Nebraskans for Peace laments the ISIS massacre of more than a hundred innocent people in Paris and over forty in Beirut. No good can come of such brutal actions. On the other hand, we oppose any precipitous declarations of war by the Western powers.

We understand the desire of people in France, Britain and the United States who may have lost loved ones or allies to want to go into Iraq and Syria with ground troops to wipe out ISIS. They perhaps believe that such an action will prevent additional attacks in Western countries. However, as the failed invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq tragically demonstrate, this approach is unlikely to work. Retaliation with a bombing campaign plays right into ISIS’s hands. It is what they are counting on for the recruitment of more terrorists and the expansion of terrorist operations.

What will work is greater coordination within the world community and law enforcement to interdict these murderous acts. We believe that working to alleviate the dire economic situation of Islamic people in Syria, northern Iraq and much of the Islamic immigrant community in France and other places is likely to diminish the festering unrest and unemployment that feeds ISIS. We also believe that police reorganization, to promote better security in Western countries, as well as trade embargoes, to prevent ISIS expansion in Syria and Iraq, will help. These actions will do more than direct military attacks on the Islamic State, which will only exacerbate matters.

After 9/11/2001’s 3,000 deaths in the Twin Towers, we attacked Afghanistan to retaliate for the American deaths. But that did not stop the killing of Americans: in the period since, 2,326 U.S. military deaths have occurred in Afghanistan, 20,083 Americans have also been wounded, 1,173 U.S. civilian contractors have died and about 100,000 Afghan civilians have been killed. The ill-conceived War in Iraq has added thousands more to the lists. And still the killing goes on.

As an alternative to declarations of war, we call on the United States government to summon Wahhabi Islam supporters in Saudi Arabia to rethink the commitments to terror attributed to them. We ask Western governments to forswear the history of terror, torture and violations of human rights that have fed terroristic movements everywhere. As peace people, we agree with the insight of Louis Fischer, Gandhi’s biographer, who said “Satyagraha (non-violence, insistence on truth) is the exact opposite of the policy of an-eye-for-an-eye-for-an-eye-for-an-eye which ends in making everybody blind.” Though we do not have easy solutions to the Middle East’s problems, we believe that undertaking another war is not one of them.

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Nebraska Report

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Nebraskans for Peace

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Crete Chapter .................. Pat Wikel ............... 402-826-4818
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Gift Memberships Are ONLY $25
by David P. Forsythe, UNL Political Science Professor Emeritus

At least since 1919, the Middle East has confounded outside attempts to manage it. When the decaying Ottoman Empire chose the losing side in the First World War, it lost its empire in the Middle East. The British and French then carved up the area giving primacy to colonial ambitions and not much concern for local welfare, drawing questionable national boundaries and installing pro-Western monarchs who in most cases did not endure. The Americans then replaced principally Britain as the major power in the region after the Second World War, and especially after the 1956 Suez Crisis, and found equal difficulty in imposing its desires on various nations. Whether one speaks of Iraq or Syria, the question of Palestine or the Yemeni civil war, stability and friendship in Iran or progress and democracy in North Africa, the United States struggled to shape regional affairs consistent with its preferences.

The Iran nuclear deal is another in a long line of outside attempts to control dangerous and threatening developments in the Middle East. I suspect it will be one to two decades before we know for sure whether it is a step forward or another failed arrangement. I think the deal should be supported, but in the sense of taking a risk for progress rather than in the sense of being sure one has found the right knife to cut a Gordian knot. Sometimes in the debate over the Iranian nuclear deal we forget how unsatisfying the status quo is... All of the bluster and even concrete actions against the Iranian regime of the clerics did not prevent Tehran from increasing its nuclear research program.

Then too there were evident threats communicated in various ways by Israel, indicating that a continuation of Iran’s nuclear research program might lead to a unilateral military first strike against those facilities. Israeli strikes on nuclear institutions in both Iraq and Syria gave credence to Israeli signals. But even these developments did not deter the Iranians. Rather, they built some of their nuclear facilities underground, thus making it harder for anyone to destroy them.

(On this matter it might be kept in mind that the Pentagon has gamed such a military strike on Iran and found that subsequent developments were negative. That is, simulations in the Department of Defense led to negative outcomes, one of which was that the United States was drawn into increased violence in the region.)

To repeat this early main point, various Western and Israeli threats and actions against Iran had not caused Tehran to moderate its nuclear ambitions, whatever they are in precise detail.

Against this historical and more recent political background, the United States negotiated the Iran nuclear deal on the part of itself and the P5-plus-1. That is, the deal is actually between Iran and the 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany. It is not hard to see that the Obama Administration views the deal as an improvement on the status quo. The Obama team claims that the negotiated text might be transformational. And it might be.

It might also turn out to be just another transaction with long-term negatives, hence my position of: ask me again in 10 or 15 years.

In the meantime there are various reasons to hope that Obama is right about the Iranian nuclear deal, beyond the point that the current efforts at isolation and pressure and threat have not worked.

1. Iran has agreed to suspend much of its nuclear program for 15 years, under international inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. This at least delays any Iranian breakout to a nuclear weapon for over a decade. It is possible that during this time the most hawkish of the Iranian leaders will die.
off (some in the top echelon are aged and unwell). There are moderate elements, and much of the Iranian population is young and wants rapprochement with the West. The Obama team and its supporters hope that Iran will become a normal rather than revolutionary state during the coming years and will be treated as such by the rest of the world, thus defusing much conflict and tension.

Some critics wanted Iran’s nuclear capability taken down to zero rather than capped at a certain level, but these critics do not say how Iran could be brought to accept that situation. Iran as a sovereign state and a party to the “Non-Proliferation Treaty” has a right to peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy, like France or Japan or the United States or any other state. The main point of the deal is to keep Iran short of the capacity to make a short dash to producing a nuclear weapon.

No doubt Iran noted that the United States invaded Iraq which did not have nuclear weapons, whereas Washington has treated North Korea, which does have nuclear weapons, much more carefully.

Critics, who expect Iran to cheat on the details of the deal, will watch the IAEA carefully. So will Washington and other P5 states like Britain and France, all of which have their own independent means of verifying developments. Any number of nuclear experts believes the negotiated inspection regime is adequate to detect cheating.

2. As economic sanctions are incrementally lifted on an Iran in compliance with the terms of the deal, more Iranian oil will flow to various markets. Presumably this will be good for investors and consumers as such a development should lower consumer prices.

But the deal is not perfect and there are negatives.

1. The problem of Iran as a nuclear state is not solved, only delayed. The can has been kicked down the road. After about 15 years, Iran could resume those aspects of nuclear research that would permit a breakout to nuclear weapons.

Certain elements of the Iranian state, such as the Revolutionary Guards, show no evidence of moderating. So even if certain top clerical revolutionaries pass the scene, there is no guarantee that moderates will triumph in an internal power struggle with the revolutionaries.

2. In the meantime, the lifting of sanctions means that Iran will have added resources with which to implement its various foreign policies. In places like Syria, Iran has backed brutal autocrats. It supplied weapons to Shi’a militia in Iraq that killed and wounded Americans. It has intruded deeply into Lebanese do-

Some critics wanted Iran’s nuclear capability taken down to zero rather than capped at a certain level, but these critics do not say how Iran could be brought to accept that situation.

mestic affairs principally via its support for Hezbollah, which is both a political actor in Lebanon and a militia fighting in Syria and threatening Israel. Iran instills fear in Saudi Arabia—for example, by backing Shi’a political factions in Bahrain (representing the majority) which sits on the Saudi border (and is the location for a major U.S. military facility).

Critics of the deal are unhappy that the nuclear deal is strictly a nuclear deal and fails to address the broader aspects of Iranian foreign policy toward Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and so forth. But as on other issues, critics do not explain how they would be able to strike a deal in which Tehran agreed to give up its quest for power in the region. It is not at all clear that any outsiders can stop the long competition between both Persians and Arabs, and now particularly between Shi’a and Sunni Muslims. Iran is of course Persian and Shi’a whereas other antagonistic actors are Sunni Arabs—like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

Based on the above brief summary, one can perhaps understand the wisdom
of a wait-and-see attitude for those of us who did not have to vote now or otherwise take an immediate position on the Iranian nuclear deal. The Obama team obviously thought it was the best that could be done given political and power realities in the current context. The status quo is not working to benefit peaceful developments, a deal might begin to move Iran in a positive direction, and it simply was not possible to get comprehensive agreement on a broader range of issues.

But in the future the critics may turn out to be right if Iran pockets the deal, continues to intervene in neighboring Arab Sunni states, remains hostile to particularly the United States, and eventually breaks out to develop nuclear weapons. In that event, all will have paid a high price for the attempt to temporarily reduce tension and encourage moderation.

Finally, a word is in order about the role of Israel in all of this. It is no secret that the Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been vociferously opposed to the deal. It is also no secret that various Iranian leaders have made clear they would like to remove Israel from the political map, regarding its creation as the result of Western neo-colonialism. About 35 other states share this view and have never recognized the Jewish state. It does not help matters that Israel has continued its military occupation or other control of territory since 1967, territory that was taken in war and territory that the rest of the world considers to be Palestinian land (in the West Bank and Gaza, the former officially occupied and the latter controlled by various arrangements).

Setting aside for now such controversies, most observers agree that Israel has multiple nuclear weapons. It has chosen to remain silent on the subject but that is the conventional wisdom. That being the case, most reasonable observers believe that the usual logic of deterrence protects Israel from Iranian decision-makers acting on the basis of their threatening rhetoric. Iran being a state with known territory and fixed population, it is an easy target for Israeli second-strike capability. That is to say, any Iranian military attack on Israel would result in massive destruction for Iran. Contrary to some journalistic speculation, there is no evidence that Iranian leaders are so rabid on the subject of Zionism that they would risk such destruction to their own state. There is every reason to believe Iranian leaders are rational, interested in a careful construction of their own national interest, and not given to revolutionary pursuits in the face of superior power. Moreover, an Iranian strike on Israel would kill Palestinians as well and damage Islamic holy places in Jerusalem. As part of this rational orientation, it is highly unlikely that Iran would allow Hezbollah or any of its other allies to control any Iranian nuclear weapon of the future. No doubt Israel would hold Iran responsible for any threatening movements by Hezbollah or similar pro-Iran militias. It should be noted that a number of Israeli retired security officials, diplomats, and politicians support the nuclear deal and counsel against any Israeli strike against Iran. The Israel Atomic Energy Commission supports the deal. While such a unilateral strike might interrupt some Iranian research efforts for a time, such a strike would almost certainly guarantee that Iran would activate and accelerate plans for a breakout to nuclear weapons status.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the train has left the station and the only remaining questions focus on the nature of the journey that has been started. The UN Security Council has approved the deal, and the U.S. Congress has failed to block it. For better or worse, we will now find out the impact of the deal. Should the next U.S. Administration pull out of the deal, perhaps claiming some violation of arrangements on the Iranian side, that will only mean that Iran and others would not consider themselves bound by negotiated arrangements. Iran could then maximize its nuclear research program. States like Russia would also feel free to change their policies as well, perhaps striking further bilateral accords with Tehran. Russia is already linked to Iran concerning the Syrian civil war, both backing Assad. Europe would move ahead with trade deals with Iran, and these energy deals would reduce European dependence on Russia. So in many ways, it will be difficult for the United States to pull back from the nuclear deal, absent clear, serious and intentional violations by Iran.

Over time, we will indeed discover if the Iran nuclear deal is transformational or just another failed attempt by outsiders to manage a complicated and conflicted part of the world.
by Roger Bergman, Ph.D.,
Director, Justice & Peace
Studies Program, Creighton
University

In “Pope Francis, Climate &
Controversy” in the July/August Nebraska Report, University of Nebraska-Omaha Professor Bruce Johansen observed that with the publication in June of the encyclical Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home, the Pope had “focused attention on climate change as no one else on earth could.” Johansen quoted the New York Times statement that “worldwide media interest... was ‘enormous.’” I can attest that local interest is also lively. I have given seven presentations on the encyclical to almost 400 people in Catholic, Protestant and non-religious settings. These audiences have seemed overwhelmingly receptive to the Pope’s message, but also worried about how we will actually move from the unsustainable present to a sustainable future. The Pope offers an inspiring vision but not a detailed blueprint.

I wrote Professor Johansen to thank him for his attention to Laudato Si’, and joined him in hoping that it marks a turning point in public perception of the urgency of combatting environmental destruction and climate change. But I also had to take issue with Johansen’s section on “Taking Issue with Genesis 1:28.” That is the famous (or infamous) passage that instructs humanity to “be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the Earth, and subdue it, and have dominion... over every moving thing that moveth upon the earth.” The Pope has not ‘re-written’ that passage, as claimed, but interpreted it in light of the best recent biblical scholarship.

As Pope Francis explains, the Creation accounts in the first two chapters of Genesis “suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself,” thus expanding the “Double Love Commandment” of the rabbis and of Jesus into a ‘Triple Love’ Commandment—a Triple Bottom Line for salvation. The Pope further explains that “The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. This in turn distorted our mandate to ‘have dominion’ over the earth (cf. Genesis 1:28), to ‘till it and keep it’ (Genesis 2:15).” The Pope then approvingly quotes Saint Bonaven-

Koch Brothers—is the proper symbol of what the Pope believes is meant by “dominion.” And it ought to be obvious that what was understood by dominion in the ancient and medieval worlds is nothing like what humanity is capable of since the advent of modern industry and technology. Saint Francis couldn’t have fracked even had he wanted to.

But that’s not what I found most troubling about Johansen’s article. He opines that when the Pope “suggests that Catholics quit having huge families, we will know...
the Catholic Church is really serious about rebuking the old command of Genesis 1:28 to multiply and subdue the Earth.” Johansen does allow that Francis has “already remarked off-the-cuff that no doctrine requires Catholics to ‘breed like rabbits.’” I had to ask Professor Johansen: Do you have evidence that Catholics are now having larger families than average? To quote a Gallup poll from 2007: “Catholics are little different from the overall population in their views of ideal family size.” The vast majority of U.S. Catholics in their child-bearing years practice artificial birth control at the same rate as the general population, despite church opposition.

But more importantly, it’s not mainly the number of people being born that threatens the sustainability of human civilization on this finite planet, but the scope of consumption of the affluent elite—which, in global context, certainly includes professors like Johansen and me. And no one has decried economic inequality more insistently than this Pope. Indeed, one of the main themes of Laudato Si’ is that social justice and environmental sustainability can never be separated. We must make simultaneous options for the poor and for the Earth, as the poor (those who have contributed least to climate change) are already the ones suffering the most from it. Remember Katrina?

Here’s what the Pope himself has to say on the subject: “To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption… Still, attention needs to be paid to imbalances in population density.” No doubt the Pope has not addressed this issue as fully as needed, but he’s on the right track, it seems to me.

I am reminded that shortly after World War II, a planning document from the U.S. State Department observed that “we have about 50 percent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population… Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity… We should cease to talk about vague and… unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization… The less we are hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.”

To be frank, I think it is easy for non-Catholics, drawing on an old prejudice, to point fingers at Catholics for their allegedly ‘huge families.’ Or to put it in a way more consonant with the Pope’s analysis: it is easy for the affluent to point fingers at the impoverished. Let me ask: would the Earth be better off with fewer high-consuming elites or fewer low-consuming poor? Should we share the Earth’s goods more equitably or should there simply be fewer of ‘them’?

I am grateful to Professor Johansen for his gracious suggestion that Nebraska Report provide me space to respond to his article. This is an excellent example of the kind of respectful dialogue and solidarity that Pope Francis encourages, from the family dinner table to the upcoming climate summit in Paris. Let us pray this dialogue is fruitful and multiplies—indeed, that it has dominion over the face of the Earth.
President Obama rejected the Keystone XL Pipeline. You know that, of course.

Something you may not know is that, the same day, November 6, New York State’s attorney general announced an investigation of ExxonMobil’s Board of Directors for lying about the important political and legal change here. Applied to climate change, this is a new use of the law, and (like Obama’s action on the pipeline) it reflects a paradigm shift in thinking about the need to take dramatic action on climate by important people with power to shape the course of events—that is, people unlike professors, journalists and activists, whose roles are purely descriptive and advisory.

We are talking here about criminal indictments of important people for lying about the effects of global warming—in an official capacity—after they had been briefed on the science.

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We are talking here about criminal indictments of important people for lying about the effects of global warming—in an official capacity—after they had been briefed on the science.

I am old enough to remember a time when my first college classroom (at the University of Washington in Seattle) contained ashtrays. Many people smoked tobacco, and they smoked it nearly everywhere. This was 1968, five years after the U.S. Surgeon General had issued a report linking smoking with harmful medical maladies. A very lively debate had ensued, with tobacco companies maintaining that smoking was fun and harmless. Later, legal investigations found that members of tobacco company boards had been briefed on the harm that smoking was doing, but had set out after that to tell the public otherwise. They lied, did damage and paid for it legally.

Hey, I thought upon first reading of the investigation, don’t members of ExxonMobil’s board have a constitutional right to lie on company time? They do it often, don’t they? Isn’t this how things work in a world where power is as power does?

A Paradigm Change

Then I realized that perhaps I was witnessing an events—that is, people unlike professors, journalists and activists, whose roles are purely descriptive and advisory.

We are talking here about criminal indictments of important people for lying about the effects of global warming—in an official capacity—after they had been briefed on the science. ExxonMobil engaged in damaging behavior knowing better (with malice, in legal language). This can lead to indictment for various forms of negligence and fraud.

Surgeon General had issued a report linking smoking with harmful medical maladies. A very lively debate had ensued, with tobacco companies maintaining that smoking was fun and harmless. Later, legal investigations found that members of tobacco company boards had been briefed on the harm that smoking was doing, but had set out after that to tell the public otherwise. They lied, did damage and paid for it legally.

I am also old enough to have developed an interest in global warming 20 years ago, when such activity was largely regarded as the province of a few scientists and some fuzzy-headed environmental activists. Since then, accumulating evidence has convinced many other people that we need to do something quickly to avert climate catastrophe.

Evidence Accumulates

Wind and solar power are spreading rapidly, and unit costs are falling. At the same time, scientists are modeling the melting of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet as a near certainty (with a 20-foot worldwide sea-level rise), the cod fishery has collapsed off New England (the water is too warm), and 2015 will be the warmest year worldwide by a substantial margin over last year’s record heat. Other scientists are calculating the proportion of fossil-fuel companies’ reserves that will have to remain un-combusted to keep the Earth habitable in coming centuries. The template of a new reality is evolving.

And, of course, a lively debate has ensued. A half century after tobacco executives maintained with straight faces that smoking was harmless fun, Oklahoma Senator James

conclusion on page 11
Open Harvest Co-op Grocery
Celebrating 40 Years of Healthy, Local Food

by Barbara DiBernard
Open Harvest Board Member

90 percent of the $4.4 billion Nebraskans annually spend on food leaves the state. (Crossroads Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN 2010).

“Only 1,300 Nebraska farms sell directly to consumers, with sales of $5.9 million, contributing 0.04 percent of the total farm product sales in the state.” (Center for Rural Affairs, 2015).

A number of organizations, businesses and individuals are working to reverse these trends by increasing support for small- and mid-scale farmers to grow food for Nebraskans to eat and by providing direct outlets for the sale of these crops. One of these organizations, Open Harvest Cooperative Grocery, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

Open Harvest, currently located at 16th and South Streets in Lincoln, started as a buying club in 1971, opened a small storefront in 1975, moved to a larger store in 1990, and completed a major expansion at that site in 2009.

In fiscal year 2014-15, 29.4 percent of everything sold at Open Harvest was from a local source, representing 115 different vendors.

No grocery store in Lincoln shows this commitment to buying from local sources.

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ing rice bread baked fresh once a week and many other gluten-free products. People with allergies and other food sensitivities will find foods and products that are healthy for them as well as a knowledgeable staff to help them make choices.

Open Harvest has a Purchasing Policy for everything sold in the store. The basis of the Policy is that products will be healthful, environmentally responsible and socially responsible. Some of the factors which go into the consideration of what products to carry include that, as much as possible, they be from small-scale producers; be grown organically; be free of artificial colors, flavors and preservatives; have minimal and recyclable packaging; and not be tested on animals. The full Purchasing Policy is available on the website at www.openharvest.coop. Many Open Harvest shoppers say that knowing the store has a Purchasing Policy is a major reason they shop there—they know in advance that the products are the best choices for them, and they don’t have to do all the research themselves.

Open Harvest has always been DIY. It was begun as a buying club by community members who wanted good, healthy food they couldn’t obtain from traditional stores and, in 1975, began operating as a co-operative grocery store. At that time, there were just a few paid staff and member volunteers did most of the work (people had to volunteer to be members). In 1983, however, the Board of Directors started a member capitalization plan in which people paid to be “Member Owners.” Since then, people become Member Owners by paying equity, which is currently $25 a year. This is not the kind of membership fee some stores require; it is equity in a cooperative which was born and has continued for 40 years to meet the needs of its Member Owners.

As a co-op, Open Harvest belongs to its Member Owners. As stated on the Open Harvest website, “Co-operatives are member-owned, member-governed businesses that operate for the benefit of their members and their communities. In co-ops, members pool resources to bring about economic results that are unobtainable by one person alone. By shopping at Open Harvest, you will nourish natural and organic food growth, jobs in your community, and the democratic process.”

Open Harvest is guided by the “Co-op Values” that are “based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.” (General Assembly of the International Cooperative Alliance, adopted in Manchester, UK, 1995)

Everyone can shop at Open Harvest. Member Owners do receive additional benefits, however, which include monthly specials, a discount on cases, the opportunity to volunteer at the store for a discount, the ability to vote for and run for the Board of Directors, participation in the annual meeting and regular newsletters and updates.

As a local business and a Co-op, Open Harvest is part of and serves a wider community in Lincoln, Nebraska. The store works with other organizations to provide education on healthy eating, cooking classes, donations of food and other resources. It also helps stimulate the local economy: “a dollar spent locally on locally produced food will result in up to $3.30 of increased local spending as the effect spreads through the local economy” (Center for Rural Affairs, 2015).

As part of its 40th anniversary activities, Open Harvest created a special audio documentary project. Over 60 interviews were recorded and compiled into an audio documentary showcasing the Co-op’s unique history, told through the memories of its Member Owners, staff and volunteers. You can listen to or download this “Storymobile” project under “Events” on the Open Harvest website. It provides a history of this dynamic Co-op Grocery that remains dedicated to a vibrant and healthy local and global community.
Inhofe, whose pockets bulge with oil-industry cash, stood on the U.S. Senate floor holding a snowball, repeating the right-wing mantra that global warming is a gigantic hoax staged by scientists stuffing their pockets with grant money. (At least he was not smoking a cigar.) One cannot be a serious Republican in our time without chirping that Party Line. It’s all political theater, in a line of work where lying is a way of life. Climate change denial is every bit as nonsensical as arguing that the sun rises in the west, the Earth is flat and the Moon is made of green cheese. And yet Republican politicians shamelessly recite these climate lies, deliberately sowing confusion.

In half a century, perhaps, people will throw rotten tomatoes at pictures of Inhofe and the board members of ExxonMobil (et al.) in the “Greenhouse Gas Museum” as floods roll into New York City and our iconic corn goes sterile in scorching summer heat. Everyone will know by then who lied to whom, and with what effect, and the law will have evolved to confirm the new reality. That evolution is already beginning, although, as one account in the New York Times reminded us, “successful prosecutions are far from assured.”

**ExxonMobil is Not Alone**

Internal documents at Exxon-Mobil illustrate that even as one in-house memo stated that “fossil fuels contribute most of the CO2” that was rapidly heating the Earth, another memo instructed company officials to “emphasize the uncertainty in scientific conclusions.” “There was a concerted effort by multiple American oil companies to obscure the emerging climate science consensus throughout the 1990s,” Paul Bledsoe, a former White House aide to President Bill Clinton on climate issues, told the New York Times. “This group may be vulnerable to legal challenge.” “Exxon Mobil is not alone,” said Stephen Zamora, a professor at the University of Houston Law Center. “This is not likely to be an isolated matter.”

“It’s not surprising, given its army of first-rate scientists and engineers, that Exxon was aware as far back as the 1970s that carbon dioxide from oil and gas burning could have dire effects on the Earth,” commented Timothy Egan in the New York Times. “Nor is it surprising that Exxon would later try to cast doubt on what its experts knew to be true, to inject informational pollution into the river of knowledge about climate change… But what is startling is how a deliberate campaign of misinformation—now disavowed by even ExxonMobil itself—has found its way into the minds of the leading Republican presidential candidates.”

**REFERENCES**


Bruce E. Johansen is Jacob J. Isaacson Professor at UNO and author of the just-released book, Eco-Hustle!
The holidays have traditionally been a time of feasting with family and friends.

The biggest concern most of us have ever had to contend with when we gather for these holiday feasts is that we’ll overeat and put on unwanted pounds.

Those days of happy, carefree indulgence though are numbered. With the imminent peril climate change is posing to the world’s food supply, we’re likely to see far more famine than feasting in the years to come.

Hotter temperatures... more extreme weather... and the increased threat of pests and diseases are projected to lower agricultural yields at least 16 percent by 2050. At the same time the demand for food in a world of 9 billion people will rise 60 percent.

Historically, the Peace Movement hasn’t given all that much attention to issues of ‘Food Security.’ But if ever there was a pressing ‘peace issue’ in the world today, ready access to food is it.

And to appreciate the importance of this point, we need look no further than our own stomachs. Miss just one meal and we all know what happens to our blood sugar: we become hard to live with. Hungry people, as we’ve known all of our lives, are crabby people... And crabby people aren't very peaceful.

We’re seeing this unpleasant dynamic being played out on the international level right before our eyes. The tragic civil war in Syria, for instance, was provoked in part by climate change and food insecurity. Between 2006 and 2011, Syria suffered a record drought that drove masses of its farmers off the land. One and a half million people were displaced by this climate catastrophe and sent fleeing to the cities, where they promptly overwhelmed the government’s ill-equipped social safety net. Hunger, oppression, sectarian rivalries and government corruption all fed the unrest that culminated in open civil war.

The refugee crisis we’re witnessing in Europe today is a direct result of this climate change-instigated crisis. The entire “Arab Spring” of 2011, in fact, had roots in climate change. Rising food prices – stemming from the colossal failure of the 2010 Russian wheat harvest – stoked protests all over the Mideast. Once again, food shortages aggravated existing grievances, sparking insurrections against the ruling governments.

The perils climate change poses for our food supply, however, aren’t confined to distant parts of the earth.

We’re facing them right here at home. Right now.

California – the source for nearly half of all the fruits and vegetables consumed in the U.S. – is in its fourth year of a record-setting drought. Even when the drought finally breaks, the era of the California Central Valley being America’s produce supplier is over. The state’s reservoirs and groundwater resources are getting depleted and hotter temperatures are reducing snowfall. What moisture they do get is falling as rain... and the mountain snowmelt farmers have relied on for a century for irrigation simply isn’t available anymore.

Meanwhile...

The average bite of food on our plates continues to travel over 2,000 miles to get there. Almost one-fifth of the food we now eat is imported from outside the country.

Even in an agricultural powerhouse like Nebraska, 90 percent of the money our citizens annually spend on food leaves the state. Despite our proud heritage as a farm state, we’re not growing food for our tables anymore. We’re producing commodity crops – corn and soybeans (mainly for ethanol and animal feed) and beef for the international market. Nebraskans grab their food off the grocery store shelf the same as everyone else.

Despite being the wealthiest nation in human history, AMERICA IS FOOD INSECURE. We’ve positioned ourselves as far away from our food supply as virtually any other country in the world.

We don’t grow our own food. We have no idea where our food comes from. And we’re not particularly concerned about trying to shorten that food chain to bring it closer to home.

For anyone who likes to eat regularly, though, this is a risky way to operate.
And it has serious implications as a ‘peace issue’.

The chair of the United Kingdom’s “All-Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development” — Lord Cameron of Dillington — warns that even ‘First World’ nations like Britain and the U.S. are just “NINE MEALS FROM ANARCHY.”

Observing what unfolded in New Orleans ten years ago during Hurricane Katrina, the House of Lords’ member concluded that, if the delivery trucks don’t arrive to replenish the shelves, after just three days, we’re looking at “rats, mayhem and maybe even murder.”

Just that quick... when people get hungry and don’t have anything to eat... the social order starts to break down.

What you’re reading here really isn't news.

Everyone from the Department of Defense to former Nebraska Republican elected officials like 1st District Congressman Doug Bereuter and U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel have sounded warnings that we’re facing food and water shortages due to climate change.

It's on the record. The information is out there. Hardly anybody in the state though is talking about this issue.

You’d think with agriculture being the lifeblood of the Nebraska economy... with all of us wanting to eat... and food so integrally tied to peace... the security of our food supply would be a hot topic of discussion.

But apart from a news report about a new scientific finding or an occasional pronouncement from a politician, there’s an eerie, unhealthy silence around this subject.

So it falls to us — the oldest statewide Peace & Justice organization in the entire U.S. — to start the discussion about how we’re going to feed ourselves in the trying times ahead.

It’s up to us to broach the topic... Just like we do with justice for Palestine... With the crying need to cut the military budget... With reducing the world’s nuclear weapons stockpiles... And with stopping our endless (and fruitless) military interventions abroad.

Important as food security is (and IT IS important because we’re all going to want our next meal), it can’t be the only issue NFP speaks up about.

The work of peacemaking is an intricate tapestry of interconnected issues. The old union slogan about ‘an injury to one is an injury to all’ is as true as ever. As part of the larger human family — and the even larger ecosystem we share with the rest of creation — we’re all in this together.

What better time of the year than the holiday season, when hopes for “Peace on Earth” are on everyone’s lips, to be talking about how we’re all connected to one another?

That’s the goal and mission of Nebraskans for Peace in a nutshell — not just during the holidays, but every day of the year.

We carry that standard and that message everywhere we go... trying to build on those connections... trying to build community... trying, in short, to build a more peaceful and just world.

This is our end-of-the-year fundraising appeal.

This is when we specifically turn to our supporters to ask for your financial help to sustain our work for yet another record-setting year.

After 45 years, you know what we’ve done. You know what tall tasks we’ve set for ourselves.

Now we ask for your financial gifts so we can pay our bills and continue these efforts.

TRADITIONALLY, WE TRY TO START THE NEW YEAR WITH $30,000 ON HAND.

And that’s our goal for this year as well. Thirty thousand dollars to give us a nest egg.

Please give as generously as you can. You won’t find a better cause. And you know your money will be well-spent.

And, this year of all years, we wish you the happiest of holiday feasts with family and friends.

Best Wishes for the New Year,

Tim Rinne
State Coordinator, Nebraskans for Peace

P.S. Gift memberships to NFP are also great ways ‘to give the gift of peace’ to family and friends and increase NFP’s numbers. Gift memberships are only $25 each.
lack of international legal constraints on global capitalism.

In the ‘nation-state’ idea, ‘nation’ means a specific nationality; ‘state’ means a particular government suiting the nationality and having a monopoly on police or army violence (save for self-defense). As Tomsky implies, a nation-state—following the post-Westphalian myth—is one people, one set of borders, partly from many European Union-like supranational arrangements, partly from the appearance of failed states, and partly from the three other changes mentioned above:

1. Increasing refugee and immigrant flows blurring national identities and boundaries: for the first time since the stabilizations after the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe, conquistador destruction of the Native American empires in the New World, and the Asian recoveries after Genghis Khan’s and later Mogul invasions of western/Southern Asia, identifying territories with rooted peoples has become impossible. Immigration and refugee flows, prompted by climate change, wars, starvation and warlord chaos, change ethnic uniformity and invite terror. The flows will not be stanched as climate change worsens and the Defense Department’s climate change-projected migrations occur.

2. Increasing resistance to the idolatry of the nation state and killing in its name. As we become more uprooted and unhealthy, we become less enthusiastic about killing to protect real or imaginary nation-state roots. An Economist article argues that “During the Korean War, around 70 percent of draft-age American men served in the armed forces; during Vietnam, the unpopularity of the conflict and ease of draft-dodging ensured that only 43 percent did. These days, even if every young American wanted to join up, less than 30 percent would be eligible to. Of the starting 21 million, around 9.5m would fail a rudimentary academic qualification, either because they had dropped out of high school or, typically, because most young Americans cannot do tricky sums without a calculator. Of the remainder, 7m would be disqualified because they are too fat, or have a criminal record, or tattoos on their hands or faces… That leaves 4.5m young Americans eligible to serve, of whom only around 390,000

Going to war and killing for a government is just not the “divine calling” it once was. Direct killing on the basis of some claimed ultimate calling is more likely.

one law and one language. To fulfill this myth, the United States pushed the ‘melting pot’ idea to make us ‘one people’ culturally; the Right tells us we need English as our one national language. Nation-state ideology tells us that the state alone can kill—in battle or execution. The nation state is ‘God,’ its mandates coextensive with God’s. Sarah Palin told us the “United States sent troops to fight in the Iraq war on a ‘task that is from God.’” A song from my childhood asserts that God’s (i.e. America’s) great heroes (e.g. Custer, Nathan Hale, WWII fallen hero Colin Kelly) go straight to a Star-Spangled heaven. But it is clear now that any group with weapons can kill, whether it is a state or not.

The nation-state cornerstone of the international order now suffocates
are minded to, provided they do not get snapped up by a college or private firm instead—as tends to happen to the best of them… “

The article observes that the elites of our nation, anomic as they are, do not go to the military.

**Amid this chaos, if we seek peace and nonviolence, we must go beyond peace negotiations and international peacekeeping among increasingly irrelevant nation states.**

These American trends correlate with worldwide phenomena. In 1970, 80 percent of the earth’s governments used conscription; now only 45 percent do, most of these for shortened terms and with easy draft escape. Going to war and killing for a government is just not the ‘divine calling’ it once was. Direct killing on the basis of some claimed ultimate calling is more likely.

3. The disappearance of nation states as exclusively the most powerful organizations on the earth as ‘corporate loyalties’ replace ethnic roots. “Transnational Institute” data shows that the world’s 100 largest economies (http://makewealthhistory.org/2014/02/03/the-corporations-bigger-than-nations/) include 37 corporations—six of which are petroleum companies. These corporations frequently control nation-state economies and military activities: for example, the oil industry during the George W. Bush administration. The world’s largest corporation is Walmart, but immediately thereafter come Royal Dutch Petroleum, Exxon Mobil, Sinopec China Petroleum, BP and Petrochina—each of them capable of controlling large nation states.

Nation states no longer exclusively control the machinery of local violence. Consider terrorist groups or failed states like Somalia or Yemen. Consider war lords and strong men, gangs, drug cartels and organized criminals, guerrilla forces, right-wing militias and gun groups, and armies serving corporations in places like the Congo—none new but endemic now almost everywhere.

Amid this chaos, if we seek peace and nonviolence, we must go beyond peace negotiations and international peacekeeping among increasingly irrelevant nation states. We must speak and live for international court sovereignty over corporate entities everywhere, especially in such arrangements as the “Trans-Pacific Partnership”; for relating rootedness to bioregions and neighborhoods instead of border guards, armies, guns, and WMDs; and for conflict resolution processes that teach peace studies and conflict resolution at micro and macro levels in our religious institutions and schools.

Peace must indeed be our profession, but in a new and radical sense.

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Carlton B. Paine, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
5625 ‘O’ Street, Suite 7 • Lincoln, NE 68510
Phone: 402-489-8484

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Speaking Our Peace

by Paul Olson, NFP President Emeritus

The Nation State Is a Very Obsolete Idea

Recently the BBC quoted Czech conservative, Alex Tomsky: “The nation state as originally conceived has no place at the end of the 20th century, let alone in the 3rd millennium—The nation state is a very obsolete idea... I see the nation state as stemming from nationalism, from the idea of a homogeneous society with a leader, with an authority, with a particular slant to history and ideology... I don’t think it is a positive force. After all it’s caused two world wars in Europe.” Other ‘authorities’ have disputed Tomsky’s kind of notion, especially the Chronicle of Higher Education, and pundits who point to new European nations (e.g. Kosovo and Macedonia) or recent Russian nationalism as contrary evidence.

I believe that Tomsky is right. The violence in Paris, perpetrated by members of several nation states but united in one nihilistic cause, is only one instance in a crumbling of the old order. States no longer have a monopoly even on massive military power.

Often the decline of the national state is attributed to regional associations such as the European Union, or the Organization of African Unity, and they are important in the changing nation-state calculus. Often it is attributed to religious fanaticism, and that certainly plays a role. But these factors are not as important as three deeper changes—the flows of peoples out of their traditional areas caused by wars and climate change; the decline of nation-state idolatry and concomitant military service caused by disillusion with nationalism; and the rise of corporate entities more powerful than nation-state governments caused by the

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