

PEACEWAYS

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The Newsletter of the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice
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CKCPJ Annual Peace Fair & Dinner Sunday, February 18, 5:00 PM

Daisy Machado, Dean of Lexington Theological Seminary, is the featured speaker

Make your plans now to attend CKCPJ's Annual Peace Fair & Dinner, Sunday, February 18, 5:00 PM, at Second Presbyterian Church, 460 E. Main Street. Suggested parking is behind Goodwin Square off Ransom Ave.

This is the traditional get together of the peace and justice community of this area, to socialize, inform one another, and rejuvenate ourselves for our continued work ahead.

As usual, we begin the the Peace Fair, a great opportunity for you to peruse information tables and converse with representatives from many of the good cause organizations in this area.

TO ORGANIZATIONS: To participate in the Fair, contact Richard Mitchell, (859) 327-6277, or by email to richard.mitchell@insightbb.com.

Setup for organizations is at 4:00 PM. If at all possible, bring your own table.

FOR RESERVATIONS FOR THE DINNER: Call Richard Mitchell at (859) 327-6277 (that's a local Lexington cell phone). In Madison County, you may call Maryann Ghosal at (859) 626-7495.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9.

Again, the food will be vegetarian fare, prepared by the café of Good Foods Co-op.

DINNER ADMISSION is \$10. For children ages 10 and under, admission is \$5.

THE SPEAKER: Daisy Machado, is Dean of the Lexington Theological Seminary.

The title of her talk will be **"The Prophetic Call to a Healthy Society and Our Response to Immigration."**

The prophet's vision for a healthy community that was able to live as God's partner in building a new society that can offer peace and justice is put to the test when the people are called to welcome those who are "other" and "outsiders." Machado will explore the following questions: What does a healthy community look like using the prophet's lens? What are its core characteristics? And finally, how can we help to make our communities reflect the core values of justice, loyalty, and compassion?

Rev. Daisy L. Machado

Currently Dr. Machado, born in Cuba, is Dean at Lexington Theological Seminary (KY). She holds a B.A., Brooklyn College, an M.S.W., Hunter College School of Social Work, an M.Div., Union Theological Seminary, New York, and a Ph.D., University of Chicago. She was the first Latina ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1981. Her publications include: *"Voces De Nepantla: Las Teologías Latinas/Hispanas En Los Estados Unidos."* in *Religión y Género*, Sylvia Marcos (ed.), Madrid: Editorial Trotta SA, 2004; *Borders and Margins: Hispanic Disciples in the Southwest, 1888-1942*. New York: Oxford

University Press, 2003; and she is co-editor of *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002.

Dr. Machado, who is a Church Historian, taught at Brite from 1992-96 and from 1999-2005.

She has also been adjunct faculty at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, and in the spring 2003 semester she was the Luce Visiting Professor at Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.

She has also led groups of students and church folk to the US/Texas border to engage in an immersion class experience that seeks to examine the impact of globalization especially on women, border/immigration issues, poverty and health issues along the border, and the morality of immigration.

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The Central Kentucky Council for Peace & Justice

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Submissions of articles or items in the *Calendar* are welcome. Contact the editor, Michael Fogler, at (859) 299-3074 or michael@lexingtonguitartrio.com. Deadline: the first Wednesday of the month.

The views expressed in *Peaceways* are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice.

Local committee active for Project C.U.R.E.

by Suzi Kifer

People in many developing countries live in fear of disease, accidents, violence or malnutrition because of the lack of medical care. Doctors, hospitals, and clinics lack even the most basic medical supplies, equipment, and medicines. Project C.U.R.E. is the registered trademark of the Benevolent Healthcare Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, humanitarian relief organization that collects donated medical supplies and equipment and delivers it to clinics and hospitals that care for impoverished people living in more than 100 countries around the world.

The Lexington committee of Project C.U.R.E. collects medical supplies and equipment at Hunter Presbyterian Church for transfer to the Project C.U.R.E. center in Nashville where it is packed in cargo containers and shipped in response to requests from medical facili-

ties abroad. (See www.projectcure.org for more information.) Donation of supplies are welcomed from hospitals, doctor and dentist offices, surgery centers, stores, and individuals.

Do you have crutches, wheel chairs, pressure casts, braces, or other medical supplies that are no longer needed? Would you like to see them used by someone who needs them? Or do you work at a medical office and have supplies that would normally be discarded? Call Suzi Kifer, Project C.U.R.E. Committee, 277-0816 and a volunteer can arrange to pick up donations.

On Saturday, February 3, a Drive By Day will be held from 10:00-3:00 at Hunter Presbyterian Church, 109 Rosemont Garden. If you bring medical supplies to be donated to the Hunter parking lot, a volunteer will accept them. ■

Chavez uses petro-dollars to help the poor in his country and ours

by Sheldon Alberts

Hugo Chavez coasted to another six-year term as Venezuela's president on the strength of petro-dollars and promises to spread more of his country's oil wealth to the poor.

But as Chavez struggles to alleviate poverty for eight million of his own citizens, the 52-year-old leftist leader is using his oil riches in an unlikely way—by paying the winter heating bills for hundreds of thousands of underprivileged Americans.

Even as Chavez demonized the United States as an evil imperialist empire during campaign events leading to his reelection, Venezuela's state-owned oil company renewed a deal to provide 40 per cent discounts on furnace oil to 400,000 people in 15 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

The act of generosity is dismissed by Chavez's critics as pure propaganda—an attempt to embarrass the Bush administration—and it is drawing mixed reaction among Venezuelans.

"I think he is just giving the money

away," huffs Carmen Herrera, a retiree who lives in a suburb of east Caracas. "There is a lot of poverty in this country that needs to be solved first."

The heating-oil program offered by Venezuelan-owned Citgo is but one element of an incredibly complex, carrot-and-stick relationship Chavez and the U.S. have with each other, one revolving predominantly around the politics and economics of oil.

Chavez won with 61 per cent of the vote.

In Washington, the Bush administration expressed hope the U.S. could improve relations with Venezuela even though Chavez called his victory another "defeat for the devil."

Sean McCormack, the State Department spokesman, said "we hope that we could have a positive constructive relationship" with Chavez in the future.

"There are, of course, well-reported frictions on some issues. From our standpoint, there don't have to be any fric-

(Continued on next page)

Iraq Study Group protects the Saudis

by Greg Palast

They're kidding, right? James Baker III and the seven dwarfs of the "Iraq Study Group" have come up with some simply brilliant recommendations. Not.

Baker's Two Big Ideas are:

1. Stay half the course. Keeping 140,000 troops in Iraq is a disaster getting more disastrous. The Baker Boys' idea: cut the disaster in half — leave 70,000 troops there.

But here's where dumb gets dumber: the Bakerites want to "embed" US forces in Iraqi Army units. Question one, Mr. Baker: What Iraqi Army?

This so-called "army" is a rough confederation of Shia death squads.

We can tell our troops to get "embedded" with them, but the Americans won't get much sleep.

2. "Engage" Iran. This is a good one. How can we get engaged when George Bush hasn't even asked them out for a date? What will induce the shy mullahs of Iran to accept our engagement proposal? Answer: The Bomb.

Let me explain. To get the Iranians to end their subsidizing the Mahdi Army and other Shia cut-throats, the Baker bunch suggest we let the permanent members of the UN Security Council—plus, Germany—decide the issue of Iran's nukes. Attaching Germany is the signal.

These signers of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agree that Iran should be allowed a "peaceful" nuclear power program.

More... Now, I am absolutely wary of neo-con nuts who want to blow Iran to Kingdom-come over its nuclear ambitions. But that doesn't mean we should kid ourselves. Iran has zero need of "peaceful" nuclear-generated electricity. It has the second-largest untapped reserve of natural gas on the planet, a clean, safe, cheap source of power. There's only one reason for a "nuclear" program, and it's not to light Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's bedside lamp.

Here's the problem with Baker's weird combo of embedding our boys with Iraq's scary army while sucking up to the Iranians: it won't work. The mayhem will continue, with Americans in the middle, because the Baker brigade dares not mention two words: "Saudi" and "Arabia."

Saudi Arabia is the elephant in the

room (camel in the tent?) that can't be acknowledged—and the reason Baker is so desperately anxious to sell America on keeping half our soldiers in harm's way.

James III wants to seduce or bully Iran into stopping their funding of the murderous Shia militias. But the Shias only shifted into mass killing mode in response to the murder spree by Sunni "insurgents."

Where do the Sunnis get their money for mayhem? According to a seething memo by the National Security Agency (November 8, 2006), the Saudis control the, "public or private funding provided to the insurgents or death squads." Nice.

Baker wants us to bribe or blackmail Iran into stopping one side in Iraq's uncivil war, the Shia. Yet we close our eyes to the Saudis acting as a piggy bank for the other side, the Sunni berserkers. (The House of Saud follows Wahabi Islam, a harsh, fundamentalist sect of Sunnism.) Why is Baker, ordinarily such a tough guy, so coy with the Saudis?

Baker Botts, the law firm he founded, became a wealthy powerhouse by representing Saudi Arabia (including representing Saudi Arabia against lawsuits from 9/11 families). But don't worry, the Iraq Study Group is balanced by Democrats including Vernon Jordan of the law firm of Akin, Gump which represents ... Saudi royals.

Of course, the connections between Baker, the Bush Family and the Saudis go way beyond a few legal bills. (See, "The Best Little Legal Whorehouse in Texas" from my book *Armed Madhouse*.)

Baker is more than aware that, a few weeks ago, Dick Cheney dropped his Thanksgiving turkey to fly to Riyadh at the demand of the Saudis for a dressing down by King Abdullah. The Saudis have made it clear that they will crank up their payments to warriors in Iraq to protect their Sunni brothers if America pulls out our troops.

King Abdullah's wish is Cheney's command — and Baker's too. The Saudis want 70,000 US troops baby-sitting the Shia killers in Iraq's Army — and so we will stay.

What gives King Abdullah the power to ghost-write the Iraq Study Group recommendations? It's not because the Saudis sell us broccoli.

And therein lies the danger. Behind the fratricidal fracas in Iraq is something

even more dangerous than bullets in Baghdad: a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia to control Iraq's place in OPEC, the oil cartel. What is painted by Baker's Iraq Study Group as an ancient local clash between Shia and Sunni over the Kingdom of God, is, in fact, a remote control proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia over the Kingdom of Oil. ■

Greg Palast is the author of the New York Times bestseller, Armed Madhouse which includes Palast's investigation, conducted for Harper's Magazine, of the secret role of James Baker III and Saudi Arabia in the forming of US plans for Iraq's oil.

Chavez and petro \$ (cont.)

tions," said McCormack, who added the U.S. was awaiting reports from international election observers before passing final judgement on the election.

Chavez had rankled President George W. Bush in August 2005 when he offered to ship emergency fuel supplies to New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

He followed up by personally endorsing a plan by Citgo, the U.S. subsidiary of state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela S.A., to offer the heating oil discounts through a non-profit Massachusetts-based group called Citizen's Energy Corp.

The latest public-relations bonanza from that venture was a splashy press conference last month at the home of 75-year-old widow Matilda Winslow in Dorchester, a hardscrabble neighborhood of Boston.

With Venezuelan officials present, Winslow took delivery of a winter's worth of heating oil.

"No matter the differences we might have, there is always room for cooperation," said Bernardo Alvarez, the Venezuelan ambassador to the U.S.

In a telephone interview Monday, Winslow said she had no qualms about accepting discounted oil from a country whose leader called Bush "Mr. Danger" following Sunday's elections.

"Bush bothers me, not Chavez," said Winslow, who has survived on Social Security since the death of her husband five years ago. "I figure that Bush should wake up and think about the elderly and low-income people out here." ■

United Nations back in the limelight

by Bill Miller

The general public and some UN observers, who erroneously believed the rhetoric about how the UN was not relevant and was precariously hanging on the brink of extinction, may wish to review Mark Twain's famous quote, "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

A major Achilles heel afflicting the UNs credibility, public image, and reputation was the Oil for Food Program (OFFP) scandal and the atrocious behavior of a handful of UN peacekeepers (out of a total of nearly 85,000) who violated their moral and legal authority by exchanging sex-for-food. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker conducted a thorough investigation that basically exonerated UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the staff (except one person who has been accused of corruption, but has not been proven guilty) of any criminal activities or wrongdoing. However, the Volcker Report did criticize Annan's managerial capabilities and the administration of the OFFP, while making specific recommendations to improve future programs.

Regarding peacekeeping abuses, the UN has established a zero tolerance for any peacekeepers violating the stringent ethical and military guidelines that direct peacekeeping missions. After these two embarrassments for the UN, some pundits thought and most UN critics were probably hoping that the international organization would be impotent in dealing with future challenges and fade into oblivion. A quick glance at the UN agenda quashes that doomsday scenario. World leaders, even President Bush, who has frequently questioned the UNs relevancy, and non governmental organizations (NGOs) are encouraging the UN to roll up its sleeves and confront even more aggressively the spiraling panoply of international problems.

These problems range from Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Darfur, Southern Lebanon, tension between Israelis and Palestinians, international peace and security challenges, globalization inequities, and Tsunami relief to controlling health problems and achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty, infant mortality rates, and providing an education for all elementary school children. The UNs agenda is overflowing with major crises and challenges that have the

potential to spin out of control and become even greater disasters. One bright spot is that the UN has had many major accomplishments over the past year or so. For example it:

Implemented a Peacebuilding Commission that will work with a state moving from armed conflict or a failed condition to creating one that is stable, peaceful and productive. The Commission will mobilize the international community to develop strategies after the fighting stops to focus attention on reconstruction, institution-building, and sustainable development. If the Commission had been in place a few years ago, perhaps Timor Leste (East Timor) would not have collapsed back into chaos.

Launched the Democracy Fund, which was first promoted by President Bush in a 2005 UN General Assembly speech, to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies. The Fund will provide electoral assistance to emerging democracies, emphasize the rule of law and democratic governance, and develop a comprehensive framework to combat corruption.

Provided humanitarian assistance to people ravaged by war or nature, such as in Darfur and the Tsunami affected countries of Asia. Even though the Security Council was unable to convince the Sudanese Government to allow a stronger peacekeeping force into Darfur, UN agencies have been quietly and effectively working with victims by providing food, shelter, health and educational services. The UN took a page from the OFFP playbook and improved upon it, when providing assistance to the hundreds of thousands of Tsunami victims, by mobilizing human and financial resources more quickly, by upgrading its managerial and administrative capabilities and by being more accountable and transparent in all of its dealings and purchases.

Saw the UN Security Council pass substantive resolutions to contain Iran's nuclear enhancement program and apply sanctions to encourage the North Koreans to halt nuclear testing and weapons development.

A few of the major shortcomings of the UN this past year have been with:

The widely acclaimed **Human Rights Council**, which replaced the somewhat flawed Human Rights Commission, has been criticized for failing to live up to its

mandate and for allowing a bloc of countries to hijack the agenda and disproportionately criticize Israel, while ignoring other countries that have committed major human rights violations. There is a mechanism to review each Council member's human rights records and to oust those who are egregious human rights violators. The Council has, for the first time, encouraged its members to abide by the highest human rights principles in their own countries.

Not expanding the Security Council to encompass a greater diversity of geographical, financial and demographic representation by bringing in major UN players, such as Japan, India, Brazil and Germany. Although the UN had several successes, and a few failures, one poignant example of the UN's importance occurred with the forceful action of Secretary General Kofi Annan who personally inserted his good offices into dealing with some very delicate issues.

For example, after the Security Council which had been tied up for over a month by US Ambassador John Bolton in order to give the Israelis more time to throttle Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon agreed to a resolution promoting a ceasefire and delineated certain steps to permanently end the conflict, Annan conducted a 10-day whirlwind peacemaking tour. He visited ten Middle Eastern countries to confer with the key players and cement the fragile peace agreement so that it would not crumble.

By meeting with Israelis, Syrians, Iranians and others, Annan was filling the role of an honest broker and catalyst, a role which used to be played by the US. Given the US's dramatic tilt towards Israel and its official policy of not negotiating with enemies, such as Iran and Syria, the US has relegated itself to the sidelines and drastically diminished its influence.

There are dozens of examples as to how the UN has played a critical role in defusing tensions or providing assistance under adverse conditions. Two in particular are the Herculean efforts made by the UN agencies during the violent conflict in Southern Lebanon and the genocide in Darfur to assist the victims.

Many people questioned why the UN was not effectively stopping the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah or inserting more peacekeepers into Darfur. The man-

(Continued on next page)

It's not just Bush, we're accountable too

by Heather Wokusch

Blaming everything on a handful of people at the top, no matter how destructive and abusive they've been, misses a critical point. Systems tend to self-perpetuate. Remove one player and the next comes in to ensure business as usual.

Remove Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, a man who helped prop up Saddam Hussein in the 1980s and skewed intelligence towards war, and who do you get? Robert Gates, a man who helped prop up Saddam Hussein in the 1980s and skewed intelligence towards war.

Replacing those in power won't help if the power structure itself doesn't change. And that means addressing how our own actions maintain this dysfunctional system.

Decades ago, Rumsfeld and Cheney hoodwinked the American people with fearmongering lies about Soviet military capability, setting the country on a militaristic path of paranoia and weapons

build-up. 9/11 let them pull the exact same trick again, with a public more focused on macho vigilantism than on facts and diplomacy.

But the dirty little secret remains: American militarism and its combative foreign policy requires perpetual conflict. After all, tough-talking cowboys and weapons manufacturers have little value in times of peace, so it's in their interest to foment never-ending strife. Maybe that's why top Pentagon strategist Air Force Brig. General Mark O. Schissler recently warned Americans to prepare for a 50-100 year "generational war." The Democrats also seem to be hunkering down for a long-term battle against the designated evildoers du jour; their "Six For '06" goals call for doubling the size of "Special Forces to destroy Osama bin Laden and terrorist networks like al Qaeda." An October 2006 report from the Democratic Leadership Council's Progressive Policy Institute additionally

noted: "America needs a bigger and better military ... Democrats should step forward with a plan to repair the damage, by adding more troops, replenishing depleted stocks of equipment, and reorganizing the force around the new missions of unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, and civil reconstruction."

The wild card in this irrational march towards military domination of the world remains Iran. Bush has already promised Israel protection if it bombs Iran's alleged nuclear facilities. And just this week, Congress voted to double the US stockpiles of military equipment in Israel (turns out that Israel had used much of the US equipment during its war with Lebanon this summer). Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's recent admission that Israel does, in fact, possess nuclear weapons is not expected to impact the billions in US aid that country receives each year either, even though the United States officially bans funding to countries that produce "Weapons of Mass Destruction."

While US involvement in an attack on Iran would invite Armageddon, Bush is already backed into a corner domestically and may feel he doesn't have a whole lot to lose. Leading Democrats (including Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama) have also called for the "military option" to be available against Iran, and would most likely push for troops and weapons to protect Israel from retaliation.

Some consider war with Iran as inevitable, but it isn't: the results of such a war would be catastrophic; and the diplomatic options have not been adequately explored.

More to the point, we must consider how devastating it is to our national security to legitimize the neocon idea of perpetual war. The Pentagon's budget currently runs over \$430 billion per year, not including the roughly \$140 billion spent in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's a total military budget of \$570 billion per year, and yet Democrats are expected to increase the military budget next year. Meanwhile, domestic social programs are being slashed to compensate for this enormously bloated military spending. And despite these exorbitant expenditures, our military has become severely weakened.

The upshot? We, the people, need to retire the tough-talking militaristic cow-

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UN back in limelight (continued)

tra was, Where is the UN?

Answer: The UN was quietly providing a vast array of services to refugees in Lebanon even while the intense fighting was underway, and UN peacekeepers were escorting civilians to safety and out of harms way. In both Lebanon and Darfur UN agencies provided food, shelter, sanitation, and maternal and child health care programs, to name just a few, under extremely dangerous conditions. The UN was on the ground working while the bullets were flying and people were suffering. Ironically, very few media outlets perhaps because of their myopic fixation with the Security Councils wrangling and their herd mentality to cover Hugo Chavez's antics at the UN generally failed to report these activities. (Speaking of Chavez, his undiplomatic attack on President Bush probably cost Venezuela a seat on the UN Security Council. Apparently, diplomats did not want to suffer through two years of unproductive, vitriolic exchanges between Venezuela and the US).

Arguably, the countries of the world have come to the conclusion, more or less, that the UN even with its faults is still the only major international forum that has the expertise and authority to deal with the vast array of thorny, intractable

international problems. One lesson learned by the 192 countries of the UN is that, even if the Security Council is tied up in knots and unable to play a constructive role immediately, UN agencies can still pitch in, in most situations, and deal with either an environmental or humanitarian disaster.

Incoming UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, a highly-respected South Korean diplomat, summed it up during his acceptance speech: "The surge in demand for UN services attests not only to the UN's abiding relevance. The UN is needed now more than ever before."

A recent national opinion poll by the Better World Campaign has confirmed what many other polls have shown over the history of the UN: "78% of Americans believe it is in America's best interest to continue to actively support the United Nations."

Nations, friends and critics alike, are rapidly coming to the same conclusion that the UN is still the only game in town. Perhaps the debate about the UN's relevancy is close to being decided. ■

Bill Miller, former Chair of the United Nations Association of the USA's Council of Chapter and Division Presidents, is currently President of the Frankfurt Chapter, UNA-USA.

Stats on the US global military empire

by Laurence M. Vance

The extent of the U.S. global empire is almost incalculable. The latest "Base Structure Report" of the Department of Defense states that the Department's physical assets consist of "more than 600,000 individual buildings and structures, at more than 6,000 locations, on more than 30 million acres." The exact number of locations is then given as 6,702 divided into large installations (115), medium installations (115), and small installations/locations (6,472). This classification can be deceiving, however, because installations are only classified as small if they have a Plant Replacement Value (PRV) of less than \$800 million.

Although most of these locations are in the continental United States, 96 of them are in U.S. territories around the globe, and 702 of them are in foreign countries. But as Chalmers Johnson has documented, the figure of 702 foreign military installations is too low, for it does not include installations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, and Uzbekistan. Johnson estimates that an honest count would be closer to 1,000.

The number of countries that the United States has a presence in is staggering. According to the U.S. Department of State's list of "Independent States in the World," there are 192 countries in the world, all of which, except Bhutan, Cuba, Iran, and North Korea, have diplomatic relations with the United States. All of these countries except one (Vatican City) are members of the United Nations. According to the Department of Defense publication, "Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country," the United States has troops in 135 countries. Here is the list:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Antigua, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea,

Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

This means that the United States has troops in 70 percent of the world's countries. The average American could probably not locate half of these 135 countries on a map.

To this list could be added regions like the Indian Ocean territory of Diego Garcia, Gibraltar, and the Atlantic Ocean island of St. Helena, all still controlled by Great Britain, but not considered sovereign countries. Greenland is also home to U.S. troops, but is technically part of Denmark. Troops in two other regions, Kosovo and Hong Kong, might also be included here, but the DOD's "Personnel Strengths" document includes U.S. troops in Kosovo under Serbia and U.S. troops in Hong Kong under China.

Possessions of the United States like Guam, Johnston Atoll, Puerto Rico, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Virgin Islands are likewise home to U.S. troops. Guam has over 3,200.

Regular troop strength ranges from a low of 1 in Malawi to a high of 74,796 in Germany. At the time the most recent "Personnel Strengths" was released by the government (September 30, 2003), there were 183,002 troops deployed to Iraq, an unspecified number of which came from U.S. forces in Germany and Italy. The total number of troops deployed abroad as of that date was 252,764, not including U.S. troops in Iraq from the United States. Total mili-

tary personnel on September 30, 2003, was 1,434,377. This means that 17.6 percent of U.S. military forces were deployed on foreign soil, and certainly over 25 percent if U.S. troops in Iraq from the United States were included. But regardless of how many troops we have in each country, having troops in 135 countries is 135 countries too many.

The U. S. global empire: an empire that Alexander the Great, Caesar Augustus, Genghis Khan, Suleiman the Magnificent, Justinian, and King George would be proud of.

Laurence M. Vance is a freelance writer and an adjunct instructor in accounting and economics at Pensacola Junior College in Pensacola, Florida.

Collective accountability (cont.)

boys in both political parties and dump the idea that perpetual war is a given. We have to hound members of the incoming 110th Congress to pursue every possible option for peace in the Middle East. And we must confront the propaganda that teaches us to fear faceless enemies, which legitimizes rollbacks in our own civil liberties. Above all, we must hold ourselves accountable to never again be fooled into an unjust and illegal war of aggression.

Finally, I recommend the following Action Ideas:

1. To learn more about the lies leading to the 2003 invasion of Iraq: — Iraq on the Record (<http://democrats.reform.house.gov/IraqOnTheRecord/>) — Downing Street Memo.com (<http://www.downingstreetmemo.com>) — After Downing Street.org (<http://www.afterdowningstreet.org>)

2. To explore peaceful approaches to foreign policy: — Foreign Policy In Focus (<http://www.fpif.org>) — Global Issues (<http://www.globalissues.org>) — One World (<http://www.oneworld.net>) — Just Foreign Policy (<http://www.justforeignpolicy.org>)

3. To identify the cost of the Iraq War to U.S. taxpayers: — Cost of War (<http://www.costofwar.com>)

Events at a Glance

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Event Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Saturday, February 3 10:00 am - 3:00 pm	Project C.U.R.E. Drive By , Hunter Presbyterian Church, 109 Rosemont Garden. Bring medical supplies for donation. ●	Suzi Kifer, 277-0816
Sunday, February 18 5:00 pm	CKCPJ Annual Peace Fair & Dinner , Second Presbyterian Church, 460 E. Main Street. Daisy Machado is speaker. ●	Kerby Neill, 293-2265
→	<p>THANKS FROM FAIR WORKS!</p> <p>Our heartfelt thanks goes to so many who made our seasonal fair trade shop, Fair Works, a great success! Special thanks to Berea's PeaceCraft shop for their technical assistance and marketing consultation; Victorian Square management, staff, and merchants; Farmer's Market vendors (also Fair Traders) for their graciousness; the dedicated volunteers; the customers; and most of all to Billie Mallory, whose hard work and dedication made it all possible. If you'd like to see this happen more in Lexington, contact Billie at 272-5468.</p>	←
1st Wed. of the month, 7:30 pm	CKCPJ Board Meeting , Friends Meeting House, 649 Price Avenue. All welcome.	Kerby Neill, 293-2265
Every Sunday 6:00 pm	Sustainable Communities Network , Third Street Stuff, on North Limestone near the corner of Third Street. www.SustainLex.org	Jim Embry, 312-7024
1st Wed. of the month, 4:00 - 7:00 pm	Franciscan Peace Center , 3389 Squire Oak.	Pat Griffin 230-1986
Meets irregularly. New meeting schedule TBA.	Faith Lunch & Politics , Fellowship Hall, Lexington Theological Seminary; sponsor: Clergy and Laity Network.	Lisa Davison, 252-0361
Every Thursday, 5:30 - 6:00 pm	Interfaith Prayer Vigil for Peace , Triangle Park in downtown Lexington.	
2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 - 8:30 pm	Humanist Forum of Central Kentucky (AHA) , Unitarian Univerisalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Rd.	Dick Renfro, 255-7029
3rd Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm	Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) , Episcopal Diocese Mission House, corner of 4th St. and Martin Luther King.	Janet Tucker, 389-8575
New meeting schedule TBA soon.	Lexington Living Wage Campaign , Community Action Council, Georgetown St., Lexington.	
4th Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm	Bluegrass Fairness Steering Committee , Price Center, 389 Waller Avenue	806-4114 info@bluegrassfairness.org
4th Thursday of the month, 7:30 pm	Central Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty , Central Library, downtown.	Will Warner, 278-9232
1st Monday of the month, 12:00 noon - 1:30 pm	Kentucky Migrant Network , Cooperative Extention Building, 1141 Red Mile Place.	Andrea Tapia, 268-3353

● *Denotes article in this issue containing more information.*



"Practice nonviolence not because of weakness. Practice nonviolence being conscious of strength and power; no training in arms is required for realization of strength." —Mohandas K. Gandhi

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Bits and Peaces

US slips to 53rd in Press Freedom Index

New countries have moved ahead of some Western democracies in the fifth annual Reporters Without Borders Worldwide Press Freedom Index while the most repressive countries are still the same ones.

"Unfortunately nothing has changed in the countries that are the worst predators of press freedom," the organization said, "and journalists in North Korea, Eritrea, Turkmenistan, Cuba, Burma, and China are still risking their life or imprisonment for trying to keep us informed. These situations are extremely serious and it is urgent that leaders of these countries accept criticism and stop routinely cracking down on the media so harshly.

"Each year new countries in less-developed parts of the world move up the Index to positions above some European countries or the United States. This is good news and shows once again that, even though very poor, countries can be very observant of freedom of expression. Meanwhile the steady erosion of press freedom in the United States, France, and Japan is extremely alarming," Reporters Without Borders said.

The three worst violators of free expression—North Korea, bottom of the Index at 168th place, Turkmenistan (167th) and Eritrea (166th)—have clamped down further. The torture death of Turkmenistan journalist Ogulsapar Muradova shows that the country's leader, "President-for-Life" Separmurad Nyazov, is willing to use

extreme violence against those who dare to criticize him. Reporters Without Borders is also extremely concerned about a number of Eritrean journalists who have been imprisoned in secret for more than five years. The all-powerful North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il, also continues to totally control the media.

Northern European countries once again come top of the Index, with no recorded censorship, threats, intimidation or physical reprisals in Finland, Ireland, Iceland and the Netherlands, which all share first place. Those countries are followed by the Czech Republic, Estonia, Norway, Slovakia, and Switzerland.

The United States (53rd) has fallen nine places since last year, after being in 17th position in the first year of the Index, in 2002. Relations between the media and the Bush administration sharply deteriorated after the president used the pretext of "national security" to regard as suspicious any journalist who questioned his "war on terrorism." The zeal of federal courts which, unlike those in 33 US states, refuse to recognize the media's right not to reveal its sources, even threatens journalists whose investigations have no connection at all with terrorism.

NOW calls for new 9/11 independent investigation

WHEREAS, events of September 11, 2001 (9/11) have been the rationale for the war on terror, the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, the Patriot Act and numerous other attacks on civil liberties, the use of torture, vast increases in military spending and the concentration of powers

in the executive branch; and,

WHEREAS, 9/11 has been used by the Bush Administration to justify huge federal budget cuts that cripple social services to women and children such as child care, abuse protection, health care and education; and

WHEREAS, 9/11 has been used by the Bush Administration to undermine civil liberties granted in the First and Fourth amendments of the Constitution with measures such as the Patriot Acts; and

WHEREAS, the Bush Administration refused to have an investigation of 9/11 until public pressure forced him in 2003 to appoint a national commission;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) call for a new and truly independent 9/11 investigation that addresses the unanswered 9/11 questions.

"Living out a witness to peace has to do with everyday choices about the work we do, the relationships we build, what part we take in politics, what we buy, how we raise our children. It is a matter of fostering relationships and structures—from personal to international—which are strong and healthy enough to contain conflict when it arises and allow its creative resolution."
—Mary Lou Leavitt