the cult of violence in this country. Betty

was convinced that as long as we rear children who believe in violence as a problem-solving tool, we will also rear a nation that believes in war as a like tool. Over the past eight years, the anti-bullying legislation changed form many times and experienced many rejections before its passage. People said that it was unnecessary, that 'harassment' covered bullying, that the problem was already solved, that bullying strengthens kids for life's battles, that it is all part of growing up, that the bill would cost too much, and that action would do no good. Throughout, NFP stood firm, as did many of the other advocates with whom it had partnered.

The victory will not mean much unless NFP members and parents are vigilant about each Nebraska school's having a policy and about the need for teacher and administrator training in each school. It will not do much unless we each care about how a school makes and implements a good policy. We must tell parents and grandparents that children have rights in this area that their school must enforce. We must tell the children also.

LB 205 is the first of a series of steps seeking the reduction of dependence on violence in our society that NFP is pursuing. Our next policy effort will concern the connection between bullying and domestic violence. We know that bullies become domestic abusers and that abusive homes produce

As long as we rear children who believe in violence as a problem-solving tool, we will also rear a nation that believes in war as a like tool.

a disproportionate number of bullies and bully victims. With this NFP effort will also go an effort to advocate for Native American female victims of violence, most often coming from off-the-reservation males, and for women abused in war, especially in the present Middle Eastern wars. We welcome any input concerning how we can put in place good policy and good advocacy in these areas. If you wish to put in your two cents, write Paul Olson at polson2@unl.edu and he will forward your suggestions to the active NFP committee headed by Marsha Fangmeyer and her associate Jill Francke. Thank to everyone who worked hard on this. Raise a well-earned toast to LB 205 and then let's get to work.



Performed at the First Mennonite Church of Lincoln, Thursday January 17, and the Unitarian Church in Omaha, Friday January 18.

by Hendrik van den Berg

Nebraskans for Peace supported the Lincoln and Omaha performances of the play *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* by the Denver-based theater company, Countdown to Zero. The dialogue of the play consists entirely of the words written by Rachel Corrie, an American peace activist and member of an international group who volunteered to live in Rafah, a city of about 150,000 in Gaza. By their physical presence, these activists hoped to prevent Israel from destroying homes, water wells, schools and other infrastructure in Gaza and the Palestinian West Bank. Rachel arrived in Palestine on January 23, 2003. She died there on March 16 when an Israeli army bulldozer ran over her as she stood between it and a Palestinian home destined for destruction.


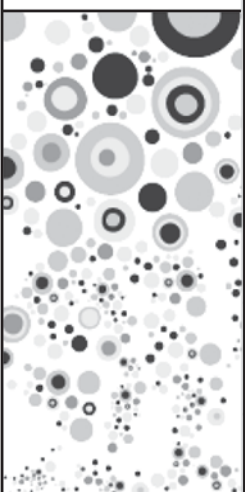
Rachel's very lively writing was masterfully presented by the actress Julie Rada, and supported by special effects controlled by the play's director, Brian Friedland, and stage manager Eric Meyers. Most impressive are Rachel's thoughts of home while living in Rafah. This mixture of writings provided the audience with the stark contrast between the seemingly carefree life in the U.S. and the daily horrors of life in Gaza.

Those who familiar with the Middle East know that Gaza is really one large prison ground, surrounded by walls and fences. Israeli soldiers routinely enter Gaza and the Palestinian West Bank

to intimidate Palestinians and to punish them for alleged acts of resistance by destroying their homes, olive groves, greenhouses and businesses. International law clearly forbids collective punishment for the actions of a few, but Israel collectively punishes Palestinians on a daily basis. Many Israelis and Americans argue that such punishment is appropriate because Palestinian suicide bombers cause deaths in Israel. Rachel saw things differently, however:

"I thought a lot about what you said on the phone about Palestinian violence not helping the situation... If any of us had our lives and welfare completely strangled, lived with children in a shrinking place where we knew that soldiers and tanks and bulldozers could come for us at any moment and destroy all the greenhouses that we had been cultivating for however long, and did this while some of us were beaten and held captive—do you think we might try to use somewhat violent means to protect whatever fragments remained?"

For us here in Nebraska, the play reminds us that the U.S. remains fully complicit in the massive oppression of the Palestinian people. As was pointed out at the end of the play, the bulldozer that destroyed the homes and killed Rachel Corrie in Gaza was paid for by American taxpayers and built in Peoria, Illinois. One of Rachel's last messages from Gaza summarized the play's message best: "Honestly, a lot of the time the sheer kindness of the people here, coupled with the overwhelming evidence of the willful destruction of their lives, makes it seem unreal to me. I really can't believe that something like this can happen in the world without a bigger outcry about it."

 <p>MARY RIEPMA ROSS MEDIA ARTS CENTER</p> <p>UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Lincoln HIXSON-LIED COLLEGE OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS</p> 	<p>COMING SOON</p>	
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<p>ADMISSION:</p> <p>\$8.00 GENERAL</p> <p>\$6.00 MATINEE (BEFORE 6 PM)</p> <p>\$6.00 MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE MARMAC, STUDENTS, SENIOR CITIZENS</p> <p>\$5.00 MATINEE FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE MARMAC (BEFORE 6 PM), AND CHILDREN (ALL TIMES)</p> <p>Box Office Opens 30 Minutes Before Showtimes</p>		<p>3.7 - 3.13 HONEYDRIPPER HONEYDRIPPER is classic Sayles cinema: an insightful sketch of assorted common folk whose criss-crossing dreams and agendas unfold against larger, more powerful sociopolitical and cultural forces.</p> <p>3.14 - 3.20 TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE The title refers to the cab driven by an Afghan man named Dilawar. Picked up as a suspect in a rocket attack in 2002, he was placed in the custody of U.S. soldiers at the Bagram "Collection Point." Within five days, Dilawar was dead.</p> <p>3.14 - 3.27 FUNNY GAMES In this provocative and brutal thriller from director Michael Haneke, a vacationing family gets an unexpected visit from two disturbed young men. Their holiday turns nightmarish as they are subjected to unimaginable terrors and struggle to stay alive.</p> <p>3.21 - 3.27 NANKING In 1937, Japanese armed forces entered Nanking, China, and systematically raped and killed over 200,000 Chinese in one of human history's worst atrocities. Decades later, there's still bad blood and unresolved tensions. This wrenching documentary combines harrowing archival footage and interviews with survivors.</p> <p>3.28 - 4.10 THE BAND'S VISIT Israeli filmmaker Eran Kolirin's debut feature, THE BAND'S VISIT, is a subtle, heartfelt, and humane work that goes a long way toward dissolving the incredibly complex cultural divide that continues to plague the Middle East.</p>
<p>LOCATION:</p> <p>313 N. 13 STREET LINCOLN, NEBRASKA</p>		
<p>www.theross.org</p>		

Paul Olson, conclusion

Grand Island groups associated with NFP are strong, but I am not so sanguine about the other groups we list. We need to have a conversation about supporting the chapters without using much staff time through finding itinerant speakers, films, slide shows, common actions and the like that will energize them. Otherwise our 'statewide' claim is a little hollow, and we isolate ourselves as urban pinkoes. We are doing better in getting college Peace & Justice groups going.

- We've worked for 40 years and still need to maintain a tight focus on the causes of violence and injustice in our society, and the building up of their alternatives, while not duplicating what other groups do. We are not the left wing of the Green or the Democratic Party. We're Nebraska's Peace & Justice organization—the oldest in the entire country.

If you have suggestions about how we can get more members and strengthen the

foundation and the endowment, how we can get new board and committee members that are eager to act for NFP, how we can energize the chapters and better focus our mission, please write to us at nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org with suggestions or to volunteer to help with the problem. Will you do some of our work? What will you do? I am old (75) and often torpid. I will not be the greatest of NFP presidents. But if you will do all that you can, I can promise that I will do my very best.

We do not face an easy time. The military and the military/industrial complex have the money and the power. We have the strength of our bodies, our consciences, our mental fight, and our meager fiscal resources. With those, we will try to celebrate our 40th anniversary years, 2008-2010 (the years of our maturity), with events at the annual conference, with write-ups in the *Nebraska Report*, and—most of all—with accomplishments for Peace & Justice. Will you join in the struggle all over again?

Safe and Free, conclusion

vote, would establish two government-appointed bodies—one, a national 10-member commission; the other, a university-based Center for Excellence, to study, monitor and propose ways of curbing homegrown terrorism and extremism in the U.S. The danger is the legislation's vague definitions of violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism and the commission's power to label individuals and groups as possible terrorists.

The ACLU has serious concerns. Caroline Fredrickson, Director of the Washington Legislative Office of the ACLU said, "Law enforcement should focus on action, not thought. We need to worry about the people who are committing crimes rather than those who harbor beliefs that the government may consider to be extreme."

The framework established by H.R. 1955 will make the focus of the commission the bill creates more likely to lead to unconstitutional restrictions on speech and belief—in addition to more appropriate restrictions on actions. Experience has demonstrated that the results of such a study will likely be used to recommend the use of racial, ethnic and religious profiling, in the event of a terrorist attack. ACLU believes this approach to be counter-productive; it will only heighten, rather than decrease, the spread of radicalization.

The ACLU has raised multiple concerns with H.R. 1955 at different points during the

last 13 months. We appreciate the steps that have been made to improve the legislation, but we still have reservations. As an organization dedicated to the principles of freedom of speech, we cannot in good conscience support this or any measure that might lead to censorship and persecution based solely on one's personal beliefs. Fredrickson explained that during hearings on the legislation called, "Using the Web as a Weapon: the Internet as a Tool for Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism," the focus on the internet was problematic. "If Congress finds the Internet is dangerous, then the ACLU will have to worry about censorship and limitations on First Amendment activities. Why go down that road?"

The ACLU is working with senators to improve First Amendment and civil liberties protections in the Senate version of the legislation.

ACLU Nebraska urges you to contact Nebraska Senators Nelson and Hagel. Find out how these men think and remind them that dissent has been part of our American tradition since the Boston Tea Party. Another tool that potentially targets "us ordinary Americans" is not needed.

We invite you to hear Ms. Bailey's personal story. For tickets to ACLU Nebraska's annual dinner and to see Barbara Bailey in person on April 12, call 402-476-8091 or e-mail us at info@aclunebraska.org.



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www.space4peace.org <http://space4peace.blogspot.com> (Blog)

Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, President, Nebraska Peace Foundation

2007 is over, except for making out your 2007 income taxes. If you have been working on your tax return, aren't you surprised how much goes to our government in Washington—much of it to support war. Now is a good time to look at what you can do to reduce the amount you have to pay in taxes.

For many, donations to charitable causes such as Nebraska Peace Foundation result in not having to pay taxes on income that is donated. This means that those in the higher tax brackets benefit more from their donations. Check with your accountant or tax advisor to see how you can benefit from a gift made now, or a planned gift at sometime in the future.



BULLETIN BOARD

Wednesdays in Lincoln	Anti-war vigil, Lincoln Federal Building, 15th & 'O' St., 5-6 p.m.
Wednesdays in Omaha	Vigil at StratCom's Global Innovation & Strategy Center, 6825 Pine Street, UNO Campus, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
March 19	Special 5th Anniversary of the Iraq War Protest, Lincoln Federal Building, 15th & 'O' St., 5-6 p.m.
March 20	Community Conversations: "StratCom: The Most Dangerous Place on the Face of the Earth" Meadowlark Coffee & Espresso, 16th & South Street, Lincoln, 7 p.m.
April 11-13	Global Network 2008 Conference on StratCom at Creighton University (see page 3 for details).
April 26	2008 Peace & Justice Expo in Omaha. Featured speaker: Sam Daley-Harris, founder of RESULTS, an international citizens' lobby on ending global poverty.



Forty & Counting

by Paul Olson, UNL Professor Emeritus

Mark your calendars! Get ready to celebrate! Not Presidents Day or Arbor Day. But NFP's birthday. Forty years of NFP and RNFP. RNFP is Rural Nebraskans for Peace—that little band of farmers and preachers and never-say-yes men from Central Nebraska and a few other locales who said 'no' to the war in Vietnam, 'no' to prejudice... that rabble that ran tractorcades for civil rights and held signs for peace, and generally raised hell about the state of the country. With them came the Quakers like Marge and Dan Schlitt and the Church of the Brethren people like Dwight Dell and the civil rights leaders like Hughes and Lela Shanks and Reuben Snake.

I remember my first NFP rally in 1970—a huge event behind the UNL Teacher's College building with rock bands and speeches by Reuben Snake and Nick Meinhardt and David Rice (now Mondo we Langa) and many others condemning the unilateral U.S. invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State killings. The rock bands were there and the hippies and speaker after speaker analyzing the war and the related shootings at Kent State and Jackson State. We were stopping Fascism, we thought. (If we had only known. It was just getting revved up.)

Since then Nebraskans for Peace has had less mellow times. It experienced some times of real poverty in the '70s. We saw Nebraskans' implication in the central episodes of the Watergate scandal, and then

the post-Watergate decline in interest in peace issues because people thought 'the struggle was over.'

When my former wife, Betty, was made state coordinator of NFP and with Mary Alice park ran the organization, I believe that NFP had fewer than 100 members, virtually no money to pay her, and so little cash on hand that she mimeographed her first issue of the *Nebraska Report*. Times that were hard to take came with these meager resources: the tiger cage torture prisons in Vietnam with Don Luce's exposés, Nixon's destruction of democratic Chile that led to Isabel Letelier's visit to tell us of her husband's assassination and American interventionism, the hostage crisis in Iran and Darryl Rupiper's trip there on behalf of NFP. Nothing fully succeeded. We seemed impotent before the 'Blue Meanies.'

Reagan built up NFP as no one else could have. He seemed to want war all over: in Europe with his missile build-up, in Central America with the Contras and death squads, in Eastern Europe and Asia against the Soviet Union with his 'Star Wars' proposals. (I have often wondered why we name anything 'civilian' after Reagan.) We saw *NO MX* here and with Marilyn McNabb in Utah; we saw Ernie Chambers' drive for divestment from South Africa; Larry Zink's and Marsha Fangmeyer's drive to Freeze the nuclear arsenals; Bob Epp's leadership in peacebuilding in Central and South America. We

seemed to be able to get things done.

Then the Clinton years produced another lull until George W. Bush strengthened us as no one else could have. Now we have the big fights on our hands again: Iraq, Iran, StratCom, endemic military pollution and global warming. Bush is even better than Reagan as our organizer. *We now know that we are in the belly of the beast here in Nebraska, and if we do not try to change things, we're not sure anyone else will.*

Though we can look strong and pound our collective chests about what we have done with StratCom and Whiteclay and the bullying bill and our anti-war actions, we are not so strong as we would like to think:

- We are 40 years old and only about 1000 households (1500 members) strong. I ask you, "Will you take it on yourself to ask five new members—Peace & Justice people—to join?" This week I am going to send an email to my network of friends to ask them to become NFPers. Will you? We need to double our size soon if we are to be effective;
- We are 40 years old, and we can barely make our budget. Admittedly, our budget is now \$150,000—compared to the little over a \$1000 when Betty started. But we still lack money to staff our needs and do the research and organizing required to get the job done. Mary Alice and Loyal Park have rescued us

from absolute bankruptcy with the money the Cat Lovers Against the Bomb calendar brings in, and they and the Nebraska Peace Foundation board have taken in enough foundation money each year to keep us afloat. *Now Loyal and the Foundation are trying to raise \$3 million dollars for an endowment that will keep us afloat in hard times. Will you look in your money sack to see if you could send a good chunk to the annual foundation drive or make a will for the endowment? We still pay our staff peanuts and get by on part-time appointments without much in the way of benefits.*

- We are 40 years old and still need a stronger board. Under Mark Vasina, we have improved our planning and record-keeping capacities enormously, as we improved our organization and resistance capacities under Marsha Fangmeyer and Carol McShane before him. We have great board members. Now we need young board members, more people of color, some fundraisers, and a few strong advocates for our priorities. Will you look around for them, perhaps in your own heart?
- We have 40 years under our belts and we still need to resuscitate the NFP chapters around the state by serving them better. The Lincoln, Omaha and

conclusion on page 11