



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

JANUARY 2002

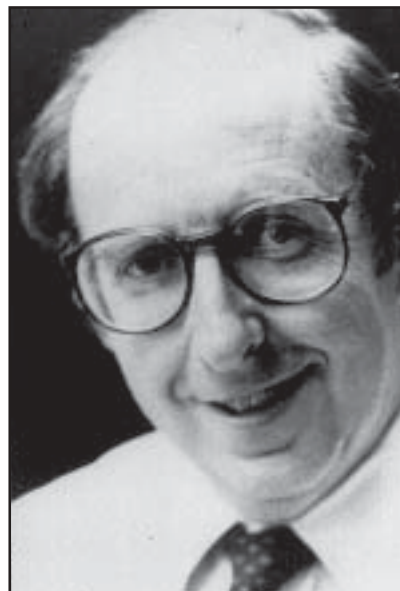
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Colman McCarthy To Speak at Annual Peace Conference

Nationally known newspaper columnist and peace educator Colman McCarthy will be the keynote speaker at the 2002 Annual Peace Conference Saturday February 16 in Omaha. McCarthy, a frequent contributor to the *Washington Post* who directs the Center for Teaching Peace in Washington, D.C., will speak on the topic of "Peacemakers in a Time of War."

The event, which is again being jointly sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work and Nebraskans for Peace, will be held at First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass St, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Early registration cost is \$20 for the day, including lunch. Information on how to register will be available starting mid-January. Continuing Education Units will be offered from Social Workers and Licensed Mental Health Practitioners.

Colman McCarthy has been stirring audiences with his fresh take on social justice and peacemaking for more than a quarter of a century. One of those rare journalists who talks as lively as his columns and books, he annually lectures at more than 20 colleges and universities a year, in addition to serving as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center and the University of Maryland.



Colman McCarthy

The Center for Teaching Peace, which he founded in 1985, is dedicated to promoting nonviolence education in our communities. In addition to conducting workshops and seminars on conflict resolution and mediation, the Center actively help schools develop peace studies programs. Firmly committed to the belief that *peace can be taught*, McCarthy has created a curriculum of studies with titles like "Alternatives to Violence," "Solutions to Violence," "Strength Through Peace" and "How To Be An Effective Peacemaker." As he puts it, "Let's not give peace a chance, let's give it a place in the curriculum."

To give *Nebraska Report* readers a taste of McCarthy's wit and analysis, we are reprinting on page 3 of this issue his article "God on Our Side," which appeared in the October *Progressive* magazine.

NEBRASKANS FOR PEACE 2002 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The state's budget crisis promises to make for a roiling 60 days in this year's short session of the Nebraska Legislature. Governor Mike Johanns got his way during the Special Session this past October when the legislature agreed to reduce \$170 million of the projected \$220 million budget deficit strictly through spending cuts. Several senators have already made it publicly known, however, that when it's time to come up with the other \$50 million during the regularly scheduled 2002 session, equal attention will be given to raising revenues. And the very first thing the legislature should do to boost revenue is to end the huge LB 775 corporate tax breaks that state government has been dishing out to Big Business for the last 14 years.

LB 775 tax giveaways have cost the state of Nebraska a breathtaking \$1.5 billion since 1987. They cost the state \$140 million last year alone—rivaling the total in spending cuts made by the legislature during the special session. Basic economics ought to tell you that when you're giving away the store, it's small wonder you're broke.

Getting the message out about the rip-off that LB 775 and the \$30 million giveaway to the Union Pacific Corporation (the so-called "Invest Nebraska Act" that the legislature passed just this past April) have been to Nebraska taxpayers has proven,

however, to be an almost impossible task. As Nebraskans for Peace was quoted as saying in the *Omaha World-Herald* after the special session had adjourned, everybody else's ox got gored by the legislature's budget knife, but nobody touched that sacred cow. Keeping with the animal metaphor, corporate tax breaks are indeed the 800-pound gorilla of the state's budget crisis, and hardly anybody outside of Sen. Ernie Chambers, Sen. Bob Wickersham of Harrison and Sen. Ron Raikes of Lincoln has been willing to talk about it.

Apart from legislation to better monitor *who* is getting the benefits of these tax break programs, *how much* they're getting, and *where* in the state (Lincoln and Omaha vs. the rest of Nebraska) these benefits are actually going, there will hopefully be a bill or amendment this session calling for the flat-out repeal of these corporate welfare programs. Repealing LB 775 could solve our state budget woes virtually all by itself, with few negative implications economically. As the legislature's own Revenue Committee study showed, most of the jobs these programs claim credit for creating would have been created anyway. And the truly new jobs that they did end up creating cost the state a whopping \$50,000 a piece. Nebraskans' tax dollars surely deserve to be put to a better cost/benefit ratio than that.

continued on page 8

inside:

Perpetuating Violence	p. 2	Nuke Race, NUKE WASTE	p. 6
God On Our Side	p. 3	Arab Leaders Abuse the People They Rule	p. 7
The War On Terrorism Continued: Next Up IRAQ	p. 4	Nebraska Parole & Corrections: Politics and Authority Rule	p. 9
U.S. Used Nuclear Waste in Afghan Air War	p. 5	Trading Futures & Hiding the Past at Enron	p. 10
		From the Bottom by Sally Herrin	p. 12

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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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Perpetuating VIOLENCE

The article which follows was written by Seth Felton for the December 10, 2001 edition of the Daily Nebraskan, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus newspaper. Though it was not written with any knowledge of the Turn Off the Violence campaign, it sets forth the assumptions of that effort, describing accurately the culture and religion of violence that have grown up in this country. To counter this culture and religion, TOTV is sponsoring a comprehensive anti-violence bill in the Nebraska Legislature directed at the protection and education of youths and families, a model effort to create anti-violence programming in schools and community learning centers, and an effort to get the religious community to teach what it knows about the appropriateness of solving problems with violence in the light of religious commandment. Felton, who graduated last month with majors in history and English, wrote a regular column for the Daily Nebraskan. Paul A. Olson

I looked at the calendar the other day and realized that in less than three weeks I graduate. "Holy Sweet Bejeweled Buddha!" I yelled. You may wonder why I didn't notice before then, but I think you all know what college life is like.

Papers, tests, projects, piles of books you paid too much for, work, the bars on Friday, the hangovers Saturday, some crazy sorority sex-bash (complete with cardboard tombstones) on Monday, etc., etc.

College is basically like putting a bucket over your head and banging it for four years straight.

Next thing you know, you're standing around in a funny black robe with a diploma in your hand and the sinking feeling that the demand for a philosophy major with a minor in medieval and renaissance studies is not currently at its peak.

Not that I have a place to talk unless I plan on getting a teaching certificate and reading Shakespeare to a bunch of bratty 15 year olds. If that were the case, I'd move to Las Vegas, a city growing so fast that it builds a new elementary school every two months.

But I'd rather pierce my tongue with a knitting needle than earn a living disciplining other people's children, only to have the parents constantly complain about it. No thanks.

Plus there's the frightening prospect that one or more of my students could open fire on their fellow classmates and teachers. Only a few weeks ago, a plot was uncovered (and foiled, thankfully) in New Bedford, Mass., where several students had planned to go on a rampage they hoped, according to the ringleader, "would be bigger than Columbine."

After the rampage, the students planned to commit suicide to further emulate the outcome of the Columbine massacre.

I realize that I write opinion columns, and I am supposed to tell everyone else what should be done about basically everything, but I simply have no answers for this.

All I know is that something is dreadfully wrong when people carry that much anger with them. Even in the Columbine case, I couldn't feel angry at the two perpetrators, only an immense sadness that someone's life could be so empty that they would actually carry out such a monstrosity.

I could say that guns are the problem, but I really don't want to get into an argument with some National Rifle Association psycho who thinks the 2nd Amendment guarantees access to cyanide-tipped hollow point ammunition. If guns were less prevalent in our society, yes, the two may have killed fewer people, but the issue goes deeper than that. There are plenty of other countries that are highly armed, but their children don't go through life burning with such rage that they plan SWAT team style assaults on their classmates.

What is the solution to this anger? Again, I don't know. I know it isn't posting the Ten Commandments in the classroom - as if those planning massacres will suddenly notice that God forbids killing and think "Oh crap, there goes that idea."

To be honest, I think a large source of this anger stems from a sort of national faith in violence. We watch hundreds of movies in which the central character's dilemmas are solved with a weapon - by searching out the demons that torment him and vanquishing them.

This faith extends far beyond the realm of entertainment. In our justice system, our answer to violence and murder is to reciprocate. If you murder, then the state shall stoop to the level of the criminal and answer with murder. If you commit a crime, then the state shall be swift to punish and retaliate. Rather than examine how to prevent future crimes, we simply react. We regulate with violence.

Finally, this faith in violence extends even to international relations. After the defeat of Iraq in 1991, for example, the United States set certain parameters for the behavior of the country. When the country deviated from those parameters, we responded with bombs, killing people who had no say in the actions of the country.

In other words, at many levels of the society, we think that violence, and more generally the ability to inflict violence, is the only measure of power. We have no faith in responses that do not carry the threat of harm, domination and control. And our children certainly respond to these messages - that violence is power.

We need an alternative response, and we as a society need to believe in other forms of power besides that of violence.

God On Our Side

by Colman McCarthy

On September 11 at American University; my class on nonviolence met at the usual time, 8:30 to 9:45 A.M. The topic was the connections between religious faith and government warmaking, with an essay on biblical pacifism as the reading to be discussed. I brought to class a tape of "With God on Our Side," sung by Joan Baez and written in the mid-'60s by Bob Dylan.

Only a few students were familiar with it. The eight verses of the anti-war song trace pseudo-faith and militarism—the Indian wars, the Spanish-American war, both world wars—and end with variations of the same line: "You never ask questions when God's on your side." "You don't count the dead when God's on your side." "Accept it all gravely with God on our side."

None of us in class that morning knew of the death and chaos occurring five miles from campus at the Pentagon or in New York City. Nor did we suspect, when we did find out, that soon politicians in both Afghanistan and Washington would be adding their own verses to the Dylan song.

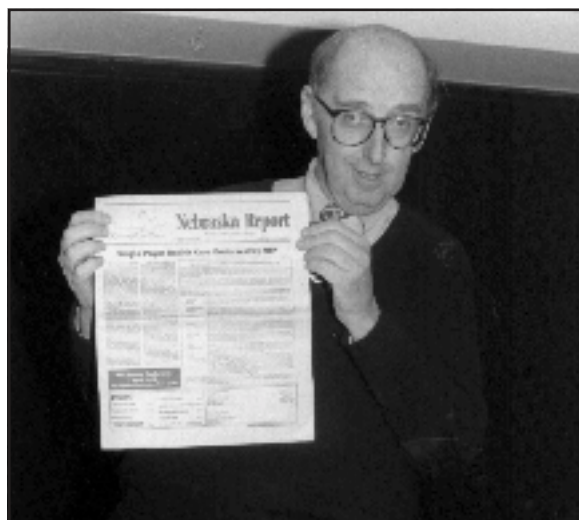
Mohammed Hasan Akhund, the deputy Taliban leader, said: "If America attacks our homes, it is necessary for all Muslims, especially for Afghans, to wage a holy war. God is on our side, and if the world's people set fire to Afghanistan, God will protect us and help us."

Days later, an equally theistic President Bush ended his speech to a joint session of Congress with his slant on the Almighty's current leanings: "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them... May God grant us wisdom and may He watch over the United States."

Two Roman Catholic cardinals, a Methodist bishop, a rabbi, and an imam rose to applaud Bush's war talk. It wasn't the God of Peace—the God of forgiveness, of mercy, of reconciliation, of love—they invoked, but the God of War, who blesses America and its military arsenal of Cobra attack helicopters, amphibious assault vehicles, F-22

Advanced Tactical fighter planes, B-2 bombers, and nuclear missiles. During the Presidential campaign, candidate Bush was asked what person had the most influence on his thinking. "Jesus," he answered. Apparently, it wasn't the Jesus who preached the love of enemies and doing good to those who harm you.

No clergy from a peace church—Quaker, Mennonite, Church of the Brethren—were in the audience, nor were any summoned to the pulpit on September 14 at the National Cathedral, where Bush, his war planners, and 3,000 invited guests prayed and sang five verses of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."



Colman McCarthy spoke in Lincoln in 1994 and posed with a copy of the Nebraska Report.

None of the five men of the cloth who were at the pulpit delivered a call to embrace nonviolent responses to the September 11 violence. As Christians Billy Graham and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick prayed with fellow Christians Bush and Cheney in a Christian cathedral where an image of the crucified Christ hung high above the clerestory, I couldn't help but remember an observation of the Hindu Mohandas Gandhi: "The only people on Earth who do not see Christ's teachings as nonviolent are Christians."

With piety and war-lust co-mingling, this was an apt moment for the clergy to lead the president and congregation in reciting "The War Prayer" of Mark Twain. "O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our

shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with the hurricane of fire... for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives... stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love... Amen."

On October 29, 1991, the National Cathedral hosted *The War Requiem*, composed by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). A conscientious objector who refused, as a pacifist, to take up arms for the British military in World War II, Britten wrote: "Since I believe that there is in every man the spirit of God, I cannot destroy... human life, however strongly I may disapprove of the individual's actions or thoughts. The whole of my life has been devoted to acts of creation... and I cannot take part in acts of destruction."

The National Cathedral, which erected a Peace Cross on its roof in 1898 to mark the end of the Spanish-American War, was also the scene

of Martin Luther King's last Sunday sermon in 1968. It included an unmistakable anti-war theme: "It is no longer a choice, my friends, between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence. And the alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation, and our earthly habitat would be transformed into an Inferno that even the mind of Dante could not imagine."

King began his ministry in 1957 in Montgomery with a sermon titled "Loving Your Enemies." "We must recognize," he said, "that the evil deed of the enemy-

neighbor, the thing that hurts, never quite expresses all that he is. An element of goodness may be found even in your worst enemy... Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars... The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

King's words have been echoed throughout the peace movement since his death. Jeanne Morin Buell, a longtime member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a pacifist, and a former Catholic nun, wrote about prayer and flags and war. Her essay, published in *Peacework: Oral Histories of Women Peace Activists* (Twayne, 1991), is uncannily relevant to the current blendings of supplication, pseudo-patriotism, and militarism: "Christians through the centuries would pray that they would win the war, as though it were possible that you could win a war. When you wage a war and allow yourself to kill your enemy, how could you hope to be heard in prayer? This is one of the worst things that could ever have been perpetrated, the idea of praying for victory. There's no way that praying to win a war could be a Christian thing. We began putting the American flags in front of the church; in a Catholic church it meant putting the papal flag on one side and the American flag on the other, like these were two loyalties, not to God, mind you, not to conscience, but the institution of the church and the country. Hours before his speech to Congress on September 20, Bush invited members of the clergy to the White House for some pre-war fellowship. With so many reverends as willing court chaplains, folding hands in prayer one moment and clapping them for the warrior President the next, church and state came together once again.

Instead of beating swords into plowshares, as the oft-quoted but ever-ignored Isaiah urged, the message now—with at least \$20 billion instantly added to the war chest—is beat swords into bigger swords.

The 'War on Terrorism' Continued

Next Up: IRAQ

With the polls showing 78 percent of the American public willing to intervene militarily to remove Saddam Hussein from power, the danger that the "War on Terrorism" will spread from Afghanistan to Iraq grows daily. The massive war mobilization by the Bush Administration coupled with the economic recession at home virtually guarantee that once the Taliban cease to offer a measurable target in Afghanistan, the U.S. will be in the hunt for a new enemy. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark sent the following letter to the ambassador and foreign minister of each member of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly last month to remind them of their legal and moral obligations under the organization's charter. Unless the United Nations is willing to stand up and challenge the U.S.'s vigilante efforts to "root out terrorism," we run of risk of engulfing the entire world in war.

December 11, 2001

Dear Ambassador,

The Security Council must direct the United States that it may not attack Iraq and must cease threatening to do so. Nor can it train, aid, or finance other forces seeking the violent overthrow of the Iraqi government. Any such acts would violate the obligations of nations under the Charter of the United Nations and constitute crimes under international law.

U.S. military and economic assaults on Iraq in the past dozen years are a continuing crime against peace and humanity. They violate the Genocide Convention.

The Pentagon admits it conducted 110,000 aerial sorties against a defenseless Iraq dropping 88,500 tons of bombs equivalent to 7 1/2 Hiroshima bombs in 42 days from January 17 to February 28, 1991. The bombs targeted every type of structure and facility necessary to support civilian life. Family dwellings, water and food

systems and supplies, industry, commerce, business, education, religion all across Iraq were the direct object of U.S. bombs punishing a whole population.

More than 150,000 thousands defenseless people died in Iraq as a result of this military assault, which included thousands of individual war crimes.

From August 6, 1990 to date, the most severe economic sanctions and forced impoverishment have deliberately inflicted hunger, malnourishment, sickness and death generously among the people of Iraq, killing and crippling infants, children, the elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers, persons with chronic illnesses, and emergency medical cases first and most frequently.

More than 1 1/2 million people have died as a direct result of these sanctions. More than half have been children under five years of age. The sanctions, coerced from the Security Council by the U.S., have violated the Genocide Convention because they have deliberately created conditions of life intended to destroy the Iraqi population in whole, or in part, because of the nationality, race, religion and ethnic origin of its people. The sanctions have had their intended effect.

Every U.N. agency dealing with food, health and children has confirmed the human horror of the sanctions. They include the FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO. The most courageous and honorable of the U.N. employees directly involved with enforcement of the sanctions and inspections under them have resigned their positions and publicly protested the sanctions and inspections policies. The food for oil program approved only in late 1996, and used thereafter primarily as a device for delay, frustration and accusation, was initiated only when international protest against the savagery of the sanctions overwhelmed the fear in which Security Council members held the threat of U.S. reprisal if they did not support U.S. policies.

The U.S. has bombed Iraq whenever it chose to do so at any time for the past 12 years. Missiles and bombs have targeted Saddam Hussein for assassination. Many hundreds have been killed, including as an illustration of the meaning of such bombing, Leila al Attar, the internationally famous artist, museum director, wife, mother, human being. The sound of U.S. jets over Iraq is omnipresent, keeping constant the terrifying memory of the continuous aerial and missile assault of February-March 1991 which averaged an aerial sortie every 30 seconds.

In the face of these staggering crimes against Iraq, the U.S. has conducted a constant campaign of vilification in the international media it controls. While claims Saddam Hussein is the evil it seeks to destroy, its broad brush paints all of Iraq as a symbol of evil. The U.S. propaganda is racist, anti-Muslim, hate-engendering and false.

The U.S. has corrupted and seriously compromised the United Nations by appearing to act in its name, tragically diminishing humanity's best hope for peace, dignity and decent conditions of life for all by its decade of brutish and criminal assaults on the people of Iraq. Though coerced, the Security Council is complicit in these crimes against peace and humanity, war crimes and genocide because it has at the least allowed its name and moral authority to be usurped by the United States.

The United States time and time again has acted on the advice of Plato's Athenian Stranger, who fearing the judgment of history, remains anonymous by waging "...war for the sake of peace." Consider how victims of U.S. wars,

surrogate and direct, since World War II have fared: Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Liberia, Cuba, Guatemala, Grenada, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Angola, Croatia, Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iran, Indonesia, Afghanistan. Yet where is the promised peace?

Consider the havoc direct U.S. military violence has wreaked in the past decade on the people of Iraq, all the Republics of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia created to make peace possible in the Balkans, Nicaragua, Haiti, Somalia, Sudan, North Korea, Kosovo, Afghanistan. And who will be next? The media reports daily on the candidates.

Is there anything Iraq has done in the past decade which threatened peace, endangered life or caused violence that could

possibly compare with the violence and calumny the U.S. has visited on Iraq. There is no legal basis or moral justification for a U.S. attack on Iraq, or for U.S. financing and assisting in the overthrow of its government. For the U.S. to do so is an international crime and prohibited by the Constitution and laws of the United States. Prevailing power in the U.S. and its government intends to attack Iraq when the current assault of Afghanistan has accomplished its purpose to consolidate U.S. domination over the Middle East, the Gulf region and central Asia.

Act immediately to end the shame of the Security Council's abject failure to assert the independence and sovereignty of the United Nations under its Charter and to end this scourge of war. Prohibit the United States from attacking Iraq.

Sincerely,
Ramsey Clark

Pastors for Peace

The following statement from 16 protestant ministers in Lincoln was submitted as a letter to the editor of the Lincoln Journal Star December 13, 2001.

We are writing in regard to the most recent "war," as President Bush terms it. We who claim to be followers of the Prince of Peace, remind ourselves that He taught us to pray for our enemies and refrain from responding to violence with violence. We join with people around the world in our resolve to bring all terrorists to justice.

We believe American people can act constructively today by:

1. Being in a season of prayer for all who mourn
2. Bringing terrorist leaders before the World Court
3. Studying the root causes of terrorism
4. Creating a foreign policy that is fair and just
5. Upholding the Constitution so that the right of people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects shall not be violated
6. Continuing within the United Nations to be supportive of a broad and inclusive government in Afghanistan.

We must think "outside the box." The old "eye for an eye" just keeps us in a cycle of violence. We need to undercut the cause of terrorists showing their cause to be false. We believe that crimes against humanity need to be addressed with methods more comprehensive than strictly military methods.

Signed by the following retired pastors:

Rev. K. Roy Bailey
Rev. Homer Clements
Rev. Nye Bond
Rev. John Minert
Rev. Conley Hinrichs
Rev. Fred Loder
Rev. R. E. Favre
Rev. Jerry McInnis
Rev. Gill Karges
Rev. Patsy Moore
Rev. Donald Marsh
Rev. William Reitmeier
Rev. T. J. Fraser
Rev. Jay Schmidt
Rev. Robert L. Miller
Rev. Dwight Ganzel

U.S. Used Nuclear Waste in Afghan Air War

The scientific and technological advances in the art of war are now regularly producing environmental "collateral damage" that long outlasts the actual military conflict. Beginning with the Gulf War, throughout the Kosovo bombing campaign, and now in Afghanistan, the U.S. military has consistently used ordnance containing reprocessed nuclear waste. In its quest for the perfect weapon, the military/industrial complex has finally developed the armament that just keeps on killing for generations to come. The following article from the November 20-December 5, 2001 Weekly Independent in Pakistan discusses at length about enduring health and environmental hazards the U.S.'s air war is sowing over the Afghanistan countryside.

by Sarmad Sufian

Hard target weapons, loaded with reprocessed nuclear waste, have been used as secret weapons in the U.S.-led air strikes against the Taliban, exposing human lives in Afghanistan and the adjoining border areas of Pakistan to a serious risk of radiation poisoning. Sources in Pakistan's military establishment say the first warning about the use of reprocessed nuclear waste arrived last week in the shape of a dying Afghan child, which led an Afghan doctor to diagnose that she was infected with radioactive or chemical weapons, presumably used by the U.S. aircraft. Some later diagnoses revealed that many of the Taliban troops and Afghan civilians have been affected, primarily due to radiation caused by the Depleted Uranium (DU), which actually is reprocessed nuclear waste.

The DU (U238) mystery metal has been produced by the U.S. since 1997. "It presents a perpetual health hazard similar to asbestos—especially in the lungs. And there is no known cure for inhaling Depleted Uranium dust." The sources say that as these cases were reported to the aid agencies conducting relief work in Afghanistan, the U.S. military bosses were quick to refute them as mere speculations. "The U.S. actually wanted to hush up the matter. Therefore, a bill has already been moved before the U.S. Congress, calling for a total ban on Depleted Uranium and the disclosure of the facts about its use in Afghanistan."

However, in a recent statement questioning the safety of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan, the American Defense Department spokesperson Kenneth Bacon indirectly confirmed the use of nuclear waste "We obviously put out instructions about avoiding Depleted Uranium dust. Our troops are instructed to wear masks if they're around what they consider to be atomised or particle-sized Depleted Uranium", Bacon said.

Estimates by Pakistani experts show that Afghanistan might have been hit by the reprocessed nuclear waste along with several hundred tons of smart bombs and cruise missiles used by the allied forces. Experts say that since the mystery metal is 50-75 percent of the weight of the bombs—up to 1.5 tons in the GBU-37 Bunker Buster bombs—the toxic reserves in the area could be huge and as dangerous as they were in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The lethal Depleted Uranium oxide is known for travelling up to 25 miles by wind. "Therefore, large areas may be affected by each of the American bombs."

The experts say the new generation of hard target smart bombs and cruise missiles being used by the U.S. against Afghanistan can penetrate ten feet into reinforced concrete before exploding. They were mostly used to attack the Taliban bunkers, caves, command centers, fuel and ammunition stores. "The two-ton GBU-37 Bunker Busters and 2000 lb. GBU-24 Pave-way smart bombs, plus the Boeing AGM-86D, Maverick AGM-65G and AGM-145C hard target capability cruise missiles all use advanced unitary penetrators (AUP-113, AUP-116, P31) or BROACH warheads with the mystery high density metal in alloy casings."

Since Depleted Uranium is basically reprocessed nuclear waste, field experts fear that given the massive bombing, the amount of hazardous radioactive deposits in the area might prove extremely dangerous to tens of thousands of the human lives in Afghanistan and the adjoining border areas of Pakistan. Reports emanating from Afghanistan reveal that after the fall of Taliban and the landing of the allied forces there, the troops and aid agencies have been told to proceed with caution. The Red Cross, Oxfam and other international aid agencies have reportedly been cautioned to stay away from the locations bombed by the allied forces and use bottled water only.

The sources say that the post-retreat U.S. bombings on the Taliban militia in Afghanistan were not targeted on the military installations, but various channels of water supply instead. "Water-supply tunnels and sources were targeted with bunker-busting bombs, with the intention to flush out Osama bin Laden, his al-Qaida group and the Taliban fighters from the hillside tunnels that riddle the landscape," said a source requesting anonymity. "The already bombed ancient tunnels were a vital source of water supply to thousands of the border villages adjoining Pakistan." Where it is feared that the U.S. bombardment on Afghanistan could dramatically increase water shortages in the war-torn and drought-stricken country, experts estimate the damage could be far more than what is being expected, given the presence of Depleted Uranium in the water reservoirs. "Not only will the water of the Afghan areas become poisoned, but it will also be extended to many parts of Pakistan as many of the Afghan rivers flow across the border to the neighboring Pakistan".

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Nuke Race

NUKE WASTE

Bush Withdraws from ABM Treaty After NMD Test

by Bud Narveson

The Pentagon's latest test of its National Missile Defense program succeeded in destroying more than a mock warhead 140 miles above the Earth. Barely a week after the Pentagon's third successful test in five tries (albeit with the continued use of homing devices to ensure destruction of the target), President Bush announced that the U.S. would be unilaterally withdrawing from the 30-year-old Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia. Yet, as the articles quoted below emphasize, development and testing of components of a missile defense would not have been restricted by the treaty for several years yet.

The President's action on the treaty and the decision to speed up construction of ABM facilities in Alaska, the Council for a Livable World reports, "does not appear to be based on any new assessment of the threats facing the United States from long-range ballistic missiles. It is more likely that the President wants to fulfill a campaign pledge by installing some missile defense system in Alaska by 2004, even if it does not work."

Writing in *Moscow Times*, December 14, 2001, Russian analyst Pavel Felgenhauer said: "The war in Afghanistan against the radical Muslim Taliban militia, Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida terrorist organization seems to have been won. U.S. forces have established bases inside Afghanistan, and Russian aid in securing bases in Central Asia is no longer essential." Hence the decision to officially announce the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty, according to this independent Russian defense analyst.

Felgenhauer quotes President Vladimir Putin's chief of staff Alexander Voloshin: "Our military experts have calculated that the existing ABM Treaty allows the United States to continue its missile defense testing program for five to seven years; if there are obstacles, we are ready to discuss how to

change the treaty." Since even a limited missile defense will not be ready for deployment for a decade or so, on the face of it, there was no immediate military-strategic need on the part of the U.S. to abrogate the treaty. In Russia, Felgenhauer writes, many see it simply as a deliberate slap in the face for Putin.

Felgenhauer also speculates that both the U.S. and the Russian military establishment will draw encouragement from seeing Putin's pro-Western foreign policy endeavor rewarded with such a public humiliation. The Russian military will likely ask for more weapons procurement money.

As for the U.S., the Russian analyst claims that its navy is now lobbying for money to build a new series of nuclear attack submarines and that the only possible enemy that could warrant the building of these new submarines is Russia with its nuclear submarine fleet.

"If Russia becomes a true ally of the West, large parts of the Pentagon's armed forces will become redundant and may be cut. If a new generation of attack submarines is not procured, the U.S. nuclear submarine-building yards may have to be closed down. In a generation we may all be living in a world where there are virtually no nuclear submarines left at all. The U.S. and Russian militaries will surely unite in coordinated opposition to such a threat." That is, the main threat to both the U.S. and the Russian military establishments is lack of a credible threat. Such is Felgenhauer's ironic conclusion.

Meanwhile, back in Washington, the *Baltimore Sun*'s Mark Matthews writes in a similar vein: "As it scrambled to mount a global anti-terror coalition in the tense aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, the Bush administration seemed to be a sudden convert to the religion of international cooperation. But not anymore. Flush with military success in Afghanistan, the White House has taken a series of steps that mark

The Terrorist Threat Against Waste Trucks & Trains

by Kevin Kamps
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Even before September 11, the potential of terrorist attacks against nuclear waste shipments was recognized. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conducted tests in the early 1980s that revealed transport containers for irradiated atomic fuel rods are vulnerable to attack by rocket launchers and high explosives. Such anti-tank weaponry has only become more powerful and available in the succeeding 20 years. In 1999, after having been targeted to become the country's dumping ground for high-level atomic trash, the State of Nevada petitioned the NRC to strengthen safeguards against such terrorist attacks. The NRC has yet to act, however.

In 2001, three trucks hauling containers of irradiated nuclear fuel crossed Nebraska. Two large train containers are scheduled to pass through as early as next spring, followed by a few more truckloads next summer. This is but a "trickle" compared to the tens of thousands of high-level atomic waste trucks and trains targeted to cross Nebraska if the proposed national dump at the leaky earthquake zone called Yucca Mountain, Nevada is opened. The nuclear power industry and its supporters in government who are pushing the Yucca dump don't want communities living along the transport routes in 45 states to know that each and every one of these shipments—traveling past major population centers and the agricultural heartland—is a potential, catastrophic terrorist target.

In late June, three containers of irradiated nuclear fuel rods from Germany were off-loaded from a ship in South Carolina and then trucked across the entire length of Nebraska en route to Idaho. Newspapers in several states, including Nebraska, quoted Department of Energy (DOE) spokespeople as saying that

everything had gone smoothly. A November 1 article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Holden Says Radioactive Shipment Was Bungled: Governor Charges That Federal Agency Broke Promises on Moving Waste," revealed otherwise.

The article reported that Missouri Governor Bob Holden had sent a letter to U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, accusing DOE of having failed to avoid rush-hour traffic and major public events, as well as having failed to designate safe stopping areas along the route, despite promises to the state in advance of the shipment. In fact, the atomic waste trucks had arrived at the border near the St. Louis metropolitan area at the beginning of rush hour. They would have driven directly past the Kansas City Royals baseball stadium during a home game, had the Governor not delayed the convoy at the state line. Just beyond St. Louis, the trucks encountered 50-mile-per-hour winds and intense thunderstorms that dumped four inches of rain, yet DOE had not designated a safe stopping area where they could wait out the storm.

In addition, a week before the shipment, DOE had sent an official notice to States along the route, mistakenly stating that the waste would go through Iowa, not Missouri. DOE called the mistake a "typo." Gov. Holden's letter concluded that, "In light of the recent terrorist attacks on our nation, I think it is only appropriate for the Department of Energy to revisit its practice of shipping nuclear fuel and other high-level radioactive waste through densely populated areas." Despite these safety and security concerns, DOE is still planning to haul another convoy of atomic waste from overseas across Nebraska next summer.

Because DOE is in the business of shipping high-level nuclear waste around the country, it is very reluctant to explicitly admit that irradiated nuclear fuel transports are terrorist targets. Actions, however, speak louder than words. DOE suspended all its

Arab Leaders Abuse the People They Rule

by Mohammed H. Siddiq

As an American citizen and a person who was born and raised in Saudi Arabia, I wish to ask my fellow Americans not to hate Arabs. I also wish to tell you that the Arab people today are all tangled up, and they have been in this situation for over 60 years.

Arabs are *not* by nature people of a distorted mental state. They are people of good religion, culture and civilization. What they have gone through for the last 60 years, however, has made them subject to common fears, anxieties and depression, due largely to the lack of freedom and complete deprivation of basic human rights. The phrase "human rights" does not exist in the political dictionary of Arab governments.



Arabs have **never freely** elected their leaders. Today's Arab leaders are either self-elected or inheritors of old regimes. Arab leaders have no personal interest in the wellbeing of their citizens, but only in how much they obey. In political terms, Arab leaders are dictators. They have come to rule, not to serve.

As a group, Arab people have kept their problems to themselves for too long, thinking that such an attitude will be commended and that being closemouthed about trouble will be heroic. Any psychologist, of course, can tell you that the practice of keeping your troubles to yourself can be dangerous.

If investigated, the Arab man's inner self is a state of confusion. He has been named an Arab, a Muslim, a Shiite, a fanatic, a fundamentalist, not to mention a terrorist. This confusing array of names and labels has filled him with fears and anxieties, and left a little hate and resentment in his mind as well. His identity disorder may amount to an actual "identity crisis," though no one uses this term. Some Arabs

speak of a profound need to "find" themselves. Others want to "get in touch with" themselves. All these confused thoughts indicate a lack of direction in life, a deep-seated feeling ranging from emptiness to severe depression.

The absolute authority which Arab leaders have enjoyed for so long has a peculiarly damaging effect on their personalities also. Absolute authority festers and becomes an infection center in the body as well as in the mind and the spirit. This particular generation of Arab leaders does not seem to like to admit the fact of sin or even mistake. Some have gone so far as to say that sin and/or mistake does not exist in their behavior. Some demand that their citizens recognize them not only as rulers, but as representatives of God/Allah.

My point is that Arab people are haunted by their leaders, but the entire world is haunted by the tragic incidents that grow out of this authoritarianism. Arab leaders have converted their people into robots, turned their countries into a zone of chronic instability and developed a bad habit of drawing the world into trouble.

Arab people are not against Jews or Americans; they are for themselves. They have been socially assaulted by their leaders and deprived of their liberty. Having come from that part of the world, I know first-hand how Hafez al-Assad treated the Syrians, how Saddam Hussein treated the Iraqis, and how the Saudi kings treated the people of Arabia. What American citizens need to understand is that Arab people are suffering from over 60 years of uninterrupted oppression, and they are thoroughly disgusted at being told to shut up. But it is not just that the Arabs are now screaming for vengeance and change; some are so fed up they do not want to live any more. And therein lies the breeding ground for terrorism.

It is high time for the western democracies to exert their utmost efforts on behalf of the Arab world and turn it into one of the newest democratic blocks. There is no reason whatsoever for western leaders to heed the demands of 21 unelected Arab leaders who can't stomach the idea of the nations of the Arab world becoming democracies.

As long as the Arabs are hurting, the longer and less successful the struggle against terrorism will be.

Since President Bush launched the "War on Terrorism" last September, we have published a number of articles by NFP member Mohammed Siddiq in an effort to provide an authoritative perspective on the political situation in the Arab and Muslim world.

As a dissident who can never return to Saudi Arabia so long as the Saudi monarchy rules, Mohammed has written numerous publications analyzing the politics and economics in his homeland. Books on Why the Boom Went Bust: An Analysis of the Saudi Government; Saudi Arabia: A Country Under Arrest; and The Prince Ails My Country can be ordered by contacting him at P.O. Box 94792, Lincoln, NE 68509, or by phone at 402-477-0985.

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2002 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA, conclusion

But the economics aside, making the rich even richer at the expense of everyone else hardly seems like the proper pursuit of democratic government, and it's high time this morally bankrupt policy was ended.

Minimum Wage Raise

What the legislature should be properly focusing on this session is the economic needs of the poorest among us. Sen. Chris Beutler's minimum wage bill (LB 633), which calls for raising the state minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 an hour, was advanced out of committee last session and is sitting on General File, ready to be taken up and debated as soon as the legislature convenes. It all comes down to whether or not a majority of the Unicameral will have the will to do it.

Former Nebraska Sen. Jim Exon was fond of saying that "the best social program in the world is a job." The corollary to that principle though is that nothing helps low-income workers and families more than an increase in the minimum wage. A dollar-an-hour increase puts just that much more disposable money into the household economy of Nebraska's working poor. But the benefits of a minimum wage raise don't just extend to those at the bottom. Raising the wage floor creates a "ripple up" effect (unlike a "trickle down" one) that percolates upwards through the wage structure, raising wages for middle income workers as well. This is not only an issue whose time has come, it's long overdue. While state government has annually been bending over backwards to provide handout after handout to Big Business, it's been five years since the legislature last increased the minimum wage. Nebraska's workers have waited long enough.

It is less clear whether the legislature will get to deal with the subject of a Living Wage in this year's short session. Sen. Beutler's LB 626, which would require private contractors doing business with state government to pay a living wage to their employees, could never muster the votes for advancement and remains bottled up in the Business and Labor Committee. The committee members voted instead to conduct an Interim Study to determine both the bill's application and the impact of its provisions requiring contractors to pay a base-line wage of \$8.00 per hour if health care is included, and \$9.00 per hour if it's not. It goes without saying, of course, that Nebraskans for Peace will

solidly support these economic justice initiatives, regardless of their legislative prospects for adoption.

Turn Off the Violence

The Turn Off the Violence project, of which Nebraskans for Peace is a key member, will again be introducing legislation to address the problem of youth and school violence. Despite the unexpected defeat of his priority bill last session dealing with similar concerns, Sen. David Landis has agreed to sponsor a revamped package of legislation that will call for "anti-bullying and conflict resolution education" in Nebraska's schools and in the soon-to-be-created "community learning centers," as well as mandatory safe storage of firearms wherever children 16 years and younger are present. This omnibus legislation is intended to provide a comprehensive approach to the problem of violence, in that it emphasizes prevention both through the teaching of nonviolence skills and restricted access to firearms. Tentatively titled "The Community Violence Prevention Act," the bill will hopefully garner broad-based support from educators, religious groups, youth organizations, law enforcement and the medical community.

In conjunction with Nebraska law enforcement, we will also continue to oppose the NRA's efforts to repeal Nebraska's ban on carrying concealed weapons. Sen. Gene Tyson of Norfolk introduced a repeal bill last session (LB 496), that is still tied up in the legislature's Judiciary Committee. While we hope to be able to keep LB 496—or another bill introduced to achieve the same end—from advancing, it's not inconceivable that the NRA will mount a major push to get the bill passed despite the short session. It's no secret that with all the anxiety about personal security sparked by the September 11 terrorist attack, the public mood toward Gun Control has shifted somewhat. The point we simply have to keep emphasizing over and over again is that having more people carrying guns in public is hardly how you create a safer society. Who wants to push a shopping cart down the grocery aisle when you've got customers packing heat? Common sense is on our side. We just have to make sure common sense prevails.

Human Rights

Now that the legislature's Death Penalty Study has been completed and demonstrated the economic and race-based inequities in sentencing, perhaps the State of Nebraska will finally abolish this barbaric mode of punishment. Sen. Chambers' has been the perennial sponsor of abolition legislation.

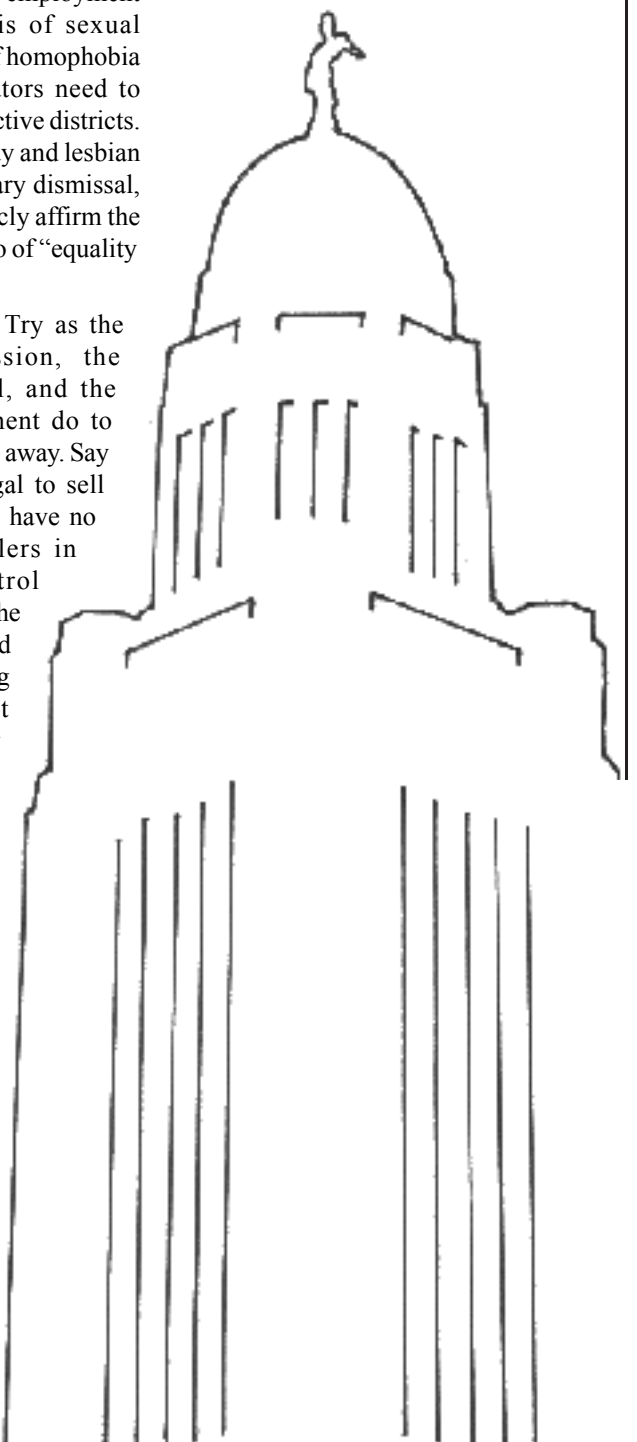
Whether his bill fares any better this year than previously will depend entirely on how effectively we organize and lobby, given the new evidence from the study. Whatever happens with the abolition bill, rest assured that there will be a bill to change the method of state execution from electrocution to lethal injection. Stopping this "socially more acceptable" means of state killing will be an equally important priority.

After last year's last-minute, heart-breaking failure to override Governor Johanns' veto of the bill prohibiting housing discrimination based on sexual orientation, Nebraskans for Peace is more determined than ever to do what we can to oppose the legal prejudice in this state against gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people. Now that the housing provision is dead for the year, we will be picking up where we left off last session in our support for LB 19—the bill banning employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Given the level of homophobia in Nebraska, our state senators need to model tolerance in their respective districts. Passing LB 19, and freeing gay and lesbian workers of the fear of summary dismissal, would be a good way to publicly affirm the truth of Nebraska's state motto of "equality before the law."

Then there's Whiteclay. Try as the Liquor Control Commission, the governor, the State Patrol, and the Sheridan Sheriff's Department do to ignore it, Whiteclay will not go away. Say what they will: That it's legal to sell alcohol in Nebraska, so they have no choice but to license dealers in Whiteclay (Liquor Control Commission)... That despite the commonly acknowledged illegal activities regularly going on in Whiteclay, they do not have the staff to provide law enforcement there for all the hours alcohol is sold (State Patrol and Sheridan County Sheriff's Department)... That even when the State Patrol does try to increase enforcement in Whiteclay, the dealers, area merchants, and even some Pine Ridge Indians themselves get angry (Gov. Johanns)... None this removes the fact that it is still **heartless, reprehensible** and **malicious** for the State of Nebraska to be deliberately profiting from Indian misery. Accordingly, Nebraskans for Peace hopes to have either a bill or amendment introduced

this session that will prohibit the sale of alcohol within five miles of a dry reservation. Having sat on the sidelines during this entire four-year public focus on Whiteclay, it is now necessary for the legislature itself to become directly involved in the debate.

In and of itself, the above items give us more than a full plate. And there's probably more to come. Until all the bills have been submitted during the first ten days of the session, we won't have a definitive list of the legislation we're favoring, and opposing. Next month, in the February issue, we will provide a further update on NFP's legislative agenda, with the appropriate bill numbers. In the meantime, it's not too early to start contacting your senator...



NEBRASKA PAROLE & CORRECTIONS

POLITICS & AUTHORITY RULE

by Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

In the state of Nebraska, a prisoner who is doing a life sentence on a first-degree murder conviction cannot be paroled until and unless the Board of Pardons commutes his or her sentence to a specific term of years. In March of 1993, the Nebraska Parole Board, under the chairpersonship of Ethel Landrum, recommended to the Board of Pardons that my sentence be commuted. This recommendation resulted in big-time controversy—with news media, police spokesmen, and politicians raging. The *Omaha World-Herald*, not surprisingly, editorialized against the Parole Board recommendation, while the *Lincoln Journal* newspaper praised the Parole Board action.

Months later, two attorneys representing me, Lennox Hinds of New York and John Stevens Berry of Lincoln, appeared before the Board of Pardons to speak on behalf of my application for a commutation hearing. I had made application on the basis of my wrongful imprisonment, citing the authority of that body to act to correct a “travesty of justice”—the phrase used by a Board of Pardons spokesperson in addressing the question of the board’s powers. Secondly, my application sought relief on the basis of my prison record and the amount of time I’d done in comparison with other prisoners sentenced to life on first-degree murder convictions. After about two hours of often heated exchanges between my counsel and the members of the Board of Pardons—primarily, Attorney General Don Stenberg and Governor Ben Nelson—Lennox Hinds stated to the board members that they were making a game out of the process by which a prisoner seeks a commutation hearing and walked out of the meeting room.

Despite all the political fireworks resulting from this initial Parole Board recommendation, the board continued to recommend me for commutation of sentence for five more consecutive years. In the course of this time, Ethel Landrum left the Parole Board, and there were other changes in personnel.

One of the major points of contention at the hearing before the Board of Pardons was the Parole Board policy that it would only recommend that a prisoner’s life sentence be commuted if he or she had gone five years straight without a disciplinary report. But while the Parole Board interpreted its own policy to only

include **major** reports (involving loss of “good time” and/or time in solitary confinement), Stenberg and Nelson, in particular, insisted that even the most inconsequential and petty disciplinary reports were sufficient to disqualify a prisoner from being considered for sentence commutation.

The fact is that, at no time when I had my yearly appearances before the Parole Board, had I gone five straight years without some kind of minor disciplinary report. At the same time, it was and is also true that, in the thirty years I’ve been locked up in this joint, I haven’t so much as been in a fight, have never threatened or assaulted anyone, despite the fact that the oftentimes European-supremacist, authoritarian, and/or arbitrary behavior of some of these guards and other staff

here and that so many of these are unnecessary, unjustly restrictive, petty, and so forth that a prisoner can have no reasonable expectation of not being in violation of some rule or other, or the arbitrary enforcement of some rule or other, at any time.

To cite a few examples, if a prisoner is so criminally inclined as to let another prisoner read his newspaper, he and the other prisoner are subject to being written up for “passing and receiving,” “disobeying direct orders” (whether an order has been given or not), “disruption of authorized duties” (even though it is supposedly the authorized duty of a guard to write a prisoner up if he has violated a rule), “giving, loaning, or selling items to others,” and “violation of regulations.” In addition, the prisoner to whom the



warrant disciplinary action, which almost never is taken by the prison administration or the courts; have no escape attempts on my record; and have neither done anything nor been accused of doing anything that would give the Parole Board cause to deny me a recommendation for sentence commutation.

But in March of 1999, at my hearing before the Parole Board, I was confronted with a new policy. All of a sudden, “five years clean of disciplinary reports” meant “any such reports at all.” And a couple of weeks later, I was notified in writing that I had been denied a recommendation due to my not being five years free of misconduct reports. I wasn’t surprised by this move since it was a very convenient way for the members of the Parole Board to avoid even being in a position where it could find me eligible for consideration. The members of the board are well aware of the fact that there are so many rules in

newspaper has been given or loaned to is subject to a disciplinary report for “possession of unauthorized articles.”

Prisoners are authorized, when visiting relatives or friends in the visiting room, to briefly kiss a visitor once at the beginning of the visit and once at its conclusion. An “extra” kiss or hug can result in a disciplinary report and might result in the termination of the visit on the spot.

If a prisoner buys a jar of coffee, for example, at the prison store and eventually consumes all the coffee, and has the nerve to keep the empty plastic jar and lid for drinking something cool, say, outside in the summertime, he is subject to a disciplinary report for either “possession of contraband” or “possession of unauthorized articles.”

In these example, as in most others that could be cited, it is almost always the case that whatever the actual rule a prisoner is accused of violating, the disciplinary report is going to contain the charges of

“disobeying direct orders,” “disruption of authorized duties,” and “violation of regulations.” This stacking of charges generally insures that the prisoner appearing before the Disciplinary Committee is going to be found “guilty” of something.

In 1999, when the Parole Board decided it would not recommend me for a commutation of sentence, it informed me that I would not have another hearing until 2003. Should I still be here, I don’t know whether I’ll have those folks wasting my time or not. Besides, if, by something akin to a miracle, the Parole Board were to actually develop enough collective sense of justice to resume a recommendation for commutation, some people’s Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State have not performed their duties on the basis of justice but on the basis of political expediency and cannot be expected to do otherwise any time soon. So while I have always tried to avoid getting “write-ups” unnecessarily, I haven’t lived my days in here in constant sweating over whether some guard or other staff person might want to use me to practice his or her authority on.

I am fortunate in that there are people who care enough about justice and/or about me as a person that they are working to get my and Ed Poindexter’s cases back into court and are doing what they can to get public attention focused on our situation. But for most prisoners here, this is not the case. Many prisoners here are having to rely on the Parole Board and/or Board of Pardons insofar as eventually getting out of here is concerned. But the games being played by these political bodies, as well as the Dept. of Corrections, are rooted in pretense and deception. These games are being played on the lives of men and women locked up in this state, many of whom are decent human beings who have done things that others do but haven’t gotten caught or have had the resources to hire decent lawyers or who have known the right people, or have been fortunate otherwise. These games are being played on the family members and other loved ones of prisoners. Mike Johannesburg ought to be honest and just make it plain—that, when it comes to “corrections,” **there are no rules** for those in charge and **no accountability**. This would bring about a tremendous savings in false hopes and expectations of something even remotely resembling fair play.

Trading Futures & Hiding the Past at ENRON

by Mark Zimmermann
Treasurer, Nebraska Green Party

The spectacular collapse of Enron, from the seventh-largest corporation on the Fortune 500 to its bankruptcy this December, has left thousands (5,600 at last count) jobless right before Christmas and tens of thousands, including many former employees here in Nebraska, with pension plans that are now worthless.

As many Nebraskans know, Enron had its beginnings in our state when in 1930 three small utilities formed the Northern Natural Gas company to pipe gas north from Kansas. For the next 50 years the company grew and diversified and by 1980 had established a parent corporation, InterNorth, to oversee its various operations and expansions. One of these, the acquisition of Houston Natural Gas in 1985 for \$2.4 billion, created the nation's largest natural gas pipeline system but also signaled the end of InterNorth. Within a year the head of the Houston company, Kenneth Lay, had moved the headquarters to Houston and renamed the company Enron.

minister. Enron denied the allegations made in the article but later abandoned the project.

The most controversial of Enron's overseas projects has undoubtedly been the Dabhol power plant in the Maharashtra province of India. Because the large \$2.8 billion plant ran on liquefied natural gas which was imported, it could only function as a "base-load" plant which the region didn't need; they did need a smaller and more flexible "peak-demand" plant. The federal government of India approved the project in 1993 over the wishes of most local citizens. Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org) has documented excessive police force, sexual assault and harassment against peaceful protesters of the plant, with some of the abuses being committed by security forces on Enron's payroll.

When the Indian government began to have second thoughts about the project, Frank Wisner, the U.S. ambassador to India at the time, campaigned earnestly and successfully for it. After his term in India, he was appointed to Enron's board of directors. The 1999 deal was one of the

trader as well—in effect a middleman, buying and selling energy futures and skimming off a percentage each time. But the stage had to be set for this to occur.

Near the end of the Bush presidency in 1992, Enron and several other corporations appealed to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to exempt trading in energy futures from government oversight and also from fraud laws. The CFTC chair who initiated this process was Wendy Gramm, a former Reagan senior staffer and wife of the conservative Republican Senator from Texas Phil Gramm. Five weeks after President Clinton took office and Gramm had resigned, she too was appointed to Enron's board. Before Clinton could appoint new replacements to the commission it voted 2-1 to deregulate trading in energy futures and, ironically, to make trading in these futures retroactive to 1974 when the CFTC was created. The appeal for exemption from fraud was dropped due to opposition in Congress.

Before this deregulation, Enron made more than 80 percent of its revenue by

Enron's largesse toward George Bush, Jr. began with his gubernatorial campaigns in Texas, to which it contributed some \$400,000. That investment seems to have paid off as the new governor introduced a polluter immunity bill in his first term. This law allows companies who make private and internal audits to be exempted from many pollution regulations. The information cannot even be used or requested in court cases. Enron has used the law numerous times.

When George Jr. began to seek the presidency in 1999, Lay was among his earliest and strongest supporters. He and other Enron executives have given more than \$2 million to Bush's campaigns for Governor and President. Lay also donated \$326,000 in soft money to the Republican Party during the three years prior to Bush's election. Lay's wife later donated \$100,000 for Bush's inauguration. This is all in addition to the \$4 million that Enron has spent lobbying Congress and the White House in the last two years.

Is it any wonder then that Lay was the only energy executive to meet alone with Vice President Cheney while he was dreaming up our new national energy plan? Or that Lay probably had undue influence in replacing the chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Curtis Hebert, with someone more to his liking?

Enron's implosion this summer and fall, after it admitted hiding excessive debt from its shareholders and auditors, has been chronicled in the media and hopefully further information will come to light during congressional investigations and the inevitable legal battles. It should come as no surprise that Lay and Skilling got out with millions over the last year or two, cashing in massive stock options while the price was still high while not allowing employee stockholders to sell until the stock had bottomed out.

The whole debacle has brought up the question of whether the government has gone too far with deregulation. Laissez-faire supporters are saying no, this was not a failure of the marketplace, only a case of good old-fashioned fraud. Deregulation opponents, on the other hand, are saying that this is what regulations are meant to prevent. But perhaps a case should be made that this shows the necessity of campaign finance reform, because when the dust finally settles we may find out that the real reason Enron went broke is that it spent too much on politicians.

“There is a very reasonable chance we will become the largest corporation in the world.”

Jeffrey Skilling, former CEO of Enron, December 2000

During the 1990s Enron grew rapidly not only in the U.S., but around the world. As early as 1988, shortly after his father won the presidency, George W. Bush, was lobbying the government of Argentina on behalf of Enron's bid for a large pipeline project which it eventually won.

Shortly after the first President Bush left office, Enron bid on a contract to rebuild a large Kuwaiti power plant that was bombed during the Gulf War. According to a *New Yorker* article by Seymour Hersh, Enron's price for supplying power was 11 cents per kilowatt hour, while a rival bid from a German company was 6 cents. In 1993 the former Secretary of State under Bush, James Baker, (who was working for Enron by then) and the former president's youngest sons, Neil and Marvin, traveled to Kuwait to lobby for the project. Hersh wrote that Enron received favorable consideration and that its Kuwaiti business partners had been "hand picked" by the Kuwaiti prime

largest industry-government contracts in the world, guaranteeing \$35 billion in payments over 20 years to a consortium called the Dabhol Power Corporation, of which Enron was the chief stockholder, other blocs being held by Bechtel, GE, and the region's electricity board. Within a year after opening the plant, the electricity board raised rates 20 percent across the board attempting to meet these payments, but soon began to default. In March of this year, they stopped the payments entirely, saying the power was too costly and the plant was unnecessary. Before its recent bankruptcy, Enron was attempting to sell its stake in the plant, but couldn't find agreement with the regional electricity board on the price. A long legal battle is expected.

Meanwhile Enron has also put its political connections to work in this country. Apparently not content with just providing a useful service (providing gas to heat our homes), it decided to become an energy

moving natural gas around the country. Within ten years it was making that 80 percent as a trader, buying and selling not just gas and electricity but numerous other commodities such as pulp, paper, water, and recently internet bandwidth. Some of these ventures were obviously successful, some were not, but were made less than obvious through complex accounting and off-the-books partnerships. By 2000 Enron's sales had topped \$100 billion and its stock price had climbed to \$90 a share. Along with these numbers though is the fact that Enron's debt had also climbed to nearly \$8 billion. Investors didn't seem worried though; Enron was just too big to fail, and too well connected.

Enron has invested in political as well as energy futures over the years and its CEO, Ken Lay, has been a stalwart supporter of the Bushes. In the late 1980s, he was a principal fundraiser in George Bush, Sr.'s campaign and later hired Bush's Secretary of State James Baker and Secretary of Commerce Robert Mossbacher.

NFP 2002 State Board Slate

Listed below is the proposed slate of nominees for the Nebraskans for Peace State Board of Directors. Any current paid member of NFP is eligible to cast a ballot for each of the board slots up for election this year. Write-in votes are naturally welcome, providing the persons whose names are being written in have given permission and are willing to serve a full two-year term. All ballots must be returned to the NFP State Office, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508, no later than February 12, 2002.

At-Large Seats (Vote for four)

_____ Gerald Henderson—The former Director of the City of Lincoln's Human Rights Commission and the Chair of the Personnel Committee, Gerald is a long-standing member of the State Board. He is actively involved in Citizens Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), a Lincoln group committed to eradicating racial intolerance.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

_____ Frances Mendenhall—A founding Co-Chair of the Nebraska Green Party and still deeply involved with the Omaha Chapter of the Greens, Frances was appointed to the State Board this past fall to fill a vacancy. In addition to maintaining her dental practice, she is one of the leading environmental activists in Nebraska.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

_____ Paul Olson—Paul is a Foundation Professor of English at the University of Nebraska and one of the most well-known Peace and Justice advocates in the state. An active member of NFP virtually from its inception, he has most recently been devoting his efforts to the Turn Off the Violence project in the state.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

_____ Jay Schmidt—A retired United Methodist minister, Jay's Peace and Justice roots in Nebraska run deep. One of only a handful of clergy to provide draft counseling to draft-age men during the Vietnam War, he has just been mobilizing a collection of Protestant ministers to speak out against the war in Afghanistan.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Congressional District 1 (Vote for two)

_____ Sayre Andersen—Currently a member of the State Board, Sayre recently retired as a Professor of Philosophy and English at Wayne State College. He has been instrumental in reviving the Wayne NFP Chapter and giving the organization a formal presence in northeast Nebraska for the first time in over a decade.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

_____ Carol McShane—Carol is the current President of Nebraskans for Peace and probably the most public opponent of the Bush Administration's "War on Terrorism" in Nebraska. A Registered Nurse and founder of Nebraska Nursing Consultants, LLC, she has nearly 40 years of experience on issues relating to health care.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Congressional District 2 (Vote for two)

_____ Patrick Murray—The Chair of the Philosophy Department at Creighton University in Omaha, Patrick has served on the NFP State Board for the past decade. Deeply committed to Nebraskans for Peace, with a long history of activism in the cause of Peace and Justice, he is one the senior members of the board.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

_____ (Vacancy)

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Congressional District 3 (Vote for two)

_____ Marsha Fangmeyer—The current Vice President of Nebraskans for Peace, Marsha is the senior attorney at Knapp, Fangmeyer, Ashwege, Besse and Marsh in Kearney. An NFP member since the mid-70s, she is a past president of both the Nebraska Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and ACLU-Nebraska.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

_____ Byron Peterson—A retired Social Worker from the Nebraska Panhandle, Byron has spent the past two-and-a-half years investigating the problem of alcohol sales at Whiteclay. A regular contributor to the *Nebraska Report*, he has working relationship with many members of the Oglala Lakota Tribal leadership.

_____ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Nuke Race, conclusion

a return to what critics in the United States and Europe call its 'unilateralist,' go-it-alone approach to world affairs.

"Bush's decision [to end the ABM treaty] was the second setback in a week for international arms-control advocates. On Friday, administration officials maneuvered to break off discussion at an international conference aimed at enforcing a worldwide ban on biological weapons, causing the convention to collapse. Both the ABM Treaty and the so-called enforcement protocol for bio-weapons are widely supported by America's European allies, who this year were openly critical of what they view as the Bush administration's disdain for international agreements and institutions such as the United Nations.

"In the Middle East, the United States has also veered away from a 'multilateralist' approach adopted in the aftermath of Sept. 11 as it tried to assuage Arab critics of its anti-terror campaign." Matthews concludes: "Most or all of these moves are widely viewed as internal administration victories by hard-liners, most often identified with the Pentagon leadership, who are deeply wary of international agreements that constrain American freedom of action in the world and impatient with the sticky process of gaining a consensus among allies." Administration critics and some Europeans, however, see the American go-it-alone trend as possibly counterproductive in the war on terrorism and other struggles that require international support for the United States.

In the meantime, the money spigot for military spending is wide open with no sign that anybody will try to cut the flow. Congress overwhelmingly passed the president's \$343.3 billion defense bill calling for an increase of \$33 billion, or more than ten percent, over last year's spending levels, including more money for pay and benefits, missile defenses, anti-terrorism and weapons for the war in Afghanistan. "I don't know of anything the president wanted that is not in the bill," said Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.), ranking minority member of the Armed Services Committee. "We're fighting a war, and we're responding appropriately," said committee Chairman Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.). "We wanted to put resources where they're needed... and we did."

NUKE WASTE, conclusion

nuclear material shipments—including waste transports—the day after September 11, and again on October 7 (fearing reprisals once the U.S. bombing began in Afghanistan). Although the bans were lifted in mid-October, a highly controversial train shipment of 125 irradiated fuel assemblies—originating at the failed West Valley, New York atomic waste reprocessing facility and bound for DOE's Idaho National Engineering Lab—is still on hold.

The two-container train shipment, one of the largest single commercial high-level atomic waste transports in U.S. history, was originally scheduled to roll on September 20, but was postponed due to the terrorist threat. In addition, because of faulty gaskets on the transport containers ("Like the O rings on the Space Shuttle Challenger," according to West Valley DOE spokesman John Chamberlain), the shipment is forbidden between October 31, 2001 and April 1, 2002. This is in order to avoid any possibility of straining the seals by encountering extreme cold weather conditions. The atomic waste train would enter from Kansas into Nebraska at Gibbon on the Union Pacific, and travel west across the rest of the state.

Now is a critical time to stop the "Mobile Chernobyl" in its tracks. Contact your U.S. Senators and Representative. Urge them to oppose Yucca Mountain when it comes up for its ultimate vote in Congress next summer. Help get your town to pass a local resolution against nuclear waste shipments through your community. For more information on how to become involved, contact NIRS by phone at 202-328-0002 or e-mail: kevin@nirs.org for a sample resolution and additional action ideas. The NIRS website address is www.nirs.org

Office Hours for the Nebraskans for Peace State Office in Lincoln, at 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

- January 9 2002 Nebraska Legislature convenes
- January 17 Citizens for Equal Protection is hosting a "Day at the Legislature" Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to noon in room 1126 of the State Capitol in Lincoln to educate state senators on civil rights issues that impact Nebraska's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens. Anyone interested in participating in this public education and outreach event should contact CFEP by phone at 402-398-3027 or e-mail at: kwilliams345@yahoo.com
- January 20 A presentation on "Christian Pacifism in a Time of War" will be held Sunday evening, January 20, at 6:30 p.m. at Antelope Park Church of the Brethren, 3645 Sumner St. (the corner of Sumner & Normal Blvd. in Lincoln). Speakers from the Friends Meeting, First Mennonite Church and Antelope Park Church of the Brethren will examine the Biblical foundation of the peace position and explore various ways in which Christians can witness for peace. For more information call 402-488-2793.
- January 21 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- February 16 2002 Annual Peace Conference

To list an event in the CALENDAR, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event. Mail to Nebraskans for Peace — Calendar, 941 "O" Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508. E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com. Announcements published on a space available basis.

These Are Strange Days Indeed

Even the most loyal Bush supporter can't say with a straight face that the man had a mandate. Yet after less than a year in office, George W. Bush, some feel, has consolidated executive power to rival FDR or LBJ. Myself, I think that's an overstatement. I remember LBJ, and I grew up among FDR-cultists, and I can tell you both those presidents possessed personal powers—of presence, of understanding, of greatness even—this president will, to put it nicely, never own himself.

Deep down, I suspect, Bush's 80-plus percent approval rating is largely a matter of wishful thinking on the part of Americans polled. High ratings for Bush did not translate into Republican victories in November, and congressional GOPs facing re-election next cycle are in agonies over the Bush recession economy.

Opposition to congressional concessions to the Department of Justice over civil liberties—

including erosion of lawyer-client privilege and expanded power to detain foreign nationals—has been vocal. Support for Bush's plan to try suspected terrorists in secret military tribunals peaked at about two-thirds of Americans polled a couple of weeks ago, but today a slim majority (51 percent) stands opposed to such tribunals.

Bush's announcement that the U.S. will pull out of the ABM treaty—despite substantial concessions by our new Russian allies in the war against terror—like administration efforts to pass arctic wilderness oil drilling and to derail ANY new farm bill, shows all too clearly the Republican leadership mindset. A long wishlist—tax cuts for business and the wealthy, and rollbacks of decades-old Democratic achievements on environment and civil liberties—seems possible at last.

Rust never sleeps, as I believe I've mentioned on more than one occasion.

History called George W. Bush's name, and rust (AKA, the Republican leadership in Congress and the Bush administration) was not caught napping. Rust is working overtime, and rust's motto is: Damn the torpedoes and take no prisoners, get

what you can while the getting's good, and full speed ahead.

If you don't believe me, I suggest you call your House representative and ask about the vote in December to give the president what is now called Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). It used to be called Fast Track Authority, and failed under that name. Fast Track/TPA is opposed by labor, environmental, social justice, religious and progressive farm and commodity organizations. It's been renamed for this Congress. TPA sounds practically benign, like a frat boy prank maybe. But Fast Track by any other name is still the same bad idea—to relieve Congress of its responsibility to examine and negotiate trade agreements, to limit debate and to allow only up-or-down votes on deals negotiated by the president.

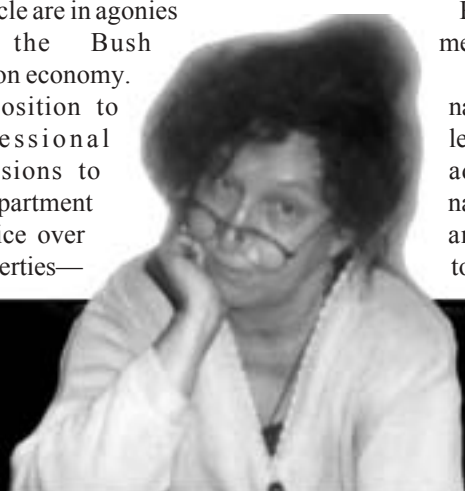
In order to pass TPA in the House, Republican leadership actually COVERED the voting clock, illegally extending the voting period until they could strong-arm the last vote they needed to win 215-214. I swear I am not making this up.

Process is the very linchpin of democracy. The rush by the Bush administration to make political hay out of

events since September 11 on many fronts indicates how little real regard Republican leadership has for democratic process. It is one thing for my congressman to vote for TPA. It is another thing altogether to help his party win that vote by violating House rules.

In time of national trouble, the longing to unite behind a strong, wise leader is powerful, and a strong, wise president could do great things. Were Bush to say to Americans, for example, "For the sake of national security, the U.S. must become energy independent over the next ten years through investment in conservation, public transportation, community planning and renewable energy," the support would be deafening.

You can't squeeze blood from a turnip, my dad used to say. The administration's agenda is business as usual, only more of it. Republican leaders are meeting bipartisan overtures with an aggressive, hard-line conservative push. These boys got their hands in the cookie jar now, and too few grownups around to tell them no.



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin

The real political spectrum isn't right to left...it's top to bottom.