



# Nebraska Report

*There is no Peace without Justice*

APRIL 2008

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## StratCom's Satellite Shoot-down

*The following editorial by NFP State Coordinator Tim Rinne was published in the March 13, 2008 Lincoln Journal Star. It subsequently appeared on a number of internet websites, including counterpunch.org, buzzflash.net and afterdowningstreet.org*

Stories about the transformation U.S. Strategic Command has undergone since 9/11 have been dribbling out for years. But just recently have we gotten a clearer picture of what these changes portend.

In October 2002, when the U.S. Space Command was shifted to StratCom, nobody could have imagined that in six months the "Shock and Awe" bombing campaign on Iraq would originate from Omaha. But with 70 percent of the missiles and smart bombs used in that pre-emptive attack guided from space, StratCom directed what Air Force Secretary James Roche termed the "the first true space war."

Then, in August 2003, the "Stockpile Stewardship Committee" overseeing StratCom's nuclear arsenal held a classified meeting at StratCom to plot the development of a new generation of crossover nuclear weapons—so-called 'bun-

ker busters'—that could be used in conventional military conflicts. The 'firewall' between nuclear and conventional war-fighting was being torn down, and StratCom was swinging the hammer.

And who could have guessed in December 2005, when revelations about the warrantless wire-

Barely a week after the United States repudiated a treaty proposal to ban space weapons at a U.N. Conference on Disarmament, StratCom shot down the satellite—using its so-called "missile defense" system.

tapping program became public, that this National Security Agency operation had StratCom fingerprints? But the NSA, under StratCom's new mission of "Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance," had been made a

StratCom "component command," and the NSA director, General Michael Hayden (who now heads the CIA), was carrying out this constitutionally suspect activity.

It's been nearly three years since the story broke that Vice President Dick Cheney ordered StratCom to draw up plans for an air- and sea-based attack on Iran. Under its "Prompt Global Strike" and "Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction" missions, the Omaha headquarters is now charged with attacking any place on earth—within one hour—on the mere perception of a threat to America's national security. The war on terror is being waged from StratCom, and the next war the White House gets us into (whether with Iran or a geopolitical rival like China) will start in Nebraska.

With all the missions it's now got in its quiver, you can hardly open a newspaper anymore without reading about a StratCom scheme.

The current flap with Russia over the proposed missile defense bases in Poland and the Czech Republic—that's StratCom's handiwork. The command picked up its "Integrated Missile Defense" mis-

*conclusion on page 2*

### StratCom Commander General Kevin Chilton

Here in Omaha... we are called on to be the most responsive combatant command in the U.S. arsenal. Responsible today for providing time-sensitive planning to conduct global strike operations anywhere on the planet... we are tasked to be the masters and defenders of domains that have become ever more critical to the way we fight as a nation—those being the domains of space and cyberspace...



*October 17, 2007 "Assumption of Command" Ceremony*

I believe we are going to need a nuclear deterrent in this country for the remainder of the 21st century... So long as there are other countries in the world that possess enough nuclear weapons to destroy the United States of America and our way of life... we need to have a nuclear deterrent force that can do the mission of preserving our freedoms.

*March 4, 2008 Comments to the Washington, D.C. Media*

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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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# StratCom's Shoot-down, conclusion

sion in 2003 after the Bush/Cheney Administration pulled out of the ABM Treaty. And those Eastern European installations—which the Russians warn are reigniting the Cold War—will be added to the network of international bases already under StratCom's command.

But from reading the news accounts, you'd never know the command was involved. StratCom's name is never mentioned.

Or who realized that, when a U.S. Predator drone fired a missile killing al-Qaida commander Abu Laith al Libi in Pakistan this past January, StratCom did everything from supply the intelligence to help fly the unpiloted vehicle? That incident dramatized how easily StratCom—with its new war-fighting authority—can skirt the law. According to an *Associated Press* story, the missile attack infringed on Pakistan's national sovereignty, meaning international law may have been breached. But with the free hand it's been granted, 60 minutes from now, StratCom could have started a war and Congress wouldn't even have had a clue.

This is not our fathers' StratCom.

Gone are the days when Strategic Command simply controlled America's nuclear deterrent, and its doomsday weapons were only to be used as a last resort. Since 9/11, StratCom has gone from never supposed to be used to being used for everything. Likening the changes that have occurred at the command

to a tsunami, former astronaut and current StratCom Commander Kevin Chilton brags that StratCom today is "the most responsive combatant command in the U.S. arsenal."

It's now also the most dangerous place on the face of the earth.

And hardly anybody knows it.

StratCom's well-publicized shutdown of the spy satellite, however, may have finally shown the world just how menacing the command has become. Barely a week after the United States repudiated a treaty proposal to ban space weapons at a U.N. Conference on Disarmament, StratCom shot down the satellite—using its "missile defense" system. And the message this shutdown sent to the world struck with all the force of an anti-satellite missile. Despite the innocuous name, missile defense is now understood to be an offensive weapon by which the United States (in the language of the Administration's National Space Policy) means to "dominate" space...

And whoever controls space controls the Earth.

Operating like some executive-branch vigilante, StratCom has just launched a new arms race—because you can bet Russia and China will never surrender the heavens without a fight.

What's equally worrisome, though, is that StratCom is now hourly making a mockery of our system of congressional checks and balances. And if Congress can't rein in StratCom, can anyone?

## Thank You Senator for Your Unstinting Candor

In his just-published book, *America: Our Next Chapter*, retiring U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel states that: "This administration's hell-bent determination to go to war in Iraq was an historic blunder borne of an astounding amount of arrogance, ignorance and incompetence... [It was] the most dangerous costly foreign policy debacle in our nation's history."

Accusing the Bush/Cheney Administration of "cherry-picking intelligence" in a "headlong, foolhardy rush to war," Hagel writes that in October 2002 the Senate was "asked to vote on a resolution based on half-truths, untruths and wishful thinking." In hindsight, he states, "Yes, I regret my vote."



Senator Chuck Hagel

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TO THE HALLS OF CREIGHTON



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# Ten Organizations from Five States Address Proposed Uranium Mining

by Shannon Anderson,  
Powder River Basin Resource Council

Organizations from Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Colorado met in Casper, Wyoming, Saturday, March 15, to discuss their joint concerns about uranium mining in the Northern Great Plains. Citizens from ten organizations are voicing their concerns about surface and ground water, human health, and local property values.

Defenders of the Black Hills, South Dakota Sierra Club and ACTion for the Environment attended from South Dakota, which faces mining proposals along the southern Black Hills. The Powder River Basin Resource Council and Biodiversity Conservation Alliance came from Wyoming, where exploratory and mining permits have been applied for in the state. Coloradoans Against Resource Destruction traveled from the northern part of Colorado where uranium mining is also proposed near Fort Collins. Three organizations—Nebraskans for Peace, the Nebraska Sierra Club and the Western Nebraska Resources Council—represented Nebraska where Crow Butte Resources is seeking to expand its uranium mining operations in the northwest corner of the state. Members of Dakota Resource Council from northwestern North Dakota are also facing new plans for uranium mining in their part of that state.

In all five states, companies plan to use 'in situ' leach mining (ISL) which injects a dissolving solution underground into suspected uranium deposits. The solution dissolves the uranium and its radioactive decay products, as well as heavy metals. This radioactive solution is pumped to the surface. The uranium is then removed and shipped to a mill for concentration into "yellowcake." The water is re-treated and then injected back underground in a cycle that continues until all the

uranium has been extracted. Reverse osmosis is then often used to remove some of the toxics from the water, and the remaining liquid is either injected underground or retained in shallow ponds. Numerous uranium mining companies are making plans throughout the West as a result of recent increases in the price of uranium.

"In Wyoming, there are significant questions about regulation and oversight of uranium operations," according to Wilma Tope, Powder River Basin Resource Council Board Member. "Citizens need to have a stronger voice in uranium activities." Wilma's family owns a ranch in Crook County, Wyoming, and has banded together with other local residents to pressure regulators to ensure adequate protection of local water supplies—both quality and quantity.

In South Dakota, Powertech Uranium Corporation has started drilling more uranium exploratory

**We call on the public and all elected officials to do everything possible to protect the water, land, and local economies from proposed uranium activities."**

wells in an area where they already have 4,000 wells in the southwestern Black Hills. "It's already been proven world-wide that ISL mining contaminates aquifers and then those aquifers cannot be restored to their previous state," said



photo credit: The Chadron Record

Wellheads dot the landscape at the Crow Butte Resources uranium mine near Crawford, Nebraska.

Charmaine White Face, Coordinator for Defenders of the Black Hills. "South Dakota relies very heavily on aquifers for drinking water and livestock use. We've been in a drought for the last ten years and the last thing we need to do is poison our water," she said.

ACTion for the Environment is very concerned that South Dakota taxpayers will once again have to take on the toxic messes that are left when a mining company leaves as happened previously with Canadian companies. Powertech is a Canadian company. "The Board of Minerals and Environment should remember what happened when they gave approval for the Brohm gold mine. Now South Dakota people are paying for that mess. Are we going to have to pay for a radioactive mess left by another Canadian company?" said Gary Heckenliab of ACTion for the Environment. "Not only South Dakota residents but all the taxpayers of the United States are going to have to pay for this for many, many years to come," he said.

Coloradoans Against Resource Destruction (CARD), formed last year in response to Powertech's proposal to mine in the rapidly-growing area near Fort Collins. "Of course uranium min-

ing always causes some form of contamination. Water at in situ leach mining sites is not returned to its original condition," said Jackie Adolph, a member of CARD. "Most people don't know that federal policies that subsidize the nuclear industry aren't just about power plants. The nuclear industry's largest negative impacts have always been in uranium mining and milling processes."

In Nebraska, Crow Butte Resources (a subsidiary of the Canadian company Cameco Corp.) is seeking to expand one the largest and oldest ISL mines in the country. Organizations have intervened in the NRC's licensing procedures. "We are particularly concerned about protection of local water supplies and cultural resources," said Buffalo Bruce, Vice Chair of the Western Nebraska Resources Council. "The NRC has failed to fulfill its duties under the Trust Doctrine, which protects indigenous rights granted to Native American populations under U.S. treaties."

North Dakota just recently started public hearings to accept comments on ISL mining in that state. Ken Kudrna, a member of Dakota Resource Council, lives only a few miles from where ura-

anium mining is planned to begin.

The groups have issued a common statement:

**"We want the uranium industry to know that we stand together on this issue. Whether in a rural setting or a populated area, uranium mining causes radioactive contamination. Past uranium sites continue to contaminate the air, land and water. Any bonds designed to pay for clean-up of former mining areas have not been sufficient, and taxpayers have been forced to pay the bill. We call on the public and all elected officials to do everything possible to protect the water, land and local economies from proposed uranium activities."**

More information can be found at:

Defenders of the Black Hills:  
[www.defendblackhills.org](http://www.defendblackhills.org)

Coloradoans Against Resource Destruction: [www.nunnglow.com](http://www.nunnglow.com)

Powder River Basin Resource Council: [www.powderriver-basin.org](http://www.powderriver-basin.org)

Nebraskans for Peace: [www.nebraskansforpeace.org/](http://www.nebraskansforpeace.org/)

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# What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

## *Global Warming Is Alive and Well*

Having done my best to explain thermal inertia and feedbacks in an *Omaha World-Herald* "Midlands Voices," I seem to have aroused several counter responses in the letters to the editor from hard-core climate contrarians. If carbon dioxide had a sense of humor, it might get a chuckle over the fact that some human beings reject the notion that CO<sub>2</sub> retains heat and will have a role in warming the Earth beyond environmentally safe limits.

At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, we have such a rare bird on our chemistry faculty—Robert Smith, a full professor, no less. Professor Smith has his doubts about evolution, too, having signed a petition to that effect offered by Seattle's Discovery Institute, which promotes "Intelligent Design." Smith is locally renowned for exercising his First Amendment rights to make a fool of himself, cock-walking our Faculty Senate meetings and the op-ed page of the *Omaha World-Herald*, telling, in the name of science (as he sees it), non-chemists such as myself that we are ignorant nobodies.

Working the public prints, I have crossed paths with some very weird 'science.' Jack Kasher, who used to teach physics at UNO, also tossed a denier's log on the fire. Professor Kasher is well known for advocating alien abductions. Several letters to the "Public Pulse" upbraided me for raising the subject of global warming when it is cold outside.

True enough, it's been an average winter around here. We still have the good Nebraska fortune of freezing our rear ends off now and then. We have lost our perspective about what is 'average,'

however, because the last several winters have been so wimpy.

Rest assured, global warming is alive and well. Meanwhile, here are a few dispatches from other places.

### **Solar Power Developing Quickly**

Robert F. Service reports in *Science* (February 8, 2008) that the cost of solar power has been declining sharply, from \$22 per watt in 1980, to \$6 per watt in 1990, and \$2.70 in 2005. Economies of scale, as well as improvements in efficiency and less-expensive construction materials may bring solar energy down to cost that competes with fossil-fuel generation by about 2015. By 2008, the solar-power industry's generating capacity worldwide was growing at an astonishing 40 percent a year, but it still generated only a fraction of one percent of total electrical power.

The silicon solar panels that dominate the industry today may be replaced by new technologies that combine several light-absorbing materials able to capture different portions of the solar spectrum, or solar cells manufactured in rolls of thin copper-indium film gallium selenide atop a metal foil. Nanotechnology plays a role in some designs for future solar-generating technology that is been theorized, but not yet commercialized. While today's silicon cells convert about 15 to 20 per cent of sunlight to electricity in the field (up to 24 per cent under perfect laboratory conditions), new technologies that have broached the realm of theory (and some in design, but not commercialization) raise that figure to 40, 60, even 80

percent. Photovoltaics made of plastic may dramatically reduce manufacturing costs.

### **Lake Mead May Run Dry**

Lake Mead, the vast reservoir for the Colorado River water that sustains the fast-growing cities of Phoenix and Las Vegas, could lose water faster than previously thought and run dry within 13 years, according to a study by scientists at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

With weather patterns in a warming world favoring a drier

of Scripps say that even with an occasional snowy winter (such as 2007-2008) demand for the lake's water exceeds the amount added each year by runoff. "We were really sort of stunned," Barnett told *The New York Times*. "We didn't expect such a big problem basically right on our front doorstep. We thought there'd be more time." He added, "You think of what the implications are, and it's pretty scary".

Other research has found that the Colorado River watershed, of which Lake Mead is a part, has had a long-standing tendency toward

and South American grasslands), releasing gases as they are burned and plowed. Destruction of these older, natural ecosystems also removes carbon sinks. In addition to the greenhouse gases caused by growing bio-fuels, additional emissions result from refining and transporting them.

"When you take this into account, most of the bio-fuel that people are using or planning to use would probably increase greenhouse gasses substantially," said Timothy Searchinger, lead author of one of the studies and a researcher in environment and economics at Princeton University. "Previously there's been an accounting error: land use change has been left out of prior analysis."

Clearance of grassland releases 93 times the amount of greenhouse gas that would be saved by the fuel made annually on that land, said Joseph Fargione, lead author of the second paper, and a scientist at the Nature Conservancy. "So for the next 93 years you're making climate change worse, just at the time when we need to be bringing down carbon emissions."

Many U.S. farmers are growing corn year-round, whereas previously corn crops were alternated with soybeans. More soybeans are being raised on newly cleared rainforest land in Brazil.

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

*"You think of what the implications are, and it's pretty scary."*

— Tim P. Barnett, Scripps Institute of Oceanography

American West, a study by scientists at Scripps indicates that Lake Mead, which spans the border of Nevada and Arizona, could run so low by 2013 that water pumps would become useless. The study has become a center of controversy between scientists at Scripps and others at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, who assert that its climate models are too crude to forecast the future water level of a single large lake.

The Scripps study found that Lake Mead's water supply has a 50 percent chance of becoming unusable by 2021 if the demand for water remains at present levels, and if global warming trends conform to mid-range models. Researchers Tim P. Barnett and David W. Pierce

drought that makes the last century look unusually wet. Climate models also indicate that a warmer climate favors persistent drought in this area.

### **Ethanol May Not be Eco-Friendly**

When the full emissions costs of producing bio-fuels are calculated, most of them are environmentally more expensive, causing more greenhouse gases than fossil fuels, according to studies published in *Science* early in 2008. Growth of feedstock for many bio-fuels, from corn to sugar cane to palm oil, destroys natural ecosystems (most notably rainforest in the tropics

# U.S. Strategic Command

## Organization Chart of StratCom Groups, Components & Task Forces

Created by Loring Wirbel, Citizens for Peace in Space

### Organizational "J-Code" Groups

**J0 – Office of the Commander** – U.S. Air Force General Kevin Chilton, not only has operational authority over the traditional nuclear triad (land, sea & air warheads), but also full oversight over what former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld called the "new triad": 1) *offensive* nuclear and conventional weapons; 2) *defensive* systems, both passive and active; and 3) *infrastructure* such as communications and intelligence. That's a mission that covers a good portion of Defense Department operations.

**J1 – Manpower and Personnel** – The military equivalent of human resources.

**J2 – Intelligence** – The office that coordinates strategic intelligence, but as the "Component Commands" diagram below indicates, this means some direct oversight over agencies like the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

**J3 – Global Operations** – Coordinating all the military wings serving StratCom, which meant nuclear-weapon wings in the bygone days of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), but now means many elements within Northern Command and the geographical commands like CentCom and SouthCom.

**J3A – Combat and Information Operations** – The chunk of Global Operations that pays attention to the underlying C4ISR (Command, Control, Computers, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) and "fighting soldier" infrastructure.

**J3B – Current Operations** – The chunk of Global Operations that works with units actually deployed in ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.

**J4 – Logistics** – StratCom's equivalent of companies like Halliburton, making sure the right

### Functional Components

**Space** – For less than a year, "Space and Global Strike" was a combined command based in Omaha. The new independent space component is now based at Vandenberg Air Force base in California, home to many of the nation's military space assets. Was the separation of the two an effort to give space a greater role? Or was it a public relations gambit to make military space seem less directly connected to global strike operations?

**Global Strike** – Lt. General Robert Elder of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, former commander of the combined Space and Global Strike Component, continues to head the Global Strike unit based at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. Global Strike responsibilities include preemptive bombing and strategic reconnaissance operations to deter attacks against the United States anywhere on the globe. To that end, it is also charged with looking at futuristic elements like the Falcon global space plane.

**Joint Information Operations Center** – When the Department of Defense (DoD) says "information operations," they mean fusing the intelligence from different agencies and sources into unified databases, and "mining" those databases. This center is at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, conveniently close to the giant National Security Agency operation at Medina Annex.

**Integrated Missile Defense** – This is the closest StratCom gets to the Army in day-to-day ops, since the Army is in charge of staffing the missile battalions of ground-based missile defense. The Air Force, however, is in charge of making all the missile-defense elements work together, such as the Navy's Aegis ships and the ground- and sea-based radar that support missile defense.

### Service Components

**Air Force Space Command** – Shall we call this the remnants of US Space Command? But with General Robert Kehler, the former Deputy Commander at StratCom moving to Colorado Springs to take this over, don't think its glory days are past.

**US Army Strategic Command** – Army has its own Space Command which manages Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), but it falls under the command of this more general group that also oversees Stryker brigades, some remaining tactical nukes, etc.

**Marine Forces Strategic Command** – One might have thought the Marines would play a minimal role here, but now that Northern Command includes "maritime ops" in defense of the homeland, the Marines and Navy will jointly be playing a more global role in 'policing' the seas.

**Fleet Forces Command** – Includes the former Navy Space Command, and active elements of Naval Security Group, handling everything from the Navy component of missile defense (Aegis cruisers) to global Navy space-based intelligence operations like Ranger and Classic Wizard.

### Task Forces

These are the "hardware management groups" for weapons and platforms, with dedicated task forces for **airborne communications, aerial refueling and tankers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, ballistic-missile submarines, and strategic bombers and reconnaissance aircraft.**

## Organizational "J-Code" Groups

*J0 – Office of the Commander  
General Kevin Chilton*

*J1 – Manpower and Personnel  
Col. Timothy Cashdollar*

*J2 – Intelligence  
Captain Jeffrey Canfield*

*J3A – Combat & Info Ops  
Brigadier General Brooks Bash*

*J3 – Global Operations  
Rear Admiral Doug McClain*

*J3B – Current Operations  
Colonel Michael Carey*

*J4 – Logistics  
Captain Walter Wright*

*J5 – Plans & Policy  
Brigadier General Mark Owen*

*J6 – C4 Systems  
Colonel Mark VanUs*

*J7 – Joint Exercises & Training  
Colonel Richard Boltz*

*J8 – Capability/Resource  
Integration Ken Calicutt*

*Global Innovation & Strategy  
Center Kevin Williams*

support operations are in place for the right groups of people.

**J5 – Plans and Policy** – Figuring out the long-range stuff, dreaming up overarching plans like "Operationally Responsive Spaceflight."

**J6 – C4 Systems** – Administration of communications and computer equipment.

**J7 – Joint Exercises and Training** – Management of global exercises, including those conducted with allies.

**J8 – Capability and Resource Integration** – An important office in planning StratCom's budget, since it has to decide if StratCom has the money and material to do the things the politicians and pundits want it to do.

**Global Innovation and Strategy Center** – A post-9/11 'cross-over' think tank that constitutes an academic institution within StratCom for studying broad problems in strategic warfare. A joint public/private entity, it is based at the University of Nebraska-Omaha Aksarben Campus.

## Component Commands

*Space  
Vandenberg AFB, CA  
Lt. General William Shelton*

*Joint Information Operations  
Warfare Command  
Lackland AFB, TX  
Major General John Koziol*

*Global Strike and Integration  
Barksdale AFB, LA  
Lt. General Robert Elder*

*Intelligence/Surveillance/  
Reconnaissance DIA Hqtrs  
Lt. General Mike Maples*

*Integrated Missile Defense  
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Lt. General Kevin Campbell*

*WMD Center, Defense Threat  
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Dr. James Tegnella*

*Network Warfare  
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Lt. General Keith Alexander*

*Joint Task Force for Global  
Network Operations  
Lt. General Charles Croom, Jr.*

*Defense Intelligence Operations  
Coordination Center  
Daniel Dawson*

**Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance** – While this sounds similar to the JIOC above, this group is run by the Defense Intelligence Agency, and decides what kind of national intelligence is relevant to the mission of StratCom. It actually runs the "platforms," while JIOC fuses the data collected.

**Network Warfare** – This is where the director of the NSA plays the most direct role, primarily because NSA has the longest history in providing computer

defense, and in planning covert computer attack. This mission was temporarily under the wing of the US Space Command, until USSC was merged into StratCom in 2002. Current CIA Director General Michael Hayden conducted the NSA's now-legendary "warrantless wiretaps" program while heading up this StratCom Component Command. Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) also is directly involved in this group.

**Global Network Operations** – Almost a subset of Network Warfare, this DISA-run group is the 'Information Technology Central' of the Defense Department, determining the architecture of its computer and communication networks.

**Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction** – A post-9/11 agency, co-located with Defense Threat Reduction Agency at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, for the study of active operations against adversaries' nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

## Service-Specific Components

*U.S. Army Forces Strategic  
Command (ARSTRAT)  
Arlington, VA  
Lt. General Kevin Campbell*

*Marine Corps Forces Strategic  
Command (MARFORSTRAT)  
Quantico, VA  
Lt. General James Amos*

*National Geospatial Intelligence  
Agency Representative  
Eric Herbst*

*Air Force Space Command  
Peterson AFB, Colorado  
General Robert Kehler*

*Fleet Forces Command  
Norfolk, VA  
Admiral Jonathan Greenert*

*National Security Agency  
Representative  
Ms. Pat Moreno*

### Task Forces

*Airborne  
Communications*

*Aerial Refueling/Tankers*

*Land-based Intercontinental  
Ballistic Missiles*

*Ballistic Missile  
Submarines*

*Strategic Bombers  
& Reconnaissance Aircraft*

# 2008 Omaha Peace & Justice Expo

“Working Toward a World Without Poverty”

**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Sam Daley-Harris**

**Saturday April 26**  
**9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Lewis & Clark**  
**Middle School**  
**6901 Burt Street**

Author and activist Sam Daley-Harris will be the featured speaker at the 2008 Omaha Peace & Justice Expo. President and founder of the 501(c)(3) RESULTS Educational Fund, Daley-Harris is dedicated to mass educational strategies to generate the will for ending world hunger.

RESULTS Educational Fund organized the February 1997 Microcredit Summit held in Washington, DC. The Summit was attended by more than 2,900 participants from 137 countries and launched a nine-year campaign to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by 2005. By the end of 2006 the Microcredit Summit Campaign had made loans to more than 133 million people, 93 million of whom were among the world's poorest. Almost 85 percent are women, and the loan repayment rate is about 98 percent.

Daley-Harris is also founder and president of RESULTS, an international citizens' lobby dedicated to creating the political will to end hunger and poverty. He is the author of *Reclaiming Our Democracy: Healing the Break Between People and Government*, about which President Jimmy Carter said, “[Daley-Harris] provides a road map for global involvement in planning a better future.” Daley-Harris is also editor of “Pathways Out of Poverty: Innovations in Microfinance for the Poorest Families.”

He lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife Shannon, who is a consultant with the Religious Affairs Division of the Children's Defense Fund. Their son Micah was born in May 1998 and daughter Sophie was born in May 2001.

This year marks the fourth consecutive Peace & Justice Expo which annually draws upwards to 500 participants.

## Why We Need To Close the Unicameral's *Revolving Door*

by Roger Holmes and Jack Gould  
Common Cause Nebraska

During the Government Committee hearing on LB 870, the so-called revolving-door bill which calls for a two-year wait before former state Sen.s and certain other elected officials can become lobbyists, Sen. Mike Friend of Omaha said he was unaware of any problems that would justify the bill. “I fail to find any value in this bill,” he told the committee.

To enlighten Sen. Friend and other committee members who appeared to share his lack of awareness, we offer the following recent examples of the revolving-door syndrome.

Our first concerns former Sen. Don Pederson of North Platte and the Assurity Life Building across the street from the Capitol at 16th and K Streets in Lincoln. Sen. Pederson, as chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the 99th Legislature (2005-2006), was instrumental in arranging for the state's appropriation of \$12 million to purchase the building. Pederson was term-limited out of the legislature in January 2007. In February, he registered as a lobbyist for Assurity Life, telling the

Omaha World-Herald it was the only lobbying job he intended to take. He resigned as Assurity's lobbyist in June, six months later, having been paid \$20,000 for his lobbying efforts.

The next example involves the former Speaker of the 98th Legislature (2003-2004), Curt Bromm, and efforts to pass legislation prohibiting power companies and municipalities from offering broadband services to consumers, which, as a consequence, would maintain the monopoly on these services by private telecommunications companies. Bromm twice sponsored such legislation; the first effort failed; the second bill was passed but the law was overturned in a court case.

In January, 2005, two days after term limits ended Sen. Bromm's legislative career, he registered as a lobbyist for nine clients, including the Nebraska Cable Communications Association and the Nebraska Telecommunications Association. These two clients paid \$5,000 a month each for his services.

Our final example concerns Sen. Kermit Brashear, LB 645 and the recent Omaha schools legislation. Just as

former Speaker Bromm was traveling through the revolving door into the lobby, the newly elected Speaker of the Legislature, Kermit Brashear, picked up the effort to prohibit public entities from providing broadband services by introducing LB 645 into the 99th Legislature (2005-2006).

**Such behavior undermines  
the electorate's trust in elected  
officials and threatens the integrity  
of our state government.**

On February 2, 2005, Speaker Brashear filed a conflict of interest declaration, as required by law, listing LB 645 and eight other communications-related bills as possible conflicts of interest because he was under contract as a lawyer to Cox Cable, a company providing broadband services.

Such conflict declarations do not require a senator to recuse himself from working on conflicted bills. Speaker Brashear played a significant role in the passage of LB 645, aided by now-lobbyist Bromm's Rotunda buttonholing of

his former colleagues. Speaker Brashear was also heavily involved in the Omaha schools legislation that occupied so much of the 2006 session.

In February 2007, within a month of his term-limited exit from the legislature, Brashear registered as a paid lobbyist, listing the Metro Student Achievement

Steering Committee as his sole client.

At the recent hearing on LB 870, committee chair Ray Aguilar and other members praised former Sen. Brashear and other former speakers and senators for their assistance to the legislature after leaving office, citing in particular Brashear's work on the Omaha schools issue.

Helpful though they may have been, Brashear's efforts were underwritten to the tune of \$1,000 per month by the Metro Student Achievement

Steering Committee, a group with clear interests in the outcome of the legislation.

And, in the first three months of 2008, just one year after his departure from the legislature, Brashear added three more lobbying clients: the Brownell-Talbot School, an interested party in the Omaha schools legislation, pays him \$1,000 per month for his services. And Cox Cable, Brashear's legal client whose telecommunications interests were protected by LB 645, pays him \$3,000 per month to represent their interests. In March, Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler, a colleague of the former speaker in the legislature, announced that the city was hiring Brashear as a lobbyist to the tune of \$12,000.

Former Sens. Pederson, Bromm and Brashear are not alone in capitalizing on a quick move through the revolving door between the legislative chamber and the lobby. It is because of their conduct and that of others (including two other recent Speakers) that Common Cause supports the Governor and Sen. Avery in asking the legislature to close the door. Such behavior undermines the electorate's trust in elected officials and threatens the integrity of our state government.

# Initiative Petition to 'Use Public Power'

## Will Open Up the Information Super Highway for Nebraskans

by Paul Schumacher  
www.usepublicpower.com

Nebraskans deserve the same benefits from competition as people in other states. Nebraska communities should be able to provide services to their people, as do communities in other states. And Nebraskans are entitled to the same benefits of technology as people in other states.

The fact that Nebraskans were smart enough to be the only 100-percent public power state in the nation and to own their own public power infrastructure should not now handicap them and force them to underutilize resources.

The "Use Public Power" initiative petition now being circulated in the state would grant local public power boards the authority over internet connection access. 'Local option' authority is critical in a big state like Nebraska where one size does not fit all. For instance, some boards may choose to:

- 'wholesale' infrastructure access to the private sector;
- string fiber optic lines to farms, residences or industrial parks to link them to a buffet of private communications providers;
- work in dynamic partnerships with local investors—young talent and old visionaries growing the information age in Nebraska, not just from the consumer side, but the all-important production side as well;
- build a state of the art communication system in their service areas;
- utilize existing power lines to deliver communications services using a technology called BPL that the FCC says holds great promise, but is currently prohibited by Nebraska law;
- do nothing but stand ever vigilant as a deterrent force ready to enter the market if private interests use their monopoly position to deter competition or otherwise do not operate in the

public interest;

- employ existing investments and assets directly or in partnership with the private sector; or
- perform any other role that public power boards, as trustees of the public heritage exercising local control, find in the interest of their communities.

### Under Nebraska's current telecommunication's policy, Nebraskans pay the highest taxes on their phone bills of any state.

*Under Nebraska's current telecommunication's policy, Nebraskans pay the highest taxes on their phone bills of any state*—due in large measure to a "Universal Service Fund" assessment which raises \$65,000,000 per year and is almost all doled out to legacy phone companies to give them incentive to provide rural dial tone and broadband. Most of those companies are closed private corporations that have broad discretion with their internal finances. By contrast, the public power companies are in a position to offer a broadband service carrying voice, internet and possibly digital television to the same rural areas using much the same resources they already have. The **6.95 percent Universal Service Fund assessment** drives up the cost of telephone in the metropolitan areas and weighs against companies considering relocation to the urban centers. In rural areas it creates a

heavily subsidized competitor which discourages private broadband investment and innovation there.

Many rural states do not even have a universal service fund. **Nebraska's 6.95 percent is the highest in the nation.** The fund frees up legacy company finances for the massive political activity that, in turn, keeps it on the books and continues to outlaw public power involvement. For those legacy companies with operations in other states, it may even free up resources for infrastructure in other states. While the accounting on the \$65,000,000 per year is very difficult to come by, clearly the assets purchased with the subsidies belong to the corporate recipients and increase their stock value. There is no obligation for the private companies to repay the subsidies should the firm merge or sell. If the public is going to pay for infrastructure, shouldn't the public own it?

The Federal government likewise hands out almost an equal amount in annual subsidy to the same legacy phone companies. Should public power companies choose to position themselves properly—and allowed by the initiative petition—they could share in the federal subsidy and create public wealth with it.

The principal argument against giving our public power companies authority to deliver telecom services (or not, as they choose) is that government should not be allowed to compete with private entities.

Such an argument ignores that in many respects public power is simply a business like any other—except it pays its shareholders dividends in the form of cheaper rates than the national average. Public power has few of the 'markers' usually associated with government. It levies no tax. It has no police. It passes no laws. The general philosophical issue in the 'government vs. private' debate is rooted in the government being able to use such powers to compete unfairly. But like business cor-

porations, public power is established under authority of statute passed by the legislature. It, like business corporations, is governed by a board or directors with fiduciary duties to the business operations. It, like business corporations, is driven by the forces of the private marketplace.

***In one very important respect, however, public power is like government.*** It is obligated to treat all equally and fairly. It is bound by public openness. It is bound by the principles of free speech and neutrality with respect to content of communication. These form the essential foundation of a communications platform consistent with our most sacred principles.

companies that insist on their ability to bundle their product line and limit access to infrastructure in discriminatory fashion.

We live in an age where the private and public sector often provide similar services and commodities. Examples:

- Parking Facilities
- Theaters and Arenas
- School Systems
- Shipping Ports and Airports
- Garbage collection and disposal
- Insurance (Medicaid and Medicare vs. private insurance)
- Hospitals and Public Health (Nebraska University Medical Center, etc.)

Do you believe that Nebraska's public power companies should be allowed to provide Internet and other telecommunications services, or should they not be allowed to?

No, Should Not Be Allowed 22.5%

Don't Know 24.1%



Yes, Should Be Allowed 53.4%

In fact, with respect to our current telecommunications situation in Nebraska, the 'government vs. private' arguments are actually reversed. It was the local phone companies that got the Unicameral to impose the 6.95 percent universal service assessment on every phone bill. It was the local phone companies that created a special eligible class to assure they had special status and access to those funds vis-à-vis innovators and competitors. It was the local phone

- Transportation (mass transit and subways compete with taxis, etc.)
- Radio & TV (Nebraska Educational TV and Public Radio/TV)
- Energy (public power competes with Natural Gas)
- Advertising (park benches, Buses, Score Boards, selling naming rights for public buildings)

conclusion on page 11

## Considerations on Craziness

by Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

As targets of J. Edgar Hoover's counter-intelligence program (CoIntelPro) in the late '60s, Mondo and his co-defendant Ed Poindexter were charged and convicted of the 1970 murder of Omaha Police officer Larry Minard. For over 37 years they have steadfastly maintained their innocence and that they were victims of an F.B.I. frameup. Amnesty International has designated them both as U.S. political prisoners.

I don't hear it—"You've got your nerve"—as much as I used to. It is, of course, what one might say to a person who's being a toilet bowl calling a sink 'white.'

There's much that goes on in the U.S. that stimulates at least some of us to say, "You've got your nerve" or something equivalent to that. For instance, according to a January 31, 2008 *Lincoln Journal Star* article, Andy Ringsmuth objects to the Nebraska Minority Committee translating civil and self-represented litigant forms into Spanish, Vietnamese and Arabic. Ringsmuth says that, if a person chooses to live here (presumably, the U.S.), he or she should learn English.

I hesitate to rain to Ringsmuth's charade. But there's substantial irony in his decision to use the legal profession as a venue for his English-only crusade. It so happens that some of the most important and commonly cited legal concepts are expressed, not in English, but in Latin and Latin-derived terminology, such as: "habeas corpus," "mandamus," "certiorari," "nolo contendere," "res judicata" and "voir dire." Is Andy Ringsmuth objecting to the prevalence of these Latin terms or to the prevalence of Latin and Greek terms in the sciences?

And as to his insistence that people who choose to live here learn English, he should be reminded that there was a time when no one in this land spoke English or any other European language. Yet the English and other Europeans who came and chose to stay didn't bother to learn the languages indigenous to this place. Nor does Ringsmuth seem to be expressing interest in learning Lakota, Dine', Cheyenne, Cree or any other of the languages spoken here before his ancestors arrived. So if I happen to be a person here in this state who doesn't speak English, I'm looking at Andy Ringsmuth and thinking, "You've got your nerve."

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Ringsmuth is not alone in seeing himself as having some kind of patriotic duty to protect the dominance of the English language in the U.S. He is one of hordes of politicians and other public figures who view English as representing a kind of purity of Americanism, with languages spoken mainly by people of color representing contamination. Unfortunately, for Mexicanos/as and other people from Central and South America who are of indigenous heritage and speak Spanish, the Spanish language is under attack. Why? It's not only because it's a foreign language but because Europeans (Caucasians) in the U.S. have come to associate it with brown-skinned, dark-haired, non-European people. This association serves to cause them a faultiness of recollection in which they forget that Spanish—like Latin, Greek, French, etc.—is a European language.

When we see these advocates for 'English-only' laws, policies and so forth, we almost always see, side-by-side with them, advocates for 'fixing our borders.' The fire-breathing Lou Dobbs of *CNN* is among the more prominent of these, combining incendiary rhetoric with a demeanor suggesting that he not only feels personally offended by 'aliens' illegally crossing into the U.S. from Mexico, but that he is feeling offended on behalf of real Americans. Someone there in the newsroom of *CNN* should tap Lou on the shoulder and give him a 'heads-up' on the fact that much of the southwestern U.S. was taken from Mexico and that the entirety of the continental U.S. was taken from the nations (tribes) who inhabited it at the time the first Europeans arrived here, and had been living here for thousands of years before their arrival. Somewhere, right about now, there's a so-called 'illegal alien' looking at Lou Dobbs on the TV screen and thinking, "You've got your nerve."

On the television these days, there are channels appealing to all kinds of interests: entertainment in general, movies and particular categories of movies, music and different genres of music, a large variety of sports, etc. Recently, I was clicking through some channels and stopped, out of curiosity, at the Sportsman Channel. The program was "Tommy Wilcox Outdoors." I've been a vegetarian since 1973 and don't find anything entertaining about people killing animals. But I had a feeling that I should check this out for a couple of minutes.

There was a large, fat man dressed in camouflage, crouching amid tall vegetation. Some distance from him, there was a fluttering contraption used to lure flying quail to within shooting range. This large, fat man in camouflage was shooting tiny quail with a big gun and, instead of a bird dog, he was

using his young son to go fetch the birds he was shooting out of the sky. At one point, the son, who was probably six or seven, came running back to his dad with a few dead quail. He was so proud as he cheered, "Dad, you shot this one right in the eye." At another point, the 'great white hunter' shot two quail in quick succession and, pleased with himself, sang a couple of bars of "Double your pleasure, double your fun." That was more than enough for me. And Michael Vick is doing time in prison, but not a fat man in camouflage, shooting tiny quail for fun, with a big-ass gun.

Sometimes words are just words, or seem to be. But often, words are much more than words. Today, for example, I learned that, though torture is torture most of the time, when it is done under the authority of the Bush/Cheney Administration, torture is *not* torture, but "enhanced interrogation."

There is much to be learned. There are children who believe their parents have value. But they learn soon enough from this country's news media that Warren Buffett and Bill Gates are *worth* several billion each. So, what of the children whose parents are working hard at full-time jobs and are only making enough money to make it from paycheck to paycheck and have little or no material assets? How long does it take for these

kids to begin to ask themselves, if Buffett and Gates are worth billions, what are their parents, who have no material wealth, worth?

"Freedom" is a word that can mean one thing to one person or group and another to a person or group in a different set of circumstances. And it can mean one thing for one person or group and something else for another person or group. "Freedom" under capitalism may mean very similar things to those who have capital and those who don't. But the freedom for those with capital is very different from the freedom for those without. For the former, it is a matter of virtually unlimited options.

In this country, freedom of speech is especially prized by those with capital who run commercial media. Their freedom means that they can use broadcast and print features, as well as ads, to encourage people to eat too much, to buy things they don't need, to pile up credit debt, to laugh at people's hardships and suffering, to disrespect vital aspects of people's cultures, to enjoy violence, to become obsessed over sex, and to otherwise put themselves and/or those around them into jeopardy. The more those who run media exercise their options, the more the healthy and constructive options for the targets of media shrink.

## MUD & OPPD Respond

The March 2008 *Nebraska Report* printed a column by A' Jamal-Rashad Byndon, in which he stated: "Sometime ago I was told a story about employment at the Omaha Public Power District and the Metropolitan Utilities District, the public utility in Omaha. Both institutions have internal policies which prohibit hiring the children of employees for summer jobs. However, employees circumvent those policies by developing contacts in the other company with whom they barter jobs for their children."

The Metropolitan Utilities District allows children of employees to apply for summer employment. We do not barter jobs for employees' children with the Omaha Public Power District.

The Metropolitan Utilities District requests a retraction of both statements.

Mari Matulka, Director, Corporate Communications, Metropolitan Utilities District

Regarding the column by A' Jamal Byndon in the March 2008 *Nebraska Report*, OPPD does have policies relating to both part-time and full-time hires, and neither prohibits the children of employees from applying for jobs at OPPD. The policy is clear that no employee should be hired who would directly or indirectly supervise, or be supervised, by a relative, or who would be assigned to the same work group in which a relative is employed. In other words, relatives of employees can apply and work at OPPD, but they cannot be supervised directly or indirectly by the existing employee. This applies to all full-time and part-time positions.

OPPD is an equal opportunity employer and administers all employment activities without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, marital status, age, national origin, veteran status, disability, or any other factor prohibited by law.

Our personnel are not bartering jobs for employees' children with MUD, and we believe these statements should be corrected. Thank you.

Gary Williams, Division Manager - Corporate Communications, OPPD

# Democracy Now!

National, Daily, Independent Award-Winning  
News Program — [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org)

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Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now addressed a Lincoln audience at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center in April 2005.



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## 'Use Public Power' conclusion

- Right of Way (providing access for phone, cable and gas lines on public property competes with the private land owners who could sell access along their adjoining property otherwise.)
- Postal Service (competition with UPS, Fed Ex, DHL, etc.)
- National Weather Service competes with private weather forecasters
- Banking (federal government's Farm Credit Service is the largest lender—USDA competes with private banks)
- Office Buildings (government owns office buildings and leases off space competing with private landlords; government also sells timber and grazing rights which would have to be purchased from private companies if the government wasn't in the business)
- Municipal water wells compete with landowners who could drill qualifying wells to connect to the distribution system and sell water to customers.
- Publicly run ambulance services compete with private ambulance companies.

The ultimate debate needs to focus on who should own the information *super highway*? Should the owner be answerable to the local people or far-away investors? Should the owner be in a position to discriminate in favor of those who buy other services from it? But if the owner is a public utility, then the consumer is free to select which private vendor to carry its voice packets (VoIP)... which email service to provide its email and spam filters... which video

company to provide its movies and news... and which online radio station to listen to. If the highway is a public road, then the door is open to the competitive marketplace for services delivered on that road system. The vision of a reasonably unregulated competitive information marketplace has a chance of becoming a reality because the consumer has the choice and the accompanying benefits of competition. But if the highway is not a public road, the owner is someone in a position to restrict consumer choices to those approved by it and to collect tribute from each and every packet of information each citizen sends or receives.

Nebraska, as the nation's only fully public power state, is in a unique position to pioneer at creating a true public information super highway. That pioneering spirit was powerfully evidenced in a late 2006 state-wide scientific poll of likely voters:

Just over half of all respondents believe the public power companies should be allowed to provide Internet and other telecommunications services. Another 24 percent don't know or don't have an opinion one way or the other.

Approximately 89,000 verifiable signatures representing at least five percent of the registered voters in each of at least 38 counties are necessary to place the initiative on the November 2008 ballot. The signatures need to be submitted to the Secretary of State by July.

The petition text and extensive background information is available at [www.usepublicpower.com](http://www.usepublicpower.com). Petitions are available for circulation by a simple request on the website or email to petition@usepublicpower.com.

<p>MARY RIEPMA ROSS MEDIA ARTS CENTER</p> <p>UNIVERSITY OF <b>Nebraska</b> Lincoln HIXSON-LIED COLLEGE OF FINE &amp; PERFORMING ARTS</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>NOW SHOWING</td></tr> <tr><td>COMING SOON</td></tr> <tr><td>ABOUT THE ROSS</td></tr> <tr><td>MEMBERSHIP</td></tr> <tr><td>SPONSORS</td></tr> <tr><td>FILM RESOURCES</td></tr> <tr><td>CONTACT US</td></tr> </table>	NOW SHOWING	COMING SOON	ABOUT THE ROSS	MEMBERSHIP	SPONSORS	FILM RESOURCES	CONTACT US	<p><b>COMING SOON</b></p> <p>4.11 - 4.24 <b>4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS</b> This outstanding picture firmly establishes Romania as a major force in early 21st-century world cinema. Winner of the Palme d'Or at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival, Cristian Mungiu's excruciatingly intense drama is set in Bucharest in the mid-1980s. Mungiu's decision to film every scene in a hyper-documentary style, with long, unbroken takes (by co-producer Oleg Mutu), ratchets up the tension to nearly unbearable proportions. It is filmmaking at its most masterly.</p> <p>4.11 - 4.24 <b>SNOW ANGELS</b> SNOW ANGELS, adapted from the novel of the same title by Stewart O'Nan, is two stories of love and loss converging. One is of a recently separated couple attempting to pick up the threads of a future when faced with tragedy. The second is about an awkward young man, currently in the throes of discovering his first romance, forced to deal with the separation and subsequent strife of his parents' relationship. "Snow Angels" is written and directed by critically acclaimed filmmaker David Gordon Green.</p> <p>4.25 - 5.8 <b>THE COUNTERFEITERS</b> Set in a Nazi concentration camp, this drama centers on history's biggest counterfeit operation. In THE COUNTERFEITERS, prisoners must choose between aiding the Third Reich in their money-making scheme and their own well-being.</p>
	NOW SHOWING								
	COMING SOON								
	ABOUT THE ROSS								
	MEMBERSHIP								
	SPONSORS								
FILM RESOURCES									
CONTACT US									
<p><b>ADMISSION:</b> \$8.00 GENERAL</p>									
<p>\$6.00 MATINEE (BEFORE 6 PM)</p>									
<p>\$6.00 MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE MARMAC, STUDENTS, SENIOR CITIZENS</p>									
<p>\$5.00 MATINEE FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE MARMAC (BEFORE 6 PM), AND CHILDREN (ALL TIMES)</p> <p>Box Office Opens 30 Minutes Before Showtimes</p>									
<p><b>LOCATION:</b> 313 N. 13 STREET LINCOLN, NEBRASKA</p>									
<p><a href="http://www.theross.org">www.theross.org</a></p>									

## Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, President, Nebraska Peace Foundation

Have you considered the Foundation in your will? Is peace work important enough to be at the top of your list? Will StratCom continue without being challenged by the work that Nebraskans for Peace is doing to educate the public about the changes and plans of that combatant command?

We are hoping to have the majority of people who have supported peace work over the years become supporters of the Foundation's Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund is growing, but we need your support to keep peace work going long into the future.

Any questions about how you can help? Call me 402-489-6662.



## BULLETIN BOARD

Wednesdays in Lincoln	Anti-war vigil, Lincoln Federal Building, 15th & 'O' St., 5-6 p.m.
Wednesdays in Omaha	Vigil at StratCom's Global Innovation & Strategy Center, 6825 Pine Street, UNO Campus, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
April 11-13	Global Network 2008 Conference on StratCom at Creighton University (see page 3 for details).
April 20	Earth Day, Noon to 4 p.m., Auld Pavillion, Antelope Park, in Lincoln. The free, no-litter Earth Day event will feature live music, children's activities, interactive displays, plus presentations by local environmentally concerned organizations.
April 26	2008 Peace & Justice Expo in Omaha. See page 8 for details.
May 13	2008 Primary Election

## Let's Make Everyday

# EARTH DAY



## Speaking Our Peace

## It's the War, Stupid

by Paul Olson, NFP President

*"It's the economy, stupid."*

Sign in the headquarters of the 1992 Clinton for President Campaign

During Vietnam, President Johnson told us that we could have both "guns *and* butter." Richard Nixon told us the same thing in different words. But after the Nixonian price controls to contain the economic fall-out and the stagflation of the Ford/Carter years, we found that we had too much civilian and military demand chasing too little productivity, too much easy credit and a resulting 21 percent inflation. When Reagan shut down the easy money and ag-land prices fell, farmers found their farms not worth as much as their mortgages—hence, the '80s ag crisis.

We have two new 'guns *and* butter' fairy stories that promise to dominate the fall elections:

1. The Iraq "surge" has worked pretty much, and it will work completely soon (the gun myth);

2. The *economy* is the fall election issue, and 'our candidate'—Republican or Democrat—can bring prosperity back (the butter myth).

*These are myths.*

One, the surge is not working, despite what Bush and McCain claim. We have achieved three of the 13 goals we projected: less than 25 percent (hardly a passing grade). We have bought off a few Sunni tribal leaders in Western Iraq, men who will stay bought off as long as we bribe them. We have brought a culture of bribery and corruption to our companies and

to their government. Muqtada al-Sadr has called off his Madhi army for a spell while he reorganizes it to be more unified under him, but his Shiite dominance goals have not altered. Al-Qaida in Iraq is still active. Deaths in Iraq are down only as low as they were before the Golden Mosque's bombing. What can put a good face on things is that some weeks Baghdad's former violence seems to have moved to Mosul or Afghanistan or Northeast Pakistan. Moving the violence, though, does not end it.

Charles Sennott, an embedded *Boston Globe* reporter sympathetic to the surge's goals, said recently on *NPR* that he'd encountered no Iraqis who believed that pacification would last after American divisions pulled back. But we in America, we are told *to wait* at a little longer and give the surge a chance to work—just like we had only to wait for the Iraqi elections to work, or for the Iraqi Army to be trained, or for the capture of Saddam Hussein to break the back of the insurgency. Now, we are told, we must wait again "lest we lose the purpose of all those lives lost."

What we should be waiting for is a UN-sponsored police action and negotiation to stabilize Iraq. We should be waiting for a peacekeeping mission from Iraq's regional neighbors. We should be waiting for our bases to close, and for Iraqis to control their own oil. We should herald Chuck Hagel though the streets of Lincoln and Omaha for his honesty.

Two, the economy is NOT the issue.

About half of the people in the U.S. believe the economy *is* the issue because that is what the media and the politicians are telling them. The candidates are campaigning as if the credit crisis and home foreclosures have nothing to do with Iraq or Afghanistan. One can understand how citizens losing their homes—after gaining easy credit, variable-rate mortgages and then seeing, in the last two years, interest rates rise while the value of their homes fell below the size of their mortgages—might think the economy was the issue. They're being told that a moratorium on foreclosures or cutting the interest rates or going after predatory lenders or tax rebates will solve things. But these band-aids will not work.

They will not work because the economy is not the issue. The war is.

The war created this economy. We have borrowed over \$500 billion to pay for the war already—this whole war has been fought on borrowed money. Five hundred billion is ten times what Bush-Cheney told us the war would cost. And Joseph Stiglitz (the Nobel Prize-winning economist) and Linda Bيلمes, in their new book *Three Trillion Dollar War*, show that—the with interest on debt, intelligence costs, costs tucked in departments other than defense, off-the-books costs, and the costs of medical injuries to U.S. service veterans—this war will cost at least \$3,000,000,000,000. That translates into an eventual debt of about \$100,000 for each family of three in America.

To try to pull off this 'guns *and* but-

ter' scenario, the Fed made easy money available just as it did before the farm crisis. It encouraged massive investment in housing to create civilian contentment. As Stiglitz explains, because of the war's cost, the "Fed sloshed credit all through the system... The regulators were looking the other way and money was being lent to anyone this side of a life support system" (*The Australian*, 2/8/08; see also *The Three Trillion Dollar War*, pp. 125-26). The Fed also relaxed credit controls. As Stiglitz argues, the war is the reason for the recession, and we will pay not only in foreclosures and bank instability, but in inflation and general fiscal instability for years, perhaps for decades. That is what we have bought with this endless stupid war—beyond the deaths, injuries and refugee camps.

So when presidential, congressional or senatorial candidates try to tell you, "It's the economy, stupid," tell them where to get off. There are no 'guns-*and*-butter' wars. Wars mean sacrifice, either now or later. We can choose to have schools, universities, roads, healthcare, thriving family farms and productive households, public transportation and green energy. Or we can choose to cry 'Terror' endlessly, worsen the causes of unrest in the Middle East, forfeit our civil liberties and squander our blood and treasure while making ourselves into a military state.

It is not the economy; it is the war. And if we do not pin back the ears of our Democratic and Republican candidates on this issue, we will deserve the wasteland we will get.