



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

JANUARY 2009 • VOLUME 37, NUMBER 1

Immigration

Good Policy Takes More than Imagination

Hendrik van den Berg
UNL Professor of Economics

Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister of France: *If there were fewer immigrants, there would be less unemployment, fewer tensions in certain towns and neighborhoods, and lower social cost.*

Reporter: *That has never been formally proven.*

Chirac: *It is easy to imagine, nevertheless.*

[From an October 30, 1984 interview in the Paris newspaper, *Liberation*.]

Between May and September of 1980, Fidel Castro temporarily reversed his long-standing policy of prohibiting Cubans from leaving the island nation. Castro announced that Cubans could leave through the small port of Mariel, just west of Havana, so the mass migration came to be known as the *Mariel Boatlift*. A flotilla of chartered boats paid for mostly by Cuban-Americans carried the immigrants from Mariel to the United States.

About half of the 125,000 immigrants settled in Miami, instantly expanding the city's labor force by seven percent. "There is no way this community can absorb so many people without serious socioeconomic problems," lamented a local school board member in a *Business Week* article at the time.

To everyone's surprise, however, wages did not plummet, the local unemployment rate barely budged, and there was no rise in crime. How could such a large inflow of foreigners not cause problems?



A father and son wave American flags at the April 10, 2006 immigration rights rally at the Nebraska State Capitol Building in Lincoln.

Studies Reveal Many Consequences

The many studies of the Mariel Boatlift revealed that immigration has benefits as well as costs. A well-known study by the labor economist David Card found that the inflow of immigrants triggered some offsetting outflows of native workers, but it also brought new investment in industrial capacity to take advantage of the expanded labor force. Card also suggests that Miami's large Hispanic population made it easier for Spanish-speaking immigrants to

find employment. This phenomenon was not unique to Miami, of course, as immigrants often settle where they have relatives or compatriots to ease the adjustment to a new society. Another study on the Mariel Boatlift found strong positive effects on Miami housing prices.

A study recently published in the international economics journal *Labour Economics* by my colleagues Orn Bodvarsson and Josh Lewer and myself confirms that the Cuban immigrants effectively demanded their own labor. Immigrants are consumers as well as workers, after all. Some of the *Marielitos* found employment providing some of the goods and services they demanded. Indirectly, they found work providing goods and services demanded by the pro-

conclusion on page 3

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U.S. Postage
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Permit No. 310
Lincoln, NE

Nebraska Report

The *Nebraska Report* is published nine times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

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Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: *Nebraska Report*, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508.

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Immigration, conclusion

viders of goods and services they demanded with their newly acquired Miami incomes. Overall, the Miami economy grew with the Marielitos' arrival. Today, Miami is a dynamic city that has become the U.S. gateway to Latin America.

In short, when it comes to immigration, people's imagination tends to not be a very good guide to the full costs and benefits of immigration. Perhaps we should excuse Jacques Chirac for his limited imagination since France has only recently become a major destination for immigrants. But, here in the U.S., there is no excuse for the narrow views of immigration we often see in the media and in the political arena.

Lessons from U.S. History

If immigration is a heavy burden on a society, then shouldn't the U.S. be one of the poorest countries in the world? To the contrary, the noted economic historian Nathan Rosenberg attributes the rapid economic growth of the United States in the 1800s to "rapid growth in demand and circumstances conducive to a high degree of product standardization." He goes on to explain how the U.S. was able to become the world's industrial leader because its market grew rapidly and, because of the country's large middle class, its market was very uniform. For both reasons, large-scale production—the driving force behind industrialization—became viable. What caused this growth of the market?

According to Rosenberg: Immigration.

Some critics of immigration suggest that history does not provide a good lesson for today because those 19th century immigrants were different from today's immigrants. Rep. Bill Archer of Texas, during a House Ways and Means Committee meeting, inferred as much when he stated that the immigrants who arrived in the United States at the end of the 1800s and the early 1900s all "came to this country not with their hands out for welfare checks," but "for freedom and the opportunity to work." However, *The Wall Street Journal* reports evidence showing that one hundred years ago, in 1909, about half of all public welfare recipients in the U.S. were members of immigrant families—even though immigrants made up only about 15 percent of the total population. At about the same time, two-thirds of people receiving public assistance in Chicago were foreign-born. Also, nearly three-quarters of all students in New York City's public schools were children of immigrants, and over half of all students in public schools of the 30 largest U.S. cities were children of immigrant families. The so-called 'fiscal burden' of immigrants is clearly not a recent phenomenon

associated only with today's immigrants.

And, how big a burden are today's immigrants? A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas shows that recent immigrants do not make settlement decisions based on the availability of welfare and social services; they mostly settle where there are jobs and where they have close family. A 1992 study for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services determined that the federal government actually enjoyed net gains from increased income tax and Social Security tax revenues because immigrants are, on average, younger than natives. Other studies have suggested that the fiscal burden of immigrants falls more heavily on state and local governments. With time, however, the situation changes at the local government level. The children of immigrants pay more taxes and receive fewer transfers, and their increased incomes make them even greater net contributors to the Social Security fund. According to another recent U.S. Federal Reserve Bank study: "When it's all added up... most long-run calculations show that immigrants make a net positive contribution to public coffers."

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But, What About Illegal Immigrants?

The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that just under five percent of the U.S. civilian labor force consists of undocumented immigrant workers. While 83 percent of all adult males in the U.S. are in the active labor force, 94 percent of unauthorized adult male immigrants in the U.S. were working in 2005. According to a detailed 2006 Special Report by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, undocumented immigrants were net contributors to state coffers. Total state expenditures for Texas' 1.4 million undocumented immigrants were estimated to be \$1,156 billion. This figure includes law enforcement and criminal justice costs as well as Texas'



Over 4,000 people rallied for immigration rights in downtown Omaha in April 2006. Except for Native Americans, the U.S. has always been a nation of immigrants.

program to give undocumented high school graduates in-state tuition at Texas universities. The estimate of total state government revenue paid by undocumented immigrants was calculated using a method that arrived at total state revenue under the assumption that immigrants suddenly disappeared. This exercise led to the conclusion that the unauthorized immigrants' presence increased the state's gross economic product by \$17.7 billion—all of which, in turn, increased property taxes, sales taxes, fees for services, and other government revenues by \$1.581 billion. In sum, the state government enjoyed a net gain of \$425 million from the presence of 1.4 million unauthorized immigrants in Texas.

Economic Growth and Immigration

Discussions of immigration tend to focus on the short term, but many of the contributions of immigrants appear in the long term. Remember, in addition to being workers, consumers, parents and taxpayers, immigrants are also innovators and thinkers. As Simon Kuznets, the noted Nobel Prize laureate once asked: "Why, if it is man who was the architect of economic and social growth in the past and responsible for the vast contributions to knowledge and technological and social power, a larger number of human beings need result in a lower rate of increase in per capita product?" In the case of immigrants, there may be a natural selection process that tends to distinguish exceptionally enterprising and talented people.

For example, an interesting example of how immigration determined technological development and subsequent economic growth involves early clock makers, who played a critical role in developing the technology of precision engineering that was a fundamental cause of the Industrial Revolution. Many early clock makers were French Huguenots, who were interested in various

aspects of science as well as the Reformation movement. When France expelled the Huguenots, most French clock makers went to Geneva, Switzerland, at the invitation of John Calvin, the leader of that Swiss city. In short, the renowned Swiss watch industry was founded by the inflow of a handful of French immigrants with precious human skills. This type of story has been repeated over and over throughout the history of the U.S.

A Final Comment

If the net sum of all the direct, indirect, short-term, and long-term consequences of immigration were negative, the country that has throughout its history received the greatest number of immigrants should be poor. The fact that the U.S. is quite wealthy suggests it is not possible to reach a conclusion about the merits of immigration by looking at only one aspect of this complex phenomenon.

It is in this light that I approach the analysis of our current immigration policies. Over the past several years, there has been a sharp expansion of immigration enforcement, and many politicians have actively called for still tougher measures. Nebraska elected a new Regent for the University of Nebraska who favors eliminating in-state tuition for undocumented Nebraska high school graduates. It looks like anti-immigrant fervor is trampling the human rights of legal immigrants, illegal immigrants and many native-born Americans. About four million U.S. citizens are members of families and households with an undocumented immigrant. In a follow-up article next month, I will describe our current immigration policies, and their effects, in more detail. For now, it is clear that the complexity of immigration makes it likely that our emotional rush to deal with this 'problem' will cause serious damage—both to our economy and the civil liberties we treasure.

World Opposes U.S. Space Weapons Stance

The following editorial by NFP State Coordinator Tim Rinne was published in the December 13, 2008 edition of the Grand Island Independent.

Just as it's done every year since 2005, the Bush/Cheney Administration has once again opposed a UN resolution to prevent an arms race in outer space. Every other country on earth except the U.S. (and Israel which abstained) supported the resolution in the December 2 vote. Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Syria, North Korea, Great Britain, France, Japan, Canada, Venezuela—177 nations total—all voted in favor of the annual "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space" (PAROS) resolution, as they have for the past twenty years. Only the U.S. dissented.

Although our government didn't actually start voting against the PAROS resolution until four years ago, the U.S. has never supported it. Prior to 2005, we'd always abstained. Neither Republican nor Democratic administrations showed any inclination to heed the will of the world community on this issue. And the reason is plain.

As the world's only remaining superpower, the U.S. has had unchallenged space superiority—and we weren't going to forfeit that advantage to be placed back on an equal footing with others. The Bush/Cheney White House made clear its hostility to any new space treaty when it stated in 2006 that "there is no—repeat, no—problem in outer space for arms control to solve." That same year, the administration released its new

"National Space Policy" which openly calls for U.S. space dominance and asserts that we have the unilateral right to "dissuade or deter... and deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to U.S. interests." And this past February, when, Russia and China proposed a draft treaty banning weapons in outer space, the administration dismissed the plan out of hand

Imagine for a moment how America's policy on space—where we get to rule supreme—must strike the rest of the world... And then imagine how we, as Americans, would react if Russia or China were to adopt such a policy. We'd be outraged. And appropriately so.

as "a diplomatic ploy by the two nations to gain a military advantage."

We Americans are justifiably concerned about our national security. But in our headlong rush to protect our own national interests, we tend to forget that other nations have national security concerns of their own.

Imagine for a moment how America's policy on space—where we get to rule supreme—must strike the rest of the world... And then imagine how we, as Americans, would react if Russia or China were to adopt such a policy. We'd be outraged.

And appropriately so.

But it should come as no surprise then that the U.S.'s staunch opposition to a measure seeking to preserve outer space for peaceful purposes doesn't sit particularly well with our global neighbors.

Perhaps after the collapse of the Soviet Union when the U.S. was the only space power still standing, we could get away with

that kind of high-and-mighty attitude. But those days are gone. China is now shooting down its own weather satellites. India has just landed a probe on the Moon. Iran is launching missiles into space. And Russia's rejuvenated space program is matching the glory days of the old USSR. America is still the big shot on the block, but the neighborhood is changing fast.

And rather than annually stonewall efforts to negotiate a new space treaty, it's now in the U.S.'s national interest to sit down at the table and hammer out a comprehensive and verifiable accord.

For those of us in Nebraska though, the threat of an arms race in outer space hits particularly close to home.

Along with its missions of nuclear deterrence, cyberspace, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance, information operations, missile defense, full-spectrum global strike, and combating weapons of mass destruction, U.S. Strategic Command in Bellevue is now responsible for space. And StratCom's fingerprints are everywhere.

Seventy percent of the munitions targeted on Iraq during the "Shock and Awe" bombing campaign, for instance, were directed from space by StratCom assets. Those proposed Missile Defense bases in Poland and the Czech Republic that are sparking a new Cold War with Russia are StratCom's handiwork. This past February, StratCom used that self-same Missile Defense system to shoot down a dying U.S. satellite, demonstrating that Missile 'Defense' can just as easily double as an offensive anti-satellite weapon. And those unmanned Predator drones that are invading Pakistani airspace and firing missiles at al-Qaida targets are being flown courtesy of StratCom's satellite network.

StratCom is up to its eyeballs in turning space into the next battleground. And if we have any hope of preventing war from erupting in the heavens, the incoming Obama Administration needs to reverse twenty years of short-sighted White House policy and set about negotiating a treaty on space.

NFP & 700 Others Sign Letter to Obama Opposing 'Missile Defense' Deployments

Dear President-Elect Obama:

We the undersigned, members and supporters of the Global Network, write to congratulate you on your recent election as President of the U.S. We want to help you in every way possible to promote peace around the world so that our national resources could be used for the tremendous needs we have here at home like health care, education, job creation, dealing with climate change and more.

We specifically write to urge you to reject the Bush Administration plan to deploy 'missile defense' interceptors in Poland and a Star Wars radar system in the Czech Republic. We know you are aware of Russia's deep concern that these deployments are really aimed at them in spite of Pentagon assurances they are only directed at Iran.

Respected U.S. scientists George Lewis and Ted Postol recently studied these proposed deployments and wrote an ar-

ticle called "The European missile defense folly" that was printed in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in the May/June issue of 2008. In their report Lewis and Postol state that, "Despite claims to the contrary by both Missile Defense Agency and State Department officials, the interceptors that Washington wants to deploy in Poland are fast enough to catch Russian ICBMs launched from locations west of the Ural Mountains toward the continental United States. The location of the interceptor site in Poland is ideal for this purpose."

Russia of course has responded that they will be forced to upgrade their offensive nuclear capability if these U.S. weapons are indeed deployed in Central Europe. The people of Poland and the Czech Republic are in large numbers opposed to their countries being used as U.S. bases and we understand that in recent days over 30 mayors from Czech towns near the proposed U.S. radar base wrote you urging the plan be scrapped.

Expanding U.S. military operations near Russia's borders

will only help create a new Cold War and a new arms race that would eventually spread throughout Europe and beyond. Instead of this we hope you will work hard to make nuclear disarmament and a space weapons ban treaty (PAROS) top priorities.

In addition, we do not believe that any president should enact base agreements or treaties (such as these with Poland and the Czech Republic) without the constitutionally required approval of the Senate.

We look forward to hearing from you about how you intend to deal with this important issue. We wish you well and thank you for your attention to this matter of grave concern to us. We pledge to you that we will keep our eyes on the ball.

In peace,

Bruce K. Gagnon, Coordinator
Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space

Statement by Lela Knox Shanks at the Ceremony Naming the Judiciary Committee Hearing Room for Senator Ernie Chambers

November 12, 2008

Good Afternoon!

What a joy it is to be here, and to have this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Senator Ernie Chambers for his lifetime of public service to and for all humanity. He has represented the human family from everywhere—of every color and every ethnic background. The far-reaching positive effects of Senator Chambers' work will be felt for decades to come.

Now, Ms. Grandberry [*the Senator's legislative aide*] told me to do this in five minutes. And the question is: just how does one thank Senator Chambers for a lifetime of contributions in five minutes? I'm not sure I can do that.

But I would like to just share briefly some of the outstanding characteristics that I have appreciated most in Senator Chambers.

First and foremost, Senator Chambers has dedicated his life to the issues that improve the daily lives, the very living conditions of the downtrodden, the underdog, the disenfranchised, the helpless, the voiceless. Indeed, sometimes he was like a voice crying in the wilderness. But he never gave up. He held fast, against all odds. In fact, he seemed to grow stronger from each new difficulty. And he was fearless through it all.

My late husband, Hughes, and I had

'heard through the grapevine,' as we used to say, before we moved to Lincoln, about this young Black barber in Omaha who dared to speak truth to power. How dare he be the bearer of historical facts and truths about America! Many of us often feared for his life, since this was at a time when an African American could disappear, be framed, or be killed and nothing would ever be done about it.

But after being elected to the Nebraska State Legislature, Senator Chambers thrived and kept coming back, year after year, despite the Nazi symbols placed on his office door, despite the death threats and the crank calls that continue to this day. He had to have had a vision that we could be better than that to have endured through it all.

There is perhaps no greater example of the kind of lifetime accomplishments of Senator Chambers than the current case of the six people who have just been exonerated and released from prison for a murder they never committed. It was because of a bill sponsored by Senator Chambers in 2001 permitting DNA testing that they were able to prove their innocence.

These six human beings had spent a total of 70 years in prison for a murder that they never committed.

What ecstatic joy they must feel today! Thank you, Senator Chambers.

Suppose any of these six people had

been executed for a crime they never committed. In fact, some of them said they confessed because they were told, otherwise, they would get the death penalty.

And of course, Senator Chambers has tried year after year to abolish the death penalty. He was successful in getting a bill passed in the Seventies, but then-Governor Charlie Thone vetoed it. But this is a new day in America, and we now know that anything is possible, including in the State of Nebraska. After all, the Second District did give one electoral vote to President-Elect Barack Obama.

Perhaps the most far reaching piece of legislation sponsored by Senator Chambers and passed by the legislature was his bill to divest in South Africa. The State of Nebraska can to this day feel a sense of pride for being the first state in the union to pass such a bill and, thus, lead the nation towards actions that would finally bring an end to the evil apartheid system and a better way of life for all South Africans. Thank you, Senator Chambers.

And also thank you, Senator Chambers, for getting a bill passed by the Legislature calling for the proper burial of the remains of Native Americans. This bill is now used as a model by the federal government.

Thank you, for what you have done to improve the lives of prisoners in this ever expanding, unhealthy 'prison-industrial complex.' Thank you, for speaking out for the protection of Nebraska athletes and their right to due process. But thank you, most of all for never selling your vote for material gain.

One outstanding characteristic of Senator Chambers that is often overlooked is that he has always played by the law. This is so admirable in these times. And every single day his cases are being cited in textbooks and in various places to prepare students for the practice of law.

How appropriate it is to dedicate this chamber, where justice issues are debated, to Senator Chambers. I will miss you, if and when I ever appear before the Judiciary Committee again. But I will know that your spirit is here.

I would like to close by saying that President Elect Barack Obama is surely standing on the shoulders of the likes of Senator Ernie Chambers.

Thank you, Senator Chambers.

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What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Building a Sustainable Future Is Not a Luxury

With the advent of a global financial crisis that may soon rival the Great Depression, I read a disturbing volley of reports asserting (with an ironic play on words) that global warming is now on the 'back burner.' Can we 'afford' such a 'luxury,' the reports ask—as if planning for a survivable future is a frill.

Building a sustainable future is not a luxury. The bad news is that we have no real choice but to build it. The really good news, however, is that creating a new energy infrastructure, done correctly, can function as an economic motor that will power our communities—and our world—out of a morass created by unchecked, short-sighted greed.

Just as our financial system needs to be reconstructed from its dangerous dependence on a surplus of borrowed money, so, as well, our energy system must be re-cast from a fossil-fuel base that is living on borrowed environmental time.

In one hundred years, students of history may remark at the nature of the fears that stalled responses to climate change early in the twenty-first century. Skeptics of global warming kept change at bay, it may be noted, by appealing to most people's fear that change might erode their comfort and employment security—all of which were wedded psychologically to the massive burning of fossil fuels. A necessary change in our energy base, they may conclude, may have been stalled beyond the point where climate change required attention, comprehension and action.

Technological change always generates unemployment fears.

Paradoxically, such changes also always generate economic activity. A change in our basic energy paradigm during the twenty-first century will not cause the ruination of our economic base (as some 'skeptics' of climate change believe) any more than the coming of the railroads in the nineteenth century ruined an economy in which the horse was the major land-based vehicle of transportation. The advent of mass automobile owner-

climate change from greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere. Over four years ago, *Business Week* argued in an August 16, 2004 editorial: "A national policy that cuts fossil-fuel consumption converges with a geopolitical policy of reducing energy dependence on Middle East oil. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions is no longer just a 'green' thing. It makes business and foreign policy sense, as well... In the end, the only real

in the days of the Wright Brothers a hundred years ago. We will take this journey because the changing climate, along with our own innate curiosity and creativity, will compel a changing energy paradigm.

Such change will not take place at once. A paradigm change in basic energy technology may require the better part of a century, or longer. Several technologies will evolve together. Oil-based fuels will continue to be used for pur-

host wind turbines.

Wind turbines and photovoltaic solar cells are becoming more efficient and competitive. Improvements in farming technology are reducing emissions. Deep-sea sequestration of CO₂ is proceeding in experimental form, but with concerns about this technology's effects on ocean biota. Tokyo, where an intense urban heat island has intensified the effects of general warming, has proposed a gigantic ocean-water cooling grid. Britain and other countries are considering carbon taxes.

The coming energy revolution will engender economic growth and become an engine of wealth creation for those who realize the opportunities that it offers. Denmark, for example, is making every family a share-owner in a burgeoning wind-power industry. Solutions will combine scientific achievement and political change. We will end this century with a new energy system, one that acknowledges nature and works with its needs and cycles. Economic development will become congruent with the requirements of sustaining nature. Coming generations will be able to mitigate the effects of greenhouse gases without the increase in poverty so feared by 'skeptics.' Within decades, a new energy paradigm will be enriching us, and securing a future that works with the requirements of nature, not against them.

Bruce E. Johansen is the Frederick W. Kayser Professor of Communication at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and author of The Global Warming Combat Manual (Greenwood Press, 2008).

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ship early in the twentieth century propelled economic growth, as did the transformation of information-gathering with computers in the recent past. The same developments also put out of work blacksmiths, keepers of hand-drawn accounting ledgers and anyone who repaired manual typesetters.

An Energy Revolution Is Overdue

We are overdue for an energy system paradigm shift. Limited supplies of oil and their location in the volatile Middle East argue for new sources, along with accelerating

solution may be new energy technologies. There has been little innovation in energy since the internal combustion engine was invented in the 1860s and Thomas Edison built his first commercial electric generating plant in 1882."

Before the end of this century, the urgency of global warming will become manifest to everyone. Solutions to our fossil fuel-dilemma—solar, wind, hydrogen and others—will evolve during this century. Within our century, necessity will compel invention. Other technologies may develop that have not, as yet, even broached the realm of present-day science fiction, any more than digitized computers had



poses that require it. (Air transport comes to mind, although engineers already are working on ways to make jet engines more efficient.)

A Wide Variety of Solutions

A wide variety of solutions are being pursued around the world, of which the following are only a few examples. Some changes involve localities. Already, several U.S. states are taking actions to limit carbon-dioxide emissions despite a lack of support from the federal government. Building code changes have been enacted. Wind-power incentives have been enacted even in Bush's home state of Texas, where some oil fields now

Paths to a New Energy Future for the United States

We know that we must change our sources of energy, but few of us realize how exciting these changes can be. In the past year or two, new research has begun to develop an amazing number of energy solutions and major discoveries are being announced practically every day. Soon we won't need more foreign oil, and then we won't need oil at all. We can also replace the polluting fuels coal and natural gas.

— *Compiled by Peter Salter*

Replacing Oil

“CLEAN COAL” — This marketing ploy exists only in political speeches and advertisements produced by the coal industry. It won't exist in our lifetimes, if ever.

ETHANOL, NO SOLUTION AT ALL — Ethanol made from corn does nothing to reduce our 'dependence on foreign oil' since it takes almost as much energy to produce the ethanol as we get back from it. Ethanol also distracts from our efforts to switch to truly useful renewable fuels, because we think we're doing something that will help even though we aren't. Ethanol made from cellulose like wood chips, switchgrass and sorghum gains some energy, but only enough to be a small contributor to the solution we need.

BIODIESEL, A MUCH BETTER ALTERNATIVE FUEL THAN ETHANOL — Biodiesel is a safe fuel which biodegrades when spilled. You could even drink it. Unlike ethanol, biodiesel can be pumped through existing pipe lines. All current diesel engines can be made to run on on biodiesel and excellent new automotive engines are being manufactured now. Biodiesel can also be produced locally. A farmer could buy a refining rig for under \$3000, and produce biodiesel in the back corner of the garage, but if standard farm crops like soybeans are used, it would take all the farm land in the U.S. to produce a small fraction of our fuel needs.

BIODIESEL FROM ALGAE, THE ENERGY HOLY GRAIL — This is a new concept which could provide us with a total solution to our energy problems.

- Algae (pond scum) grows extremely fast and some varieties have bodies which are more than 50-percent oil.
- Algae needs only sunlight, water and carbon to grow, and the water can be sewage, farm run-off or even ocean water.
- Algae could be grown on poor-quality land which is unsuitable for other agriculture.
- Algae can produce 100 times as much energy per acre as soy, so an area the size of the Nebraska Sandhills could grow all the energy the country needs.

WHEN CAN WE HAVE IT? — The first biodiesel to be made from algae in useful quantities happened only 18 months ago. There are still problems to be solved but quantity production should begin in 2009 and grow quickly as answers to production problems are found.

Our Other Best Oil Replacement

ELECTRICITY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES — The world's auto and battery makers are all working furiously to develop vehicles which run entirely or mostly on electricity. By converting most of our motor vehicles to run on electric power, we make great gains in energy efficiency. Gas and diesel engines waste most of their fuel's potential energy. Electric motors waste very little. Still, while 'going electric' will greatly increase our energy efficiency and dramatically reduce our use of oil, we will need to increase our supply of electricity. This can be done with NO new fossil-fuel plants, though people connected with the

energy industry would like you to believe otherwise. All of the electrical energy we could possibly use is available from at least three or four sources, and all of these sources are endlessly renewable and non-polluting.

WHEN? AND HOW MUCH? — Wind and solar power facilities usually take less than two years to build. Coal and nuclear take around ten. Costs of construction are now about the same for coal, wind and solar. Once built, renewables are much less expensive.

New Electricity

WIND: THERE'S ENOUGH TO POWER EVERYTHING, AND IT'S FREE — A wind map of the world produced at Stanford in November 2007 showed that there is at least 4.5 times enough wind available at high-energy sites to provide all of the power we need.

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (roof panels) — Recent developments will make this far less expensive and more efficient. Germany gets much of its electricity this way, and it's not a very sunny country. Roof panels on private residences, government and commercial buildings could provide much electricity and vastly broaden the power grid.

SOLAR THERMAL — There's enough heat from the sun available in our southwestern deserts to power the country many times over. Many com-

panies have applied to lease land to build power generating facilities on over a million acres, but the Bush/Cheney Administration has not cooperated. Perhaps with Obama's election things will change.

GEOTHERMAL — Iceland gets nearly all of its electricity using heat from beneath the Earth's surface. A recent MIT study showed that we could get most of our electricity from geothermal. Years of cheap energy, however, prevented much work from being done on this in the U.S. until recently.

WAVES AND OCEAN CURRENTS — Aquatic energy can be harnessed to generate hundreds of times as much electricity as the world needs. The technology is just being developed, but Spain and China have both invested in new production facilities.

AND EVEN MORE — Ocean temperature gradients can be converted to electricity. Tidal dams could provide considerable energy and many other potential sources of power are being explored... even human-made tornados. All of this should give us far more power potential than we could ever need, and make construction of new fossil-fuel facilities unnecessary and unwise.

PLUS — If rules are made universal to allow consumers to sell excess power produced by their own generation systems back to the power companies, this alone would likely mean that no new traditional power plants would be needed.

THE FASTEST WAY TO IMPROVE OUR ENERGY SITUATION IS TO ENCOURAGE POWER CONSERVATION. We could use much less power and still live happily. This needs to be integral to any plan.

IMPROVING OUR POWER GRID IS NEEDED

To make use of our new alternative energy supplies, we'll need vast improvements in our nation's power grid. That was going to be necessary anyway, however, to avoid brownouts and blackouts around the country. New HVDC (high voltage direct current) power transmission lines like those used in Europe will probably need to be built, permitting large amounts of current to be sent longer distances with much less loss than occurs with alternating current. The expense of these improvements, though, pale beside the huge sums we pay for foreign oil every year. What could our government possibly do that would mean more to our economy and national security?

BUT WE WON'T NEED MORE NUKES!

Nuclear plants are generally a safe and economical way to produce power which does not pollute the air or contribute to global warming. Fuel for these plants is abundant and inexpensive though its production often causes very serious pollution of ground water. New types of nuclear plants such as the CANDU produce power with much less nuclear waste. The Pebble Bed Reactor is also a new design with promise. Still, nuclear plants are expensive to build, take a full ten years to construct and no one wants one anywhere near their backyard.

Al Gore's Plan for How We Can Do This

Immediately commence a clean energy program that includes efficiency, generation, transmission and transportation.

Energy Efficiency: Upgrade our national energy infrastructure to eliminate waste, save money and improve comfort. Make every bit of energy we produce work harder for us.

Renewable Generation: Accelerate the ramp-up of clean, renewable electricity sources through policies that support increased private and public investment in technologies that work—like wind, solar, and geothermal.

Unified National Smart Grid: Modernize transmission infrastructure so that clean electricity generated anywhere in America can power homes and businesses across the nation; Build national electricity 'interstates' that

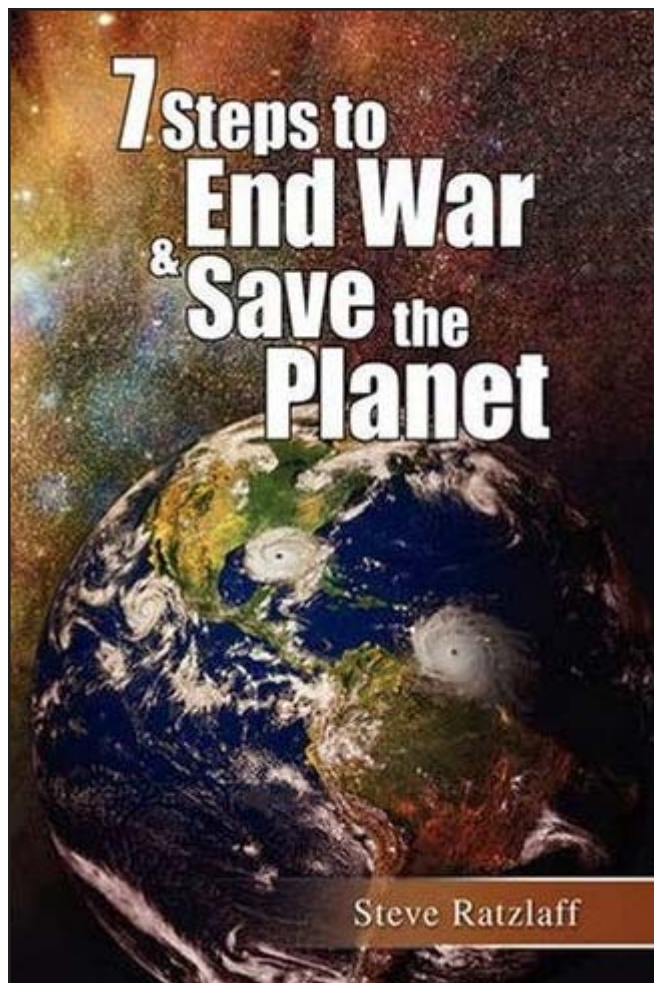
move power quickly and cheaply to where it is needed; Establish local smart grids that buy and sell power from households and support clean plug-in cars.

Automobiles: Transition to efficient plug-in cars that 'fuel' with clean electricity. In combination with the unified grid, a nationwide fleet of plug-in vehicles also provides a key source of electricity storage.

RepowerAmerica.org Visit this new website to see how experts say we could eliminate fossil fuels in the production of electricity in the U.S. in the next ten years.

Peter Salter is an NFP member who noticed last year that while everyone talked of renewable energy, almost no one had a clear picture of how it could be accomplished. He researched the subject and discovered that it really is possible to replace fossil fuels, but the big energy companies will do just about anything to keep it from happening. He hopes that the new Obama Administration will make it happen. Reach Peter at: p.salter@juno.com.

Ending War, Saving the Planet



7 Steps to End War & Save the Planet
by Steve Ratzlaff
204 pages
Xlibris (2008)
\$19.99 (Paperback); \$29.99 (Hardcover)
www.xlibris.com
orders@xlibris.com

Steve Ratzlaff speaks with the authority of someone who knows. The Native Nebraskan and Mennonite minister has made peacemaking and justice-working the foundation of his entire adult life. NFP members will remember the former pastor of First Mennonite Church in Lincoln addressing rallies against the Iraq War, committing civil disobedience over alcohol sales at Whiteclay, advocating for Palestinian rights, making Christian Peacemaker Team trips to Colombia and Vieques, Puerto Rico, and serving as the honorary board chair for the National Campaign for Peace Tax Fund. Over the years, he's personally toiled longer in the vineyards for Peace & Justice than most of the rest of us put together.

Who better then to speak from the pulpit and warn us about the dangerous—and potentially deadly—mess we're making of our world? His new book, 7 Steps to End War & Save the Planet, provides the kind of 'how-to' advice and guidance we yearn to get to from religious leaders—whatever their creed. As we start the New Year, this "timely and passionate manifesto" (as the Kirkus Review below expresses it) can help us all resolve to be better citizens of the earth.

Kirkus Review: A pacifist's timely and passionate manifesto addressing the issue of global warming.

Utopia, as Ratzlaff explains, is not some unattainable oasis

but rather a world without war and with a balanced global habitat that can sustain future generations. "[R]ank and file Americans need to be able to comprehend what global warming is all about," the author writes, "in order to grasp what will happen if we fail to take immediate steps to combat it." The book is not a scientific treatise bogged down with academic language, but rather a pacifist's simple approach to solving one of the world's most difficult dilemmas. Employing a minimum of hard data to explore melting ice caps, rising sea levels, changing weather patterns and ocean currents, Ratzlaff effectively illustrates the cause-and-effect relationship between human activity and the planet's well-being. While Al Gore answered the hows and whys of global warming in *An Inconvenient Truth*, Ratzlaff illustrates the imminent need for vast governmental and political changes, and he explains the consequences of ignoring the obvious threat to our planet. The author states that one of the biggest problems with the current approach to global warming is the tendency of advocates to ignore the significant role of population growth. Additionally, at the roots of global warming lay nationalism, religious wars and the military-industrial complex—Ratzlaff outright blames governments and corporations for the current situation. After demonstrating the various successes of the United Nations in heading off global conflicts, the author concludes that the UN is the only organization capable of becoming a fully empowered international governing body. Yet handcuffed by its current structure, it can do nothing more than cast environmental resolutions that are often ignored. Unlike other books that attempt to tackle major global issues, rather than pointing out the problems and offering no solutions, Ratzlaff rounds out each of the seven steps with definitive alternatives in his "If I Were President" summaries. A thorough yet easy-to-comprehend take on global warming.

2009 NFP Issues Priorities

The Nebraskans for Peace State Board of Directors has once again established the organization's annual issues priorities, which will guide NFP's political program for the coming year.

In a world so sorely in need of peacemaking and justice-working, it goes without saying that the demand invariably exceeds the available resources. When you're working with an annual budget of barely \$150,000, however, you simply can't do everything and you have to make choices. NFP's State Board, accordingly, annually meets in retreat each fall to identify the priority issues that the organization will focus on in the year ahead.

In general, the State Board informally considers four criteria when making their annual selections:

- 1) Does the issue fall within the domain of NFP's historic charge;
- 2) Will NFP's participation produce an achievable outcome;
- 3) What kind of financial resources will be required to execute the work plan, and
- 4) Are individual members of the State Board willing to 'champion' the issue with their time and talent?

The working premise behind these criteria is that, rather than simply 'stand' for something (important as that often is), we want NFP to annually be able to point to meaningful achievements.

For example, in adopting the "War in Iraq" as a priority last year, the State Board never deluded itself into believing we could single-handedly stop the war. But our 'plan of action' called for us to continue spotlighting the cost of the war to Nebraskans in terms of blood and treasure, and encouraging Senators Hagel and Nelson to continue their public criticisms.

Finally, it should be emphasized that these issue priorities are not written in stone, and can be reconsidered by the State Board at any time, should circumstances warrant. With that said, here are the five issues priorities for 2009:

- **PROGRAM I: Turn Off the Violence**
Anti-violence work in the schools; domestic violence in relation to bullying
- **PROGRAM II: Anti-War & International Law**
Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the 'War On Terrorism'; United Nations and International Law
- **PROGRAM III: StratCom & Nuclear Weapons**
Whiteclay alcohol sales; immigration; UNO Afghan Center; North Omaha
- **PROGRAM IV: Civil Rights & Economic Justice**

• PROGRAM V: Environment

Military degradation of the environment; wind and solar energy advocacy; civilian nuclear and environmental hazards; climate crisis education and proposed solutions.

In addition to these programs, NFP will continue to closely monitor the following topics: State economic justice & tax equity; Meatpacking workplace justice; Globalization and empire: general focus; Globalization and empire: Latin America; Death Penalty; GLBT issues.

NFP members and chapters across the state are encouraged to get involved with any and all of these issues, by contacting their elected officials, educational through letters to the editor and hosting public events. Regardless of where you are, there's always something that can be done. It's up to us to go out and do it.

'Yes We Can' Close the School of Assassins!

by Mark Welsch, NFP Omaha Coordinator

Concepcion Marquez, 75 – Presente!

Julia Claros, 30, Daughter of Concepcion Marquez – Presente!

Alberta Claros, 18, Daughter of Julia Claros – Presente!

Child, 1, Daughter of Alberta Claros – Presente!

Israel Marquez, 80 – Presente!

Francisco William Gómez Monsalve, 10 – Presente!

Marta Lilian Claros, 3, Daughter of Domingo Claros – Presente!

The names of these and hundreds more were sung out from the stage for hours with the crowd of 20,000 calling out "Presente!" and raising our crosses after each name. In Latin America, there is a long tradition of remembering those who have been martyred in the struggle for Peace & Justice by reciting this Spanish word for "here" or "present."

As the names were sung and "Presente!" proclaimed, a funeral procession slowly and solemnly walked past a gate to the U.S. Army school that trained those responsible for the deaths. Flowers, crosses and messages on pieces of paper were left at the gate to remember those who were murdered in an attempt to stop freedom and justice in Latin America.

These people—babies in mothers' arms, young children, middle-aged and old men and women—were all killed by graduates of this "School of Assassins" (SOA) at Fort Benning in Columbia, Georgia. As the names were called and we replied "Presente!," I cried.

I cried for each of the people who had been murdered. I cried for and with their families—some who stood near me. I wept because as a U.S. citizen, I am partly responsible for their deaths. I cry again as I write this while remembering the weekend I spent outside of the gates of this U.S. military base where 60,000 military personnel have been trained, and more are being trained to this day, from Central and South America countries—too many of which return home to terrorize and murder their fellow citizens. We can and must close this abomination forever.

Thousands of civilians, often poor people in rural villages, have been murdered by people in their own country's military. These murders were brought to international attention 19 years ago when six Jesuit Priests, their housekeeper and her 14-year-old daughter were murdered in their home. They were murdered because the priests ran or taught at a university in El Salvador. Nineteen of the military officers cited for these heinous crimes received training at what was then named the "U.S. Army School of the Americas." Those martyred on November 16, 1989 were:

Ignacio Ellacuria, rector of the University and an outspoken critic of the Army – Presente!

Ignacio Martin Baro, who studied the effects of war on the human psyche – Presente!

Segundo Montes, a strong advocate for refugees and human rights – Presente!

Amano Lopez, a gifted counselor and pastoral worker – Presente!

Joaquin Lopez y Lopez, director of an education program in poor communities – Presente!



Juan Ramon Moreno, a gifted preacher and retreat leader – Presente!

Elba Ramos, the Jesuits' housekeeper, remembered as sensitive and intuitive – Presente!

Celina Ramos, Elba's 14-year-old daughter who had worked as a catechist – Presente!

The school claims it trains military personnel in combat, counter-insurgency & counter-narcotics. But its graduates are responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America.

People in the Catholic Jesuit community subsequently started an annual protest at this "School Of Assassins" that trained the murderers.

I am honored that Joyce Glenn, Pastoral Associate at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, allowed me to join her church's group on their yearly bus trip to Fort Benning, Georgia. Another bus from Creighton University also went to the SOA vigil. We joined 20,000 people outside the gates to the base, which—when almost closed by Congressional action in 2001—re-opened a few days later under the euphemism, "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation" (WHINSEC). The same instructors, books and students were at the 'new' school. Only the name was changed—not its teaching of barbaric military activities of torture, extortion, execution and oppression of native people.

The school claims it trains military personnel in combat, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics. But its graduates are responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America. In 1996, the Pentagon was forced to release training manuals used at the school, which provided instruction in torture, extortion and execution. Some of the SOA's more notorious alumni include dictators Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos of Panama, Leopoldo Galtieri and Roberto Viola of Argentina, Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru, Guillermo Rodriguez of Ecuador, and Hugo Banzer Suarez of Bolivia. Lower-level SOA/WHINSEC graduates have participated in human rights abuses such as the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the El Mozote Massacre of 900 civilians in El Salvador.

The trip also reminded the elders and helped teach the younger travelers about racial problems in America. After a prayer led by Fr. Jack McCaslin and others at Creighton Prep High School, we were on the bus and on the road at 6:00 p.m. the evening of November 13. The next morning we visited the Birmingham Alabama Civil Rights Institute and were able to enter the 16th Street Baptist Church that was bombed by the KKK on September 15, 1963 and four young Black girls were killed:

Denise McNair, 11 years – Presente!

Cynthia Wesley, 14 years – Presente!

Carole Robertson, 14 years – Presente!

Addie Mae Collins, 14 years – Presente!

I remember the bombing from the TV news when I was seven years old.

Maria Teresa Gaston from Omaha was one of the speakers at this year's event, which included mass, workshops, teach-ins and a concert at the Columbus Convention Center. While there, I handed out 500 NFP flyers inviting people to join our very own Peg Gallagher for her 91st birthday at a nonviolent protest next October 6-8 at the "Strategic Space and Defense Conference 2009" in Omaha, hosted by the Military-Industrial Complex to promote StratCom's mission of space dominance. Protesting at this hideous event is essential to halting the arms race in outer space.

To learn more about the SOA/WHINSEC vigil and take action to close the School of Assassins. Go to <http://www.soaw.org> to sign the petition to the President to close the SOA. If you would like to go to the SOA vigil in November 2009, please let me know by email at NFPomaha@NebraskansForPeace.org or call 402-453-0776.

Letters to NFP... on the Middle East

Iraq...

It has now been more than five-and-half years since the United States preemptively attacked Iraq, and there is no end in sight to the bloodshed. The decision the Bush/Cheney Administration took to invade and occupy Iraq was based on deceit, haste and ignorance—ignorance specifically of Iraq's long history of resisting foreign occupation. Let us review the assertions of our senior officials prior to going into Iraq. All the following statements were made between July 2002 and February 2003, i.e. in the eight months preceding the invasion.

Vice-President Dick Cheney said: "After liberation, the streets of Basra and Baghdad are sure to erupt in joy." Senator John McCain assured the world that "the Iraqi people will greet us as liberators." Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz stated: "You are going to find, and this is very important, you are going to find Iraqis out cheering American troops." Chair of the Defense Policy Board Richard Perle promised: "Support for Saddam, including within his military organization, will collapse after the first whiff of gunpowder."

Then we have Kenneth Adelman, member of the Defense Policy Board, who said, "Desert Storm II will be a walk in the park." And as this race for the absurd went on we had Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute tell us: "If we [Americans] come to Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran as liberators, we can expect overwhelming popular support." Finally, I hope your memory is not blank to the words of the commander-in-chief who claimed the "end of major combat operations" barely a month after initiating the war.

Had these senior officials been versed in Iraq's history of resisting foreign occupation, they would have thought twice before uttering these absurd assertions.

In 1917, when British troops conquered Baghdad, British commander Lt. General Sir Frederick Stanley Maude issued the "Proclamation of Baghdad," which assured Iraqis: "Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators." Yet in 1920, some three years later, a ferocious armed revolt engulfed tribal areas in central and southern Iraq.

Today, America and Iraq are bleed-

ing—thanks to our decision to invade Iraq. If we really want to be safe and live in peace, we should not contribute money or effort to the continual build-up of America's military might, which equals that of all the other nations combined and, in fact, has escalated the build-up of military resources everywhere. As a nation we have become far more capable of killing people because we do not see them. We just fire our space-guided smart bombs and missiles and the targets disappear.

Removing our troops from Iraq and Afghanistan is a moral as well as political and economic imperative. Initiatives to remove them are overdue and should be supported by every American citizen.

Mohammed H. Siddiq
Lincoln, Nebraska

Israel and Palestine...

The "Report from Palestine" by Hannah Breckbill in the September 2008 *Nebraska Report* mentions many issues without addressing any of them. She says in her first paragraph that she wanted "to understand the emotions rather than *just* the facts" (italics are mine). She definitely succeeded in her article. But I would suggest the rest of your readers would benefit from focusing on the facts as well as the emotions.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be solved only when the Arab backers of the conflict recognize that they need to support a realistic compromise and urge the Palestinians to agree to peace. There are counter arguments and background information for all the issues that Breckbill raised. Let's take them one at a time:

Claim 1: She brings up Palestinian houses being demolished. Explanation: Houses are demolished when they are the homes of terrorists and when the owners allow terrorists to use them to shoot at Israelis.

Claim 2: Illegal settlements. Explanation: The settlements are disputed and not illegal; regardless, they could be abandoned anytime there is a peace agreement. In Gaza they were abandoned. These structures could have been used to relieve the economic hardships there. Instead Palestinians destroyed the infrastructure left by the Israelis. Israel itself has 20 percent Arab population. There is no reason that Arabs and Jews should not be able to live side by side in Palestinian-controlled areas as they do in Israel. The idea of ethnic cleansing should not be supported by people who belong to Nebraskans for Peace.

Claim 3: Arbitrary checkpoints. Explanation: The checkpoints are to protect Israeli citizens (Arab and Jew) from terrorists. As Breckbill undoubtedly knows, suicide bombers have killed many innocent people in Israel. Claim 4: The Israeli military is destroying young Israelis' conscience. Fact: I do not know where she got this opinion. The Israeli army goes out of its way to avoid civilian casualties. As Hezbollah did in Lebanon, the Palestinians use civilians (and their houses and orchards) as shields. When there is collateral damage, they use dead civilians and destroyed property for propaganda. With that said, I have no doubts that there are some Israeli soldiers who have acted poorly; but there are others who have acted heroically to save people's lives, such as the young soldiers who delivered the baby mentioned in a caption to a picture accompanying the article. Breckbill claims to want to understand the emotions. I don't see any evidence she wanted to understand the emotions of the Israelis. Remember the wrong decision by a soldier may mean that that soldier or several others will die. Israel has a universal draft so many of the soldiers are very young and when faced with the unknown status of a stranger, they sometimes go overboard. The cause is that terrorists are a real threat and people who have lost family and friends sometimes are angry and react violently. This is the nature of war. This conflict has gone on since before 1947 because first the Palestinians refused to accept Jews as neighbors and then after 1947 they refused to accept the UN resolution that partitioned the land.

Claim 5: Refugees being kicked out of their homes in 1948. Explanation: Not *all* the refugees were forced from their homes in 1948, *some* were. However, most left because they were assured by their Arab 'friends' that Israel would be destroyed and they would get the whole country for themselves. Breckbill fails to mention that after 1948 the Arab countries of northern Africa and the Middle East expelled their Jewish populations. The expelled Jews went to Israel and have become contributing members of society. It is truly a tragedy that the Palestinian people remain in refugee camps after 60 years. They are there because their Arab allies do not want to have them in their countries. It serves the greater Arab political agenda to maintain the squalor of the refugee camps.

Claim 6: Gaza is the largest prison in the world. Explanation: If Gaza is a prison then it is one of the Palestinians' own

"Chronicles a painful odyssey that should give pause to the caring, the oblivious, and those who don't give a damn." Frank LaMere
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
Chair, Native Caucus, Democratic National Committee

THE BATTLE FOR WHITECLAY



See the theatrical premiere of the documentary Jan. 30 – Feb. 5
Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center • 313 N. 13th Street in Lincoln
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 <p>MARY RIEPMA ROSS MEDIA ARTS CENTER</p> <p>UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Lincoln HIXSON-LIED COLLEGE OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS</p>	www.theross.org	COMING SOON
	NOW SHOWING	ROSS CLOSED FOR WINTER BREAK Dec. 22, 2008 - Jan. 8, 2009
	COMING SOON	1.9 - 1.22 SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK is a film about failure, about the struggle to make your mark in a world filled with people who are more gifted, beautiful, glamorous and desirable than the rest of us — we who are crippled by narcissistic inadequacy, yes, of course, but also by real horror, by zits, flab and the cancer that we know (we know!) is eating away at us.
	ABOUT THE ROSS	1.9 - 1.29 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE is the story of Jamal Malik, an 18 year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai, who is about to experience the biggest day of his life. With the whole nation watching, he is just one question away from winning a staggering 20 million rupees on India's "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" But when the show breaks for the night, police arrest him on suspicion of cheating
	MEMBERSHIP	1.23 - 1.29 STRANDED: I'VE COME FROM A PLANE THAT CRASHED ON THE MOUNTAINS In October 1972, a plane carrying a team of young rugby players from Montevideo, Uruguay, went down in a snow-covered valley in the Andes. The dramatic tale of the survivors' struggle to stay alive and be rescued, already told in a bestselling book and feature film, finds new depth and resonance in this picture.
	SPONSORS	1.30 - 2.5 THE EXILES is an incredible feature film by Kent MacKenzie chronicling a day in the life of a group of twenty-something Native Americans who left reservation life in the 1950s to live in the district of Bunker Hill, Los Angeles, California.
FILM RESOURCES	ADMISSION: \$8.50 General Admission \$7.00 Students \$6.50 Seniors \$6.00 Members \$5.50 Children	
CONTACT US	Matinee \$6.50 General Admission \$5.50 Seniors \$5.00 Members \$5.50 Children	
	Children are 12 and under, Seniors are 80 and older	
	We accept cash, check, NCard, Visa, and Mastercard	
	Box Office Opens 30 Minutes Before Showtimes	
	LOCATION: 313 N. 13 STREET LINCOLN, NEBRASKA	

Letters to NFP, conclusion

making. The Arabs did not want to negotiate peace in 2000. Israel needed a new strategy since it was clear the Palestinians did not want to make peace, so they decided to just leave. It is now apparent that having Israel in charge was better for most ordinary Palestinians. They had food, water, electricity, medicines and jobs. The people of Gaza rightly threw out the corrupt Fatah party, but they also voted for leadership (Hamas) that would not recognize Israel. No other country in the world would allow a neighbor to exist on its borders that actively is trying to destroy it. Israel should be praised for its restraint. If the leaders of Gaza cared about their population, they would end the violence and allow normal relationships.

Claim 7: Israel wants to turn the West Bank into another Gaza, portioning it into smaller and smaller cantons. Explanation: This claim is not consistent with claim 6 where Israel is faulted for leaving Gaza to become one big mess. The claim here is that Israel will micromanage the West Bank. On the contrary, Israel would prefer that the West Bank be a functioning Palestinian political unit, as opposed to the non-functioning Gaza. If the Palestinians had not started the Second Intifada in 2000, they would have a functioning state now. I will offer a criticism of Israel: supporting the Fatah faction that rules the West Bank is not a good long term strategy since they are corrupt and should be replaced. The problem is the 'cure' available (Hamas) is worse than the disease.

Claim 8: 'There is the Wall.' Explanation: It is surprising that Israel took so long to build the fence. The fact is that when the Palestinian people had easy access to Israeli society, the terrorists took advantage of it by blowing up many civilian targets. Israelis got fed up with being killed. The 'security fence' is working; the suicide bombers have been minimized. It is too bad that it has come to this and that the innocent Palestinian has

to suffer because of the extremists.

It is easy to find individual stories on both sides that illustrate the tragedy that is playing out in the land of Israel. One can be sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians, but it is important to recognize how the actions of the Palestinians have contributed to this plight. The history of the conflict also shows that the Palestinian people are being used by their neighbors, who want to destroy Israel and therefore have not helped the Palestinians or allowed them to make peace with Israel. The events in Gaza show that the Palestinians are a long way away from having the ability to govern themselves. What the peace groups and others interested in this issue need to do is help Palestinians build capable institutions, and educate people on how to build a better life for themselves and live in peace with their neighbors. The violence against innocent Israelis (Jews, Christians and Muslims) by Hezbollah, Hamas and Fatah are anything but peaceful. Why do Breckbill and Nebraskans for Peace seem to ignore this basic underlying fact? Israel is not up against pacifists like Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi.

I suggest to those who are ready to criticize Israel, that whatever standard they want to judge Israel by—human rights, economic rights, civil rights and democratic institutions—that they use the same standard to judge other nations. Since Israel is reacting to and trying to prevent violence, criticisms of Israel should suggest what changes Israel can make that would bring a peaceful outcome to the situation. If people want to make a meaningful contribution to helping the situation, I suggest they consider a donation to the Abraham Fund (www.abrahamfund.org) whose organization is dedicated to "Advancing coexistence and equality among Jews and Arabs in Israel."

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January 7	2009 Nebraska Legislative Session Begins
January 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observed
January 20	Inauguration of President Barack Obama (and official end of the Bush/Cheney nightmare)
February	Black History Month

To list an event, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event to: NFP, 941 'O' Street, #1026, Lincoln, NE 68508, or email: NeReport@neb.rr.com.

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Speaking Our Peace

Yes, Mr. Bush, This War/Recession Is Hard

by Paul Olson, NFP President

It must have been a day for getting things off the chest. No sooner had the government finally admitted that we were in a recession than the President was confessing he'd never realized the war would be so hard.

Perhaps he thought the whole thing would be fun: get on a pile of rubble, put on a hardhat, pretend to be a fireman; fly into a carrier, parachute a few feet with a messianic banner—"Mission Accomplished"; or, play with big Tinker Toys in the desert and dream huge scary dreams about End-Time.

Well, Mr. Bush, it did turn out hard for the thousands of dead, mostly poor American soldiers and civilians and for the hundred thousand and more poor Iraqis and Afghans burned to death or shot. Too bad. I didn't know it was hard for you.

Your recession though is also hard. You said February 18 on the "Today Show" that you didn't think the war caused the economics problems: "I think actually the spending in the war might help with jobs... because we're buying equipment and people are working."

But a lot of your people (6-7 percent) aren't working now. A lot of them aren't buying houses. A lot of them are going hungry (more than 1 in 8 people). And a lot of them face the end of their dream of a decent life or a decent education.

As I get older, I tend to reminisce. I recently looked at pictures that reflect my own memories of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, especially South Dakota in the '30s—the Farm Security Administration

pictures of poor and starving rural people, the pictures from my father's parishes of farm buildings and machinery covered with dust, a dust cloud at least a thousand feet high moving in on Gregory, South Dakota.

The relief work, the beggars, the starving, straggly cattle wandering through the countryside, the grasshoppers eating the up the grasslands and crops, even the fence posts. No one could pay Dad. We couldn't even raise a garden. Finally we moved to Wisconsin's Lake Superior area—rain and no dust but farming in brick clay and glacial rocks. It was hard.

After we came back to Nebraska in 1944, I fished with a neighbor in Wahoo, August Albert. He taught me to paint houses, to mix the paint just right, to use an angle brush for fine work, and to scrape and prime the siding so that the work lasted forever. He taught me my first job skills. After work we would go bullhead-fishing, he on the other side of the fish-hole with his hang-down pipe glowing in the dark. There would be silence, then crickets, a frog croak, and occasional crackles in the bushes from passing animals. After a while August would start to recall things. He had no work or money at times during the Depression. He had fished to keep his family going (his wife was gone). He had picked up coal along railroad tracks and clinkers in dumps for heating. He had rummaged in the dumps for food and clothes.

Roosevelt was a good man.

The government had saved him and his family during those hard times when,

in 1933, it decided to do something and launched the New Deal.

(For a sense of how good the New Deal could be, read Suzanne Williams' *Nebraska and the CCC*, obtainable from the Denton Community Historical Society.)

Now the government has decided to do something again. This time though, it's not the CCC or the WPA or the Federal Writer's Project. Now it will give \$700 billion dollars to the biggest banks, rescue AIG (too big to fail!), rescue the 'Big Three' automakers, and spill mega-money on mega-corporations everywhere to make their deserts bloom. But no blooms come yet from this strategy of first rescue the upper crust.

In my view, no blooms will come until ordinary folks have work, mortgages that they can pay, food to feed their kids, and money to spend. One cannot run a mass production economy without money for the masses. Paul Krugman, the newly tapped Nobel Prize-winning economist, wrote in 2006 that Bush's tax cuts saved those with incomes of over \$200,000 a year more than \$44,000 annually, and gave half the tax-cut money to them. Those receiving less than \$75,000 annually received barely a quarter of the cuts: "For the first time in our history, so much growth is being siphoned off to a small, wealthy minority that most Americans are failing to gain ground even during a time of economic growth." Two years later with economic collapse and the same policies in place, most Americans lose ground at a radical pace.

Ironically, we cannot now spend our way out of a depression through New Deals and wars as we did in the Great Depression. Then, we had little national debt and strong basic industries. Now we have a three trillion-dollar war to enrich Big Oil's part of the "small wealthy minority" (a figure that does not count the off-the-books 'privatized' costs Annual Peace Conference speaker Michele Chwastiak detailed in the Nov./Dec. 2008 *Nebraska Report*).

- We have about 11 trillion dollars in national debt—about 12 percent of that debt held by China and Japan and another 12 percent by the rest of the world.
- Our dollar is increasingly less the normative standard for international currencies.
- Our spending on infrastructure, education and job creation has gone up in smoke. As our jobless numbers grow, military spending creates only a fraction of the jobs per million of dollars spent that civilian spending creates.

Our Big Business war has placed large sections of the economy in a 'socialist' sector where the market does not operate, where usable goods are not created, and where food for the hungry is not produced. In coming months, billions of dollars will be directed to this same unproductive sector bailing out the very, very rich.

Yes, Mr. Bush, this war has been hard for everyone but the wealthy. Perhaps the next administration will find a way to put resources and hope into the hands of the August Alberts of our country. Let us hope.