



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

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Korea and Nebraska StratCom Comrades in Arms

As a representative of Nebraskans for Peace, State Coordinator Tim Rinne was invited to deliver a talk on StratCom at the "International Conference against the Asia Pacific Missile Defense and for the End of the Arms Race" in Seoul, South Korea April 16-18. Through meetings with Korean political activists and fact-finding trips to the countryside (including visits to several American military bases and the "De-militarized Zone" separating North and South Korea), he had a chance to witness first-hand the commanding presence of the U.S. military on the Korean Peninsula. And, as the text of his speech, "Korea and Nebraska—StratCom Comrades in Arms," illustrates, the fingerprints of U.S. Strategic Command are everywhere to be found in this Asia-Pacific nation.



A full-color version of this photograph appeared on the front page of Hankyoreh, one of South Korea's leading newspapers. Approximately 40 of the participants at the "International Conference against the Asia Pacific Missile Defense and for the End of Arms Race" visited the Odusan Unification Observatory overlooking the "De-militarized Zone" between North and South Korea. This Cold War bastion from the 1950s continues to rend the peninsula apart over half a century later.

I want to begin by thanking "The Korean Committee for the International Conference against the Asia Pacific Missile Defense and for the End of the Arms Race." Nebraskans for Peace (the organization for which I work) hosted last year's Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space conference in Omaha, Nebraska—and I have a personal appreciation for just how much work goes into putting on one of these events. So I thank you all for your hospitality and effort.

As a Nebraskan who has never before been to Korea, I wish I was visiting your beautiful country under more genial circumstances. But as you know, my home state of Nebraska is the headquarters for U.S. Strategic Command—the historic

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Nebraska Report

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Clip & Mail

Korea and Nebraska, continued

command center for the U.S.'s nuclear deterrent... and Strategic Command ("StratCom") has been an all-too-familiar presence in the lives of the people of the Asia-Pacific for now six decades.

More than any other region on earth, the Asia-Pacific has had to contend with the menace of America's nuclear arsenal: from the morally reprehensible atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki... to the more than one hundred atmospheric nuclear tests on your lands and waters... to the unremitting threat of nuclear attacks against the Communist nations of the former Soviet Union, North Korea, Vietnam and China.

Since 1948, the fate of the Asia-Pacific has rested in the hands of U.S. Strategic Command on Offutt Air Force Base in suburban Omaha—just an hour from where I live.

Such belligerence on the part of the U.S.—spanning decades—has hardly laid the ground for a mutual and cooperative relationship between our two hemispheres. The countries of the Asia-Pacific have been right to focus so much of their attention on the dangers of the U.S.'s nuclear strategy and the urgent need for international disarmament by all nuclear states.

After the horrifying exhibition of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, one can hardly imagine a peril greater than that posed by StratCom's stockpile of nearly 5,400 nuclear weapons. The mere idea explains why for generations we have referred to nuclear war as the 'unthinkable.'

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S., however, the threat posed by StratCom—unbelievable as it sounds—has grown even more ominous and immediate.

Within months after the attack of 9/11, StratCom began undergoing a complete overhaul in its role and mission at the hands of the Bush/Cheney Administration. In addition to its historic responsibility for "Nuclear Deterrence," StratCom was suddenly charged with the mission for "Space." In early 2003, the command was assigned four more missions: "Missile Defense," "Intelligence/Surveillance/ Re-

connaissance," "Information Operations" and "Full-Spectrum Global Strike." In 2005, "Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction" was added to its duties. And finally in 2007, StratCom was awarded "Cyberspace"—for a total of eight missions.

In addition, under the Bush/Cheney Administration's revised "Nuclear Posture Review" of 2002, StratCom's nuclear mission was openly shifted from 'defensive' to *offensive*—permitting 'first strike' nuclear attacks.

Today, the command is waging the White House's global "War on Terror" and actively pursuing the U.S. government's goal of militarily dominating space. With

It is virtually impossible nowadays to talk about any military-related activities or events in South Korea without tracing them back to U.S. Strategic Command.

just a phone call from the president, StratCom is now authorized to preemptively attack any place on earth within one hour—using either conventional *or nuclear* weapons—merely on the suspicion of a threat to the U.S.'s national interests.

StratCom will not only plan, direct and execute the next military conflict the White House gets America into, StratCom is responsible for collecting the intelligence on which the decision to attack will be made. Sixty minutes from now, this remote command in the American heartland could have taken the U.S. to war—and the United States Congress wouldn't even know.

Over a five-year span, StratCom went

from being a purported deterrent whose 'doomsday' weapons were 'never supposed to be used' to now 'being offensively used for everything.'

There really isn't anything anymore that doesn't fall, somehow or the other, under StratCom's umbrella. Under the U.S.'s revised "Unified Command Plan," StratCom—with its space assets, comprehensive mission array and cross-service authority—now serves as the 'enabler' for all the other regional unified commands (NorthCom, SouthCom, EuCom, CentCom, AfriCom and, of special interest to you here in the Asia Pacific, PaCom)... Which is why, incidentally, the adoption of a new space treaty—PAROS—is so important. It will limit StratCom's power.

The current StratCom Commander, Air Force General and former astronaut Kevin Chilton, even proposed in congressional testimony last year that Strategic Command's name should be changed to "Global Command"—to better reflect the global nature of its missions.

StratCom, as the title of last year's Global Network conference sized it up, is now "the most dangerous place on the face of the earth."

And its fingerprints are everywhere:

- Those so-called 'Missile Defense' installations being proposed for Poland and the Czech Republic that have been infuriating Russia and threatening to restart the Cold War—that's StratCom.
- StratCom as well coordinated the shutdown in February 2008 of a falling U.S. spy satellite with a SM III missile launched from an Aegis-class Missile Defense cruiser from here in the Pacific Ocean—thereby demonstrating that America's so-called Missile 'Defense' system can in fact double as an OFFENSIVE, anti-satellite weapon.
- Those CIA Predator drones that are routinely flying over Pakistani airspace and firing Hellfire missiles at alleged al-Qaida targets are flown with the aid of StratCom's space assets, with intelli-

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gence supplied by StratCom spy satellites.

- And those ECHELON National Security Agency listening stations in Misawa, Japan; Pine Gap, Australia and Waihopai, New Zealand—that are eavesdropping on your phone calls and perusing your emails—are all part of StratCom's international Intelligence/Surveillance/Reconnaissance network.
- The recent clash between a U.S. spy ship and Chinese naval defenses in the South China Sea is linked to StratCom's Intelligence/Surveillance/Reconnaissance mission as well, as the U.S. sub-hunting craft was conducting spying activities near the site of a new Chinese submarine base.
- And finally, as our South Korean hosts and friends know all too well, StratCom's presence here on the Korean Peninsula is nearly universal—to the point where your country has become the forward operations base for everything from launching preemptive nuclear or conventional strikes against North Korea, to the deployment of a Missile Defense system across the Asia Pacific, to the economic and military encirclement of China.

It is virtually impossible nowadays to

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Obama's Changes in Military Policy Are Driven Less by Philosophy than by Economic Reality

by Loring Wirbel

Military space analyst Loring Wirbel of "Citizens for Peace in Space" in Colorado Springs has been an indispensable resource in helping NFP understand the drastic transformation that's taken place at U.S. Strategic Command since 9/11. A nationally recognized authority on the militarization of space (and a board member of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space), he is also—as the speech below reveals—an astute political observer. He delivered this talk in South Korea at the "International Conference Against the Asia Pacific Missile Defense and for the End of the Arms Race" April 16-18.

Canadian activist Naomi Klein told *The Progressive* magazine in its February 2009 issue that she is tired of the progressive activists with "selective amnesia." They cannot remember anything bad that happened before the Bush Administration, and do not recognize bad policy coming from the White House after Bush left. Naomi Klein was talking about the financial problems Bill Clinton started with the Glass-Steagall banking act.

But activists working for peace in space know what she is talking about. The U.S. Space Command's "Vision for 2020" document was written during the Clinton years, not the Bush years. And many aggressive military space policies are continuing unchanged in the Obama era.

In March 2009, Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said that the White House has only done a moderate job of changing executive-branch abuses from the Bush Administration, and of implementing the changes suggested in ACLU's 100-day "Actions for Restoring America" document. While Obama rapidly called for the closure of Guantanamo, his administration did not change its state secrets position in the case of Binyam Mohamed, nor did it change the Bush position on lawsuits involving the National Security Agency (NSA) and warrantless surveillance.

From our perspective, Obama's actions regarding the future direction for the U.S. Missile Defense Agency—one of the central concerns of this conference—have also been mixed. There have been two positive developments: First, at his request, the Pentagon is considering a budget cut of approximately \$2 billion, or 20 percent, in the agency's \$10 billion budget. The new director of MDA, Army Lt. General Patrick O'Reilly, has indicated that no weapons will be fielded without testing, as was common in the Bush Administration. Even General James Cartwright, vice chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and former StratCom Commander), is warning that any missile defense beyond short-range "Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense" (THAAD) is probably obsolete

and may be canceled. And secondly, President Obama has made an informal offer to Russia to postpone or cancel the planned missile-defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic—if Russia will help dissuade Iran from proceeding with nuclear weapons development.



However, there is no real discussion within the Pentagon for taking existing missile-defense weapons in California and Alaska off alert. There is no intention of cutting back on Asia deployments of Aegis cruisers for sea-based missile defense. Obama seems to be as willing as George Bush to respond decisively to further North Korea tests of the Taepodong-2 missile system. It is instructive to look at a proposal in the March 12 *New York Times* by MIT Professor Theodore

Postol, suggesting that European ground-based missile defense be abandoned in favor of a boost-phase kinetic missile defense that would be carried on UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), which would fly over "nations of concern" such as Iran and North Korea. It seems likely that President

with Israel, which was expanded by Bush prior to the December invasion of Gaza, is unlikely to be limited by Obama unless the new prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, significantly expands Israeli control in the Occupied Territories.

Same old, same old?

Does this lead us to the conclusion, favored by Ralph Nader, that there is no difference between Democrat and Republican policies? Not exactly. Former Vice President Dick Cheney sought a vast expansion of executive power that was unlike any seen in a century. Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld denounced the notion of "soft power," and criticized "Old Europe" because the mainstream EU nations would not support preventive 'first-strike' war. Clearly, the Obama Administration recognizes that the U.S. is an empire in decline, and that it can only assert authority so long as it recognizes the role of other nations that hold the keys to economic hegemony.

But no less than the Republican Party, the Democratic Party leadership fully recognizes that imperialism and 'exceptionalism' are foundational principles in American political life—and philosophies that remain quite popular with U.S. citizens. The invasion of Iraq, for instance, only became unpopular when its goals bogged down in 2004. U.S. citizens do not relish the thought of seeing their superpower status decline, and are willing to listen

While visiting a newly expanded U.S. Army base with StratCom connections, the delegates in South Korea saw almost a dozen mobile PAC-3 (Patriot Advanced Capability) launchers parked beyond the razor-wired fence. Lockheed Martin describes its PAC-3 system as "the world's most advanced, capable and powerful terminal air defense missile."

Obama would promote such a concept as 'responsible' missile defense.

Further, in existing theaters of war, the Obama Administration supports intelligence and force-deployment methods begun under Bush. CIA Director Leon Panetta said he thinks the armed flights of UAVs over Pakistan and Afghanistan have been successful. Intelligence flights of unarmed UAVs throughout Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan will likely be increased. Intelligence-sharing

continued on next page

to any leader who tells them they can still be Number One. The biggest danger (as we saw in the run-up to the Iraq invasion with the propaganda about Saddam Hussein's WMDs) is when our national leaders attempt to use populism to rally U.S. citizens against an adversary. Thus far, Obama has avoided using such populist rhetoric. If the conservative commentators who now rule the Republican Party find a populist crusade to rally citizens against a new 'enemy,' however, we can expect such crusades to become popular, particularly as citizens' fears escalate in times of economic uncertainty.

Is there a bright spot?

The brightest spot may be that same economic uncertainty. Continuing the infrastructure of the Bush Administration—in

terms of future space weapons or current space platforms used in first-strike warfare—simply cannot be afforded. The apparent need to go through a second round of cutting the budget in June-July 2009 will confront the Defense Department and intelligence establishment with uncomfortable choices.

For example, the current plans call for the Missile Defense Agency to see up to \$2 billion of its \$10 billion annual budget cut. The number of cuts could grow by the summer. This may mean that space-based successors to the "NFIRE" weapons test platform are canceled or postponed. It is unlikely as well that the airborne laser for midcourse missile defense will move beyond simple tests.

It is important to note that

some programs of missile defense have already been handed over to active military wings. The ground-based missiles in California and Alaska, for example, now are under the control of Air Force Space Command and Strategic Command. The Theater Missile Defense weapons on Aegis cruisers are under Navy control with Air Force input. However, the operational budgets of the military service commands are also likely to face significant cuts, with all available funds going to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In space-based intelligence, the budgets of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) and National Security Agency (NSA) now are estimated at \$15 billion for each agency, with the total U.S. intelligence budget estimated at \$66.5 billion. This is a 30 percent increase from the last

published figures of the Director of National Intelligence, and is simply unsustainable in a budget crisis. More space intelligence will have to be outsourced to private platforms, and more advanced satellites like the "Transformational Satellite System" will have to be delayed.

What does this mean for deployed forces on the ground? Targeting of gravity bombs and missiles using Global Positioning System satellites is not likely to be affected, because a full constellation of GPS satellites is already in orbit. As a result, the advantages in GPS-powered bombs like the "Joint Direct Assault Munition" will still be realized in areas as diverse as Gaza (where Israel has access to U.S. space technology), and the Pakistan/Afghanistan border region.

Those networked battlefields

that depend on space-based communications and intelligence, however, will experience significant reductions in capability. The ambitious multi-service programs such as "Future Combat Systems" and "Net-Centric Warfare" will either be delayed or have capabilities canceled, because the satellites will not be there to support the system. On March 11, 2009, the U.S. Government Accountability Office warned that the developers of Future Combat Systems and the Joint Strike Fighter may attempt to field the systems without adequate testing, because they would otherwise be unaffordable.

Indeed, the common problems of the NRO, Air Force and NASA were deemed so severe in the aftermath of the Obama inauguration, the White House es-

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Korea and Nebraska, conclusion

talk about any military-related activities or events in South Korea without tracing them back to U.S. Strategic Command in my home state of Nebraska:

- Take the expulsion of the farmers of Daechu-ri near Pyeongtaek to expand Camp Humphreys Army base into a U.S. outpost to project force anywhere across East Asia...
- Or "Operation Key Resolve"—the recent US/ROK training exercise involving a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier strike group, an Aegis Missile Defense cruiser, cutting-edge weaponry and tens of thousands of military personnel—which the North Korean government nervously viewed as a trial run for a preemptive invasion...
- Or take the latest round of nuclear brinkmanship with North Korea over what it claims is a satellite launch, but which the U.S., South Korea and Japan all condemn as a ballistic missile test...
- Or finally—reminiscent of Cold War superpower politics—the ongoing effort to draw South Korea, Japan and Aus-

tralia into a "Pan-Asia Pacific Security Union" (PAPSU) that can militarily counter the influence of China and Russia...

Every one of these Korean events is directly linked to the missions of U.S. Strategic Command in Nebraska.

As Mr. Ko Young-dae of SPARK so succinctly stated in his speech at last year's

The peoples of our two lands—the nation of Korea and the state of Nebraska—have been conscripted into a kind of 'unnatural alliance' by StratCom and made unwitting 'comrades in arms.'

Global Network conference in Omaha, "StratCom is the main threat to peace on the Korean Peninsula."

In fact, the peoples of our two lands—the nation of Korea and the state of Nebraska—have been conscripted into a kind of 'unnatural alliance' by StratCom and made unwitting 'comrades in arms.'

We are each, in our own way, victims of StratCom's power: both through the wealth and prestige it brings to our two economies and governments... and through the political, military—and economic—oppression it conducts in our name.

But the people of Nebraska, I can tell you today, have no interest in throwing off the shackles of this oppressor. We in Nebraska love our StratCom. We worship at its shrine and will not bite the hand that, we're convinced, is so generously feeding us. (The Omaha Chamber of Commerce estimates that StratCom annually generates almost \$2.5 billion dollars in economic activity for the Omaha area—five percent of the local economy.)

As a life-long Nebraskan, I can assure you that the liberal, anti-militarist views you have heard me express today are not shared by the overwhelming majority of my Nebraska neighbors. They are not even shared by most of my own family.

The people of Korea, on the other hand, have much to gain by throwing off the yoke of StratCom's oppression:

Your independence from the U.S. for starters...

Then, once freed from the U.S.'s stifling influence... the chance to finally end the 58-year-long war with the North (which we saw first-hand evidence of yesterday at the DMZ) and to pursue regional peace with your Asia Pacific neighbors.

It is to you—our Korean comrades in arms—that Nebraskans for Peace looks for leadership to truly begin challenging StratCom's global reach.

We pledge to stand in solidarity with you as together we work to end this threat to the world.

Thank you.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Troubling Questions about 'Cap and Trade'

Now that the Environmental Protection Agency has belatedly classified greenhouse gases as pollutants, how do we get to the point of street-level regulation? Now comes the tough part: 'walking the walk.' How do we really cut emissions of greenhouse gases before feedbacks in the Earth system make any such effort futile? What do we really change in our daily lives?

To regulate greenhouse gases, they must be measured. So the EPA is preparing to order large U.S. corporations to compile and report their greenhouse-gas emissions. While they are at it, the EPA should require the same kind of audits within government agencies. President Barack Obama should order the Pentagon, for example, to calculate its carbon footprint—including the first-ever report of the greenhouse-gas emissions for modern, mechanized warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Cap and Trade

To curtail greenhouse gases generally, the only strategy currently generating any political momentum is 'cap and trade'—with Wall Street investors in particular viewing it as a potentially lucrative new market in which to make money. A straight-forward 'carbon tax' would undoubtedly be more efficient, but nobody—

in this political environment—wants to institute a new tax. For such an approach to be at all palatable, taxes would have to be cut on things we would like to encourage (lowering the income tax on labor would be a possibility), while raising them on ecologically destructive activities, such as greenhouse-gas emissions.

“Cap and Trade does not have a prayer of phasing out fossil fuel emissions fast enough to save the planet, e.g., allowing us to phase-out coal-fired power plants.”

— James Hansen, director, NASA Goddard Institute

With a cap-and-trade system, a 'cap' is placed on the volume of greenhouse-gas emissions and then the emitting industries are allowed to 'trade' for the right to pollute. Companies that do not emit greenhouse gases to their limits can sell their rights to others, creating a market that rewards emission reductions. Over time, limits tighten, raising the price of pollution.

The cap-and-trade system operating in Europe relies on the market to establish a gradually shrinking target for Europe's carbon dioxide emissions, and then divvies it up by country. At regular intervals, each country then allocates 'shares' to power plants

and other factories which are less than their previous use, thereby forcing them to cut emissions, get credit for reducing greenhouse gases in developing countries, or buy spare 'allowances' from other firms to make up the shortfall. That creates a market—and a market price—for allowances.

'Cap and Hustle'

Use of such a cap-and-trade market in Europe, however, has shown itself to be vulnerable to various business hustles. The European Union's issue of a limited number of industrial permits to emit carbon provoked an old-fashioned 'lobbying for favors' that enriched some of the EU's biggest polluters and (by the end of 2008) produced very little actual reduction in greenhouse gases.

Large utilities and basic industries convinced the European Union to give away most of the permits free—in large numbers—so the market nearly collapsed. Europe eventually issued a new system of permits that traded

about \$80 billion during 2008, most of which was recouped from consumers in the prices of goods and services (often as higher electric bills). However, the volume of carbon dioxide emitted by plants and factories participating in the system rose 0.4 percent in 2006 as compared to 2005 and another 0.7 percent in 2007.

Germany's power company RWE, Europe's largest industrial source of carbon dioxide, reaped \$6.4 billion in three years. Companies throughout Europe took in about \$374 billion at the peak of the market, as various national governments (most notably Germany) added exemptions and bonuses that fattened the take.

"It was lobbying by industry, including the electricity companies, that was to blame for all these exceptional rules," said Hans Jürgen Nantke, the director of the German trading authority, part of the Federal Environment Agency.

Cap and Dividend

James E. Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, proposes that carbon taxes be returned to people under a "Cap and Dividend" program to help individuals cope with higher energy prices. He described the concept:

"In hard economic times with high fuel costs, the public will rebel against any carbon tax—unless 100 percent of the tax

is returned immediately, monthly, to the public on a per-capita basis. The public is fed up with politicians spending their money in cahoots with alligator-shoe-wearing, toad-eating (just kidding) lobbyists. Carbon taxes will drive energy innovations and the dividend will spur the economy. Taxes can be fruitfully initiated on a national basis; any trade disadvantage should be eliminated via an import duty on products produced in other countries that do not impose a comparable carbon tax, with 100 percent of the duty added to the per capita dividends."

According to Hansen, "Cap and Trade does not have a prayer of phasing out fossil fuel emissions fast enough to save the planet, e.g., allowing us to phase-out coal-fired power plants. Clearly there must be people in the Obama Administration who understand that. Yet Cap and Trade is still talked about as if it were something good. One wonders: do they really believe we have 'a planet in peril'?"

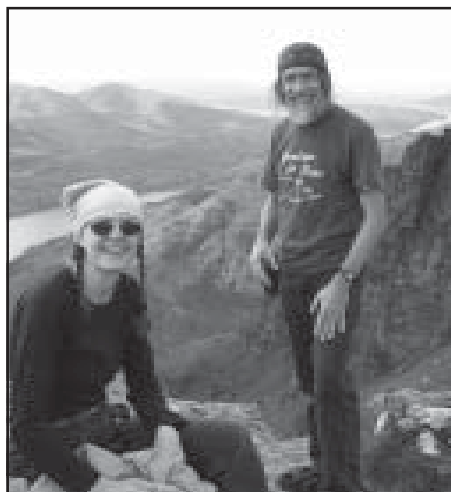
A 'cap' raises the price of energy, just as does a simple honest carbon tax on oil, gas and coal at the first sale at the mine or port of entry," Hansen stated. The term "cap" is a euphemism, Hansen said, "disguising the fact that it is a tax, assuming that the public is a bunch of dummies who will

Taking an Economic ‘Wrong Turn’

How Our Chance to Build a Sustainable Economy Is Being Undermined

by Hendrik van den Berg
UNL Professor of Economics

In my last article (“We’re Never Getting Back to ‘Normal,’” April 2009 *Nebraska Report*) I explained that—even if the current financial crisis ends—things cannot return to what they were because the economic practices of the past quarter of a century were simply unsustainable. For an entire generation, we were living beyond our (and the earth’s) means and the bubble has finally burst.



Hank and his wife Barb in the Scottish Highlands last summer. He was in the UK to deliver a paper at an international ‘green economics’ conference.

Instead, I proposed that we use the opportunity this crisis affords to move toward a more economically, socially and ecologically sustainable future. Already the global recession is bringing consumption down to a more sustainable level, and Americans are actually beginning to save more of their income. The stimulus packages contain ‘green’ projects, and Congress is once again giving consideration to increasing funding for education and providing healthcare coverage for everyone.

That hoped-for outcome may not necessarily come to pass, however. There is a

very real possibility that, in a few years, we will find ourselves in much worse shape than we are already.

Some Americans are clearly angry about what the Wall Street banks and other firms did. The various ‘Tea Parties’ held around the country in April suggest that some Americans are also angry about the massive bailouts and subsidies for the very same banks and firms that caused the collapse in the first place. But given the intransigence of the financial industry and the complicity of our political leadership, it’s clear that the public has not gotten nearly angry enough. The weak popular outcry has been insufficient to stop our government officials from providing the financial industry repeated bailouts and subsidies on obscenely favorable terms.

Let’s face it, if our political leaders were at all concerned about public reaction, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner wouldn’t have dared release the new ‘heads I win, tails you lose’ bail-out plan to encourage private investors (mostly financial firms and hedge funds) to acquire the questionable assets those same financial firms created. Under this blatantly obscene plan, the government provides loans to the buyers of the assets—but they can walk away from the loans if the assets fall in value below their purchase prices, thus saddling the taxpayers with the losses. Most Americans reply with a collective “Whatever.”

Americans are clearly no longer politically engaged. Nor do they seem to understand—or want to understand—economics and finance. These are disturbing and destructive tendencies because the financial industry (which is keenly aware of its own interests) has taken advantage of this apathy by effectively dictating U.S. financial and economic policy. The result of letting the financial industry dictate policy for the past four decades is the worst economic recession since the Great Depression—a recession that is touching every corner of the globe.

The Lessons of the Great Depression

Our experience from the Great Depression suggests that governments around the globe should now be instituting real financial and economic reforms to reverse some of the familiar economic problems like growing income inequality, unemploy-

From a long-run perspective, the partially successful fiscal stimulus (at best, fiscal stimuli can only soften the fall) may actually make it more difficult to achieve a sustainable global economy...

ment, and stagnant wages, as well as confronting new problems such as environmental destruction. When the U.S. economy collapsed from the financial crisis that followed the stock market crash of 1929, Congress eventually passed the “Securities Act” and the “Glass-Steagall Act” in 1933 and the “Securities Exchange Act” in 1934. The regulatory structure these laws set up provided for more market transparency and information, prohibited financial institutions from engaging in conflicting and overly-risky activities, and established strict oversight of financial markets. They prevented a recurrence of financial crises for nearly 50 years.

At the same time, the experience from the Great Depression is also sobering. Let’s not forget that it took from 1929 until 1933 before real reform was passed by the Congress and signed into law by President

Roosevelt (newly elected after nearly four years of inaction under President Hoover). Unemployment had to rise to nearly 25 percent and a large percentage of the U.S. banking industry had to openly fail and lose a large proportion of Americans’ saving before reform measures were finally taken. We are not yet in such a dire situation today, so there may not yet be the urgency to change economic and financial policies.

Still, one might expect that we learned something from the mistakes of the past and that, this time, another Great Depression will not be necessary before we take measures to prevent excesses in the financial industry from undermining the global economy. Economically and politically, however, we seem to have forgotten the lessons of the Great Depression. In fact, for over 30 years now, we have been dismantling or undermining the Depression-era reforms.

As early as the 1960s, when memories of the Depression were still fresh, the

... As long as things do not get much worse, there won’t be any political pressure to bring about real economic change.

banking industry began actively lobbying for weakening the Glass-Steagall provisions that prohibited banks from engaging in risky, non-banking activities. This lobbying brought results in the 1970s, when banks were given more freedom to set interest rates on loans and deposits. The public seemed to be happy with the higher interest rates on their deposits and not the least bit suspicious of the deeper conse-

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NFP Scholarship Essay Winner Karen Jantzen

Tri County High School Senior Karen Jantzen of Plymouth, Nebraska submitted the top essay for the 2009 NFP College Scholarship Essay Contest, writing on NFP's "Turn Off the Violence" Priority. This fall, Karen plans to attend Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she will spend her first year with the university's "Outtatown Discipleship School." Her winning essay is printed below.

Please consider supporting young peace-makers like Karen by contributing to the NFP Scholarship Fund. Essays are submitted in each congressional district and are judged around NFP priority issues. Each district can have one \$500 scholarship winner and two \$100 winners. To contribute, make your check to the "Nebraska Peace Foundation" (marking in the 'memo' that it is for the NFP Scholarship Fund) and mail care of: NFP, 941 'O' St., Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508.



Karen Jantzen

It hasn't been very long since the last media coverage of a school shooting, with one student turning against and reacting violently upon fellow peers or teachers. Other acts of violence at school are also becoming more common. A few years ago at my school, a student planted a pipe bomb, but his plan was discovered, thus narrowly averting disaster. Last year, someone was expelled after threatening to bring a gun to school; another student was suspended for several days after threatening to kill

a classmate. Just a few weeks ago, a boy sitting at my lunch table was kicked out for having his pocket knife with him. School is the place where children, who are the future, are trained and educated. If violence is escalating in that atmosphere, something is wrong. Peace and

**School is the place where children,
who are the future, are trained and educated.
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something is wrong.**

nonviolence in the future will only come through the education of this generation's children, and school is the most important place to begin.

One step involves the curriculum and options presented to students. Textbooks seem to glorify war and violence through their focus on them, and often nearly skip over important nonviolent people and events. I had the opportunity this year to take online classes through "Virtual High School," and one that was offered was "Peacemaking." In this class, I learned many valuable things, including peace history, the value of communication and the respect for many different viewpoints, that were not taught in any classroom. Such a class needs to become a more widespread option to complement war education. Or perhaps teachers could spend more time on important historical non-violent movements, their success and the results. Also, the presence of military recruiters in schools seems to reinforce that violence is acceptable and necessary. Such incentives they offer to uncertain students can convince them to take a path that they may not have chosen without the direct pressure right in school, had they not been allowed to promote military involvement on school grounds.

Students and parents who show interest in this should inform others through presentations, articles, editorials and other means, thus sparking questions and interest from a wider body of support. Existing organizations, such as "The Coalition Against Militarism in Our Schools," could help. This would encourage their teachers and school administrators to dis-

cuss the idea with the school board and obtain clearance to offer this education or discourage recruitment. After experimentation and evaluation, if the result is positive, these measures should be presented to the state's department of education to allow more extensive publicity

and execution if approved. However, teachers would have to be trained in that area, the curriculum revised and new materials purchased, and the military would not take kindly to losing a large field of potential recruits. Because of

the dedication, work, organization and scale involved, this option is probably least viable, although it is not impossible.

Domestic issues and a poor home environment can lead students to channel their feelings through violence, bullying or unhealthy detachment, because they don't recognize other more positive responses. A nearby town has a program called "Mother to Mother Ministry," which pairs mothers—generally from different socioeconomic backgrounds—to support, aid and teach each other through friendship. Whole families benefit from this, and it can change a child's home life and views so that love becomes stronger than violence. Such a program, implemented in all communities, could decrease household problems and in turn diminish the emotions leading to violence.

The first step would be getting the word

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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>	<p>www.theross.org</p>	<p>COMING SOON</p> <p>May 29 - Jun 4 EXAMINED LIFE pulls philosophy out of academic journals and classrooms, and puts it back on the streets. One week only!</p> <p>May 29 - Jun 11 ONE DAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND. Paris, 1987. As the trial of Lyon's Gestapo head Klaus Barbie plays out on television, French businessman Victor Bastien finds himself obsessed with piecing together the truth about his family's history.</p> <p>Jun 5 - Jun 11 THE SECRET OF THE GRAIN The richness of "The Secret of the Grain" lies in the close, tireless, enthusiastic attention it pays to the most mundane daily tasks, especially those involving food.</p> <p>Jun 12 - Jun 25 SUGAR follows a young pitcher from a training camp in the Dominican Republic to a minor-league club in Iowa, captures the contradiction of the love of the game and the corrupt business of big-time sports.</p> <p>Jun 12 - Jun 18 HUNGER Director Steve McQueen and playwright Enda Walsh blow all the prison movie clichés out of the water with this piece about a prison protest and hunger strike.</p> <p>Jun 19 - Jun 25 HOME A poet and mother to a young daughter is drawn to a house that reminds her of her childhood home, and here she realizes that many things in her life are coming full circle.</p> <p>Jun 26 - Jul 2 TULPAN a sweet-natured fairytale set in the barren landscape of a Kazakh steppe.</p> <p>Jun 26 - Jul 9 ANVIL! THE STORY OF ANVIL is a timeless tale of survival and the unadulterated passion it takes to follow your dream, year after year.</p>
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Obama's Policy Change, conclusion

established a "Committee for U.S. Space Leadership" to discuss a revised national policy, a "Space Council" and a possible "Presidential Space Advisory Board" to hammer out a plan by the end of 2009 for better utilization of space. But notice that the committee referred to "U.S. Space Leadership." President Obama is unlikely to alter those aspects of the Bush National Space Policy that advocated a dominant U.S. role in determining how all nations use space.

Ordinarily, the intelligence services of UKUSA and NATO, as well as the space services of Israel, Japan and other nations, could augment the U.S. military in regional theaters. But this financial collapse is global. No one will be able to pay for the weapon systems that looked achievable just two years ago.

"G20/Europe" and Its Aftermath

The first week of April proved a critical time for the Obama Administration. European leaders had to be convinced to support a \$1 trillion global bailout package. NATO leaders surrendered to the concept of expanded Afghanistan deployments, but with some caution. Meanwhile, Obama had to deal with a recalcitrant North Korean regime conducting a test firing of the Taepodong-2 rocket April 5, and he used the opportunity to argue in Prague for global nuclear reductions.

Many more events were taking place in early April behind the scenes. The U.S. Air Force launched a "Wideband Global Satcom" (WGS) satellite April 3, significantly increasing its global communication capability. The Director of National Intelligence

sought White House approval for an expensive "2 + 2" satellite to replace the canceled "Future Imagery Architecture" satellite system. The Air Force insisted it did not have a problem with this expensive new system, but it obviously meant less money would be available for other satellites. At the "National Space Symposium" in Colorado Springs, Intelsat executives said they had been asked by Air Force officials to use a commercial satellite to carry attack information for UAVs over Afghanistan, which they agreed to do. Space Command commander General C. Robert Kehler said that the military will rely on commercial satellites for 80 percent of its traffic, even after WGS was launched.

The Air Force also made some big changes in early April to reflect the way the Pentagon considered warfare. Control of nuclear weapons, once handled by the Space Command for Strategic Command, was placed under the new "Global Strike Command" at Barksdale Air Force Base. During the Bush Administration, the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons had been made less clear, perhaps making nuclear war easier. Now, the lines between nuclear and conventional weapons are clearer, but the Pentagon is emphasizing the 'important role' of Global Strike Command, even as Obama says he wants to reduce nuclear weapons.

The Air Force also established its new Cyber Command as the 24th Air Force at Lackland AFB near San Antonio, Texas, underneath the authority of Strategic Command. Cyber Command will perform computer attack and computer defense for the U.S. government. It is ironic that

attention is being paid to Chinese efforts to probe computers through South Asia, when the U.S. effort is far bigger and more secret.

And what of Pacific Command (PaCom) and its role in missile defense? When North Korea launch programs were first announced in March, Pacific Command, like Japan's defense forces, was boasting of its ability to shoot down any uncertain North Korean payloads. The mere presence of Aegis cruisers can

Obama realizes that the limits of the fiscal budget will mean cutbacks in the Missile Defense Agency, National Reconnaissance Office and National Security Agency.

play a provocative role in regional disputes. But by the end of March, military officials were being told to avoid emphasizing the role of Aegis. No one at the National Space Symposium emphasized this capability. The assumed failure of the satellite payload on April 5 made the Pacific Command effort to show the flag appear exaggerated. But it is certain the Aegis will continue to be valued—not for its role in so-called "Theater Missile Defense"—but as a means of demonstrating U.S. power in potential regional battlefields.

As he came back from Europe, Obama realized that the proposed missile-defense bases faced significant opposition in Poland and the Czech Republic. He realized that Iranian and North Korean efforts to develop new weapons and space technologies cannot be halted through brazen language or new space weap-

ons, but will be continuing issues for negotiation and dialogue. He also realized that the limits of the fiscal 2011 budget, and even the undecided elements of fiscal 2010, will mean cutbacks in the Missile Defense Agency, National Reconnaissance Office and National Security Agency. Military space officials do not assume they can continue with the "Transformational Satellite" or that the "Space-Based Space Surveillance" satellite will expand beyond one satellite to be launched

in July. These are the new realities of the continuing recession.

If there is any silver lining for U.S. imperialists in all this, it is that the crisis will affect nations that are considered adversaries of the United States. In the aftermath of the apparent April 5 satellite failure, North Korean expansion of Taepodong-2 and -3 programs likely will be delayed, and Iran could find any weaponization programs in its uranium enrichment program may be unaffordable—particularly in an era of low oil prices. The only U.S. adversary not affected by such a crisis, of course, is the stateless opponent, as represented by various "Salafist Muslim" groups.

It is not comfortable for peace activists to attach their hopes to a wish that economic conditions continue in their

present state of near-depression. But it is important to recognize that President Obama will not abandon certain policies of space domination and control because he is a 'peace-loving' president. He believes in U.S. dominance of the planet, as do most Democrats. There is a significant difference between Democrats and Republicans in the way such powers are exercised, but often, the Democrats require more careful observation by the peace community.

I will end with a story from 180 years ago, during the U.S.' first major use of ethnic cleansing. After Congress passed the "Indian Removal Act" of 1830 requiring all Indian Tribes east of the Mississippi River to be forcibly moved to Oklahoma, President Andrew Jackson personally negotiated with the Choctaw and Creek Tribes. He told them, "I want you to be moved by force, but I will never lie to you. Some of the people who say they want to preserve the tribes in Georgia and Tennessee say they want you to stay, but they wish to destroy your culture. Some people like Thomas Jefferson have given public speeches supporting the tribes staying here, but they have written privately to friends that they hope that the Indian Removal Act passes. I will tell you to leave. Other white men will make nice promises, but those promises are lies."

Do not misunderstand me. I am not nostalgic for the days of George Bush simply because he was an honest world conqueror. But as Andrew Jackson warned the Choctaw, we must carefully watch those who would promise hope and change while delivering the same message of war.

Taking an Economic 'Wrong Turn' continued

quences of bank liberalization.

Then, in the early 1980s, many of the barriers between banks, savings and loan (S&L) banks, and other financial institutions were removed. Of course, it was just a couple of years after the savings and loans were permitted to engage in commercial and investment banking activities that massive abuse, fraud and incompetence caused the so-called "S&L crisis." Cleaning up the failed S&Ls cost the American taxpayer about \$200 billion in 1980s dollars. But during the Reagan era there was no talk of re-regulating anything. If anything, the mess was blamed on previous government regulations, and more deregulation was needed!

Under the watch of Chair Alan Greenspan in the late 1980s, the Federal Reserve Bank unilaterally decided to further undermine the Glass-Steagall Act by permitting banks to engage in non-banking activities such as investment banking. This was justified by alleged concerns that U.S. financial firms would be unable to compete in the global financial industry if they were stifled by 1930s regulations. Again, there was little public outcry. Most Americans were content to believe the frequent claims that our sophisticated and globally competitive financial industry was our greatest economic asset.

Finally, by spending some \$300 million in lobbying and campaign contributions, the financial industry pushed Congress to overturn Glass-Steagall altogether in 1999. This new legislation was passed with the active help of the Clinton Administration and its Secretaries of the Treasury, Robert Rubin and Larry Summers. The latter now serves as Obama's director of the National Economic Council. Again, there was little public reaction. As a result, financial firms can today do pretty much anything they want to do.

We all know what they say about people who forget the lessons of history. According to the script, we again find ourselves with a financial crisis and in a very serious global recession—one that could

still become another real depression.

Oh, But Today Things Are Different

Yes, some things are different today. But the differences may lengthen the economic fall. One thing that is different today, compared to 1929, is that the government and most economists have learned

How do we end the dominance of the financial industry?

The best way to get there is the nationalization of the current bankrupt industry, followed by its reorganization into smaller, better-defined parts of the financial sector.

something about macroeconomic policy. Even the George W. Bush administration quickly enacted a real fiscal stimulus package at the first signs of recession, and it did not wait years, as the Hoover administration did, to increase aggregate demand by increasing government expenditures financed by borrowing the savings that otherwise would not be spent. The White House is now actively pushing other countries to do the same, and most have. For example, China has increased government spending by an even greater percentage of its GDP than the U.S. has. Hence, we may avoid a world depression as deep as we experienced in the 1930s.

But, from a long-run perspective, the partially successful fiscal stimulus (at best, fiscal stimuli can only soften the fall) may actually make it more difficult to achieve a sustainable global economy. Perversely, the general level of public apathy means that as long as things do not get much worse, there won't be any political pressure to bring about real economic change. There won't be enough unemployed people to demand a reversal in the weakening of the social safety net, to improve healthcare or to improve education. Nor will people feel the need to substantially change their

lifestyles, save more and stop wasteful consumption. If people's savings are not totally wiped out, as they were in the Depression, there will be little pressure for new laws to re-regulate how much risk the financial industry takes with our money. And there will be less pressure to reestablish a more just and progressive tax system to fund Social Security, fund univer-

promised.

The Financial Industry Is More Politically Entrenched Today

The most ominous difference between today and the 1930s is the growing political clout of the financial industry. Note how it has been able to continue fleecing the taxpayer even after it was found to have been found fleecing sub-prime borrowers, credit card users, retirees and just about everyone. Some angry writers and citizens point to the financial industry's excessive 'greed' and 'arrogance.' But such words only serve to deflect attention away from the true cause of the financial sector's behavior: over the past 50 years it has amassed enough political power to effectively dictate economic and financial policy throughout the world.

Here in the U.S., despite a change in administrations and control of both houses of Congress by the president's party, economic and financial policies are being set by people who were recently bankers themselves. The foxes are still running the henhouse.

Paulson, Summers, Geithner and other high-ranking government economic advisors are all from the financial industry. Geithner worked for Robert Rubin at

conclusion on next page

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Chair, Native Caucus, Democratic National Committee

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the Treasury Department, who had the left the helm of Goldman Sachs to become Clinton's Treasury Secretary, before passing the position over to Larry Summers in 1999. During the past decade, as head of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, Geithner technically oversaw and audited Citibank—the world's largest bank—which was headed by, you guessed it, Robert Rubin. This is the type of "crony capitalism" for which we criticize developing countries. It should not come as a surprise that President Obama actively resisted calls by several European leaders for increasing international regulation of financial firms during the recent G20 meeting in London, pushing instead for all countries to expand fiscal measures like increased government expenditures. The IMF/World Bank meeting in late April, where the U.S. was represented by Treasury Secretary Geithner and National Economic Council director Summers (Obama's chief economic advisor), failed to resolve the regulation/fiscal dispute.

The American public has not yet realized that the financial industry is not on their side. It seems to be more than willing to side with Obama against those 'socialistic' European governments seeking more regulation. Calls for the nationalization and reorganization of banks—a tactic used by every capitalist government, including ours, to deal with failures of small banks—is labeled as socialistic and, therefore, not an option. We are now also seeing active bank lobbying against letting judges alter the terms of mortgages in order to avoid home foreclosures. "Poor borrowers' own fault," chime in the conservative pundits.

Meanwhile, regulators have encouraged the largest banks to become even larger by letting them acquire other failed banks. And so the concentration of the financial industry grows even denser. And because the government assistance comes without any strings attached, we now see the bailed-out firms using bailout funds to fund more PR, lobbying and congressional campaign contributions, making it unlikely the financial industry will ever be constrained by the government. You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours is the political order of the day.

How Do We End the Dominance of the Financial Industry?

If we are to achieve the good outcome suggested in my last article, it is absolutely mandatory that the financial industry be reduced to carrying out basic functions such as 1) providing a safe place for savers to store their accumulated wealth, 2) channeling those savings to investment and R&D projects in an objective and efficient manner, and 3) providing certain insurance services. More important, we need the financial industry to change how it handles the economy's savings. We need the financial industry to channel increased savings to the new 'green' and social programs that underlie a more fair, just, and livable economy.

The best way to get there is the nationalization of the current bankrupt industry, followed by its reorganization into smaller, better-defined parts of the financial industry. Most of the industry can eventually be resold to private investors, with the government hopefully getting back most of the money paid to restore the individual banks and financial firms to solvency. Unfortunately, we may have already missed the opportunity of using the industry's financial plight to carry out a nationalization and reorganization.

The generous bailout money thrown at the private mega-firms with few strings attached has now improved the financial firms' situation to where they can generate seemingly positive results, and nationalization seems to not be necessary any longer. And equally expensive fiscal stimulus plans have prevented the massive economic contraction that could mobilize the public to demand real change. The government's commitments of hundreds of billions—even trillions—of dollars to "turn the economy around" and more to 'save the financial industry that is critical to our economy' almost guarantee that nationalization and reorganization will not be forthcoming. The banks and the obscene incomes of the bankers will survive for a while longer, and real change seems to have been pre-empted.

Where is the public opposition to this scheme to make the public pay to save the very financial institutions that are standing in the way of creating a more just and sustainable world?

Carlton B. Paine, Ph.D. • Clinical Psychologist

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What's HOT, conclusion

never catch on. With all its hooks and eyes, 'Cap and Trade' will allow a lot of funny business. At least we would get a few Wall Street millionaires back in business—via speculation and gaming the Cap and Trade system (funded by John Q. Public, of course)."

Hansen said he had read on politico.com that the number of lobbyists in Washington, D.C. working to influence federal policy on climate change increased

in the past few years by 300 percent to 2,340 lobbyists: four climate lobbyists for every member of Congress. "At least the alligator shoe business is doing well. Not too good for alligators, though," he said.

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).

Karen Jantzen, conclusion

out about the program. A willing coordinator would organize a base of partners and encourage involvement. Through activities and mutual learning opportunities, such as scrapbooking, gardening, cooking and other workshops, friendship would evolve and mothers could find higher self-esteem and find new ways to relate to their children and spouses without fomenting violence. This project would require organization and a strong commitment by all individuals involved. Without local support and donors, funding could become another obstacle. A need exists in every community for this type of ministry, and because of its flexibility and informal nature, it could be structured according to the needs of each location and with as many or few participants as interested; this would make it a fairly simple and feasible enterprise.

Many students are not involved in extra-curricular activities, and therefore have few constructive alternatives to violent video games, unhealthy activities or poor environments, which breed violent behavior. Maybe dues are too expensive, the focus of the organization isn't interesting or they are not friends with the people involved. These students need to belong to something. Schools should offer a 'club' to everyone, regardless of skills, interests or backgrounds, to provide a support network of friends and a source of entertainment to such students. This 'peace club' could take as much involve-

ment as one is willing to give, and perhaps organize fun activities and local service projects to foster goodwill and a hunger for justice in participants.

Interested students would have to form a leadership team, find an adult sponsor and publicize to the student body. The leaders would need to be aware of community service opportunities, organize inspiring guest presentations and be open to suggestions from all the members involved. They would promote communication among members so everyone would feel included. Students could see firsthand the benefits of compassion and altruism. Potential challenges include lack of time, enthusiasm and suitable service projects for the weather or number of participants needed. Because this would be a simple, low-budget, student-run organization, it is the most realistic practice to help curb school violence.

School violence, often with a root in domestic trouble, is a prevalent and rising problem today. Three possible preventative measures include emphasizing peace education and ousting military recruitment in schools; providing support for mothers to boost the quality of home life; and offering students a peace club at school to spend their time in a positive and charitable manner. With organization and dedication, every community can do their part to bring this to fruition.

Your Foundation Speaks

by Loyal Park, President of the Nebraska Peace Foundation

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“Merle Hansen is dead and buried.” Hard words.

I last saw Merle at a recent Nebraskans for Peace Annual Conference as he struggled down the hall to the dining room with his lifelong friend, Dutch Hoppe. As we shook hands, he said—his voice rough with age, “Thank you for what you do.” He was in his mid-80s, afflicted with Parkinsonianism, feeble, but his still purposeful eyes spoke volumes. Merle wanted me to be up and doing.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* published an article about Merle’s death—all about the AAM, the NFO, the tractorcade and the Farmer’s Union. Not one word of Merle’s quest for peace and justice.

When we celebrated 40 years of NFP, we recalled ACT I, scene 2, of the play of its beginning: Arlo and Merle with Tom Rehorn, the preacher fired for opposing the war in Vietnam, gathered around Tom’s kitchen table. A fired preacher and two farmers about to change the world. But as Margaret Mead said about little purpose-filled groups, they can.

Merle’s first talk to me at UNL, to students, to anyone who would listen, concerned the fate of Vietnam’s landmined farmers and of the poor in our country. He told of our agreements at Geneva. He told how, for his opinions, he had been threatened with the poison-

ing of his beloved Charolais cattle, a breed relatively new to Nebraska but almost as old as Charlemagne in France.

Merle rode horseback in Omaha’s African American community to celebrate Ernie Chambers and his commitment to civil rights. He brought along a pony for the kids to ride, and even earlier in the ’50s worked with Des Moines civil rights leader, Edna Griffin, to integrate the Katz Drugstore in Des Moines. He pushed NFP to support divestment-from-South Africa legislation in the Nebraska Legislature and retrocession for the Winnebago so they could enforce their own law. The most moving remarks at his funeral came from Frank LaMere, a Winnebago man who had known and loved Merle. He had received \$5.00 from Merle as a beginning down payment on his daughter’s education, a daughter now well into her successful advanced education. Frank, because of Merle’s encouragement, has become the senior Native American spokesperson on the Democratic National Committee.

We often put signs on the doors of the temple of peacemaking. “Enter here, ye students, college professors, yuppies, members of the ‘smart set.’” Merle could not enter such a temple. He believed simply that where justice and peace prevail, family farms exist, farmers are free, and food can abound sufficiently so that ev-

eryone can be fed. Last year I found one of Merle’s first essays for NFP, not a defense of farmers, but of the failure of federal welfare programs to provide good nutrition to mothers and children.

Former NFP staffer Suzy Prenger remembers Merle’s concern for feeding the hungry in Central America during the Contra War period, for protecting the rights of those peasants to grow good food and keep it home to feed hungry people.

The Hansen family had always worked for change going back to their involvement in the 1930s “Farmers Holiday” movement and the ‘penny auctions’ they organized to protect farmers facing foreclosure. During the 1980s, Merle organized and headed the North American Farm Alliance and its “Farms not Arms” efforts, organized and served on the Executive Committee of the National Family Farm Coalition and Jessie Jackson’s presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988. Merle knew that if we want lasting peace, we must work for economic and social justice for everyone, people of all ethnic and social backgrounds, including family farmers around the world.

Merle called early and often for Nixon’s impeachment—not for Watergate, but for fighting an undeclared war. He supported “Women in Farm Economics” (WIFE) long before farm women were supposed to protest. He ran for Nebraska Uni-

versity regent on a program of proper medical care for rural areas long before rural medicine issues prevailed. His almost winning effort made a difference in how the University of Nebraska’s Med School acted toward rural folks.

Amid all of this, Merle ran a successful farm, often farming with his family far into the night. When Ronald Reagan came to Omaha, he pulled a manure spreader through the streets to say what he thought of Reagan’s philosophy. When people were saying that country music folk and jazz people could never work together, he rode horses in North Omaha. Jim Hoppe, Dutch’s son, remembers when he and the Hansen kids went together on peace trips, how good Merle was to the kids and how smartly he wore a suit while bearing witness to the ‘real American way’ of democracy and equality.

The dead bear witness. In this case the witness is that all of us can change things—all of us, whatever our vocation, can make justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. Though the *Journal Star* failed to mention Merle’s peace and justice work, his funeral did and his family designated the Nebraska Peace Foundation as one recipient of memorials for him. Merle’s temple of peace had doors open for all human beings.

Remembering Merle Hansen

by Paul Olson, NFP President