CHAPTER 3

Censored Déjà Vu WHAT HAPPENED TO LAST YEAR’S MOST CENSORED STORIES

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INTRODUCTION

Déjà Vu: East Timor

BY CARL JENSEN

The world applauded on May 20 as tens of thousands of celebrating East Timorese crowded onto a racetrack in their nation’s capital to witness the official birth of the Democratic Republic of East Timor as an independent sovereign state.

When United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan handed power to the country’s new president, Jose Alexandre Gusmao, it formally ended four centuries of Portuguese colonial rule, 24 years of oppressive Indonesian occupation, and two years of interim rule by the United Nations.

After taking the oath of office, Gusmao told the crowd, “Today we are a people standing on equal footing with all other peoples of the world. Today we rejoice as an independent nation, governing our own destiny.”

Representatives of more than 90 nations including former
President Bill Clinton, Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio, and Australian Prime Minister John Howard, were there to witness the birth of the world’s 192nd nation, the first of the new millennium.

Shortly before a peacekeeper lowered the blue U.N. flag and the new flag of East Timor was raised, Kofi Annan told the cheering crowd, “I salute you, people of East Timor, for the courage and perseverance you have shown. That a small nation is able to inspire the world and be the focus of our attention is the highest tribute that I can pay.”

Plaudits aside, it was not that easy for East Timor to capture the attention of the world.

In 1979, more than 20 years earlier, East Timor was the number seven *Censored* story of the year, according to Project Censored. The Project revealed that up to 100,000 East Timorese men, women, and children had been slaughtered since Indonesian military forces invaded the tiny territory in 1975 with the support of the United States.

In 1985, Project Censored reported that after 10 years of genocide in East Timor, the world’s press did still not cover the tragedy. It was the number three *Censored* story of the year. By then, Amnesty International reported that up to 200,000 East Timorese, a third of the population, had died as a result of Indonesian aggression.

While America’s mainstream media recently reported the hard-won independence of East Timor, they neglected to acknowledge the covert involvement of the United States in the region. The United States provided Indonesia with armaments, military training, and political support for its aggression against East Timor. The U.S. officially suspended its military assistance program to Indonesia in 1992, allegedly because of the world attention being paid to the East Timor holocaust.

Critics, responding to questions of why the media had failed to report America’s support of Indonesian aggression against East

Extract from *Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action*
Timor, attributed the press silence to government and corporate interests. They pointed out that the world’s leading oil conglomerates were vitally interested in the oil and gas reserves under the Timor Sea. A petroleum industry trade magazine, *Offshore*, reported in May 1996 that companies poised to exploit oil reserves off Indonesia and East Timor included Exxon, Conoco, Chevron, Texaco, Maxus Energy, Marathon, Arco, and Unocal.

A classic example of the cozy relationship between U.S. corporate and political interests and the repressive regime in Indonesia is found in the case of Freeport-McMoRan, one of the world’s largest producers of copper and gold.

Freeport-McMoRan is a New Orleans-based company that runs the world’s biggest gold mine in the Indonesian rainforest. In 1998, it had access to about 2.8 million acres. When Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975, it was with the approval of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Gerald Ford. The approval given to Indonesia’s General Suharto by Kissinger and Ford came to be known as “the big wink.” In 1995, Kissinger was appointed to the board of directors of Freeport-McMoRan. His firm, Kissinger Associates also is a lobbyist and consultant to Freeport-McMoRan.

In retrospect, we wonder if East Timor would have celebrated its independence on May 20, 2002, if it had not been for the international support given the courageous East Timorese people by individuals like political analyst Noam Chomsky, who wrote the original 1979 source story, “East Timor: The Press Cover-up”; groups like the East Timor Action Network and Amnesty International that wouldn’t let the world forget about East Timor; and media watchdog organizations like Project Censored that challenged the press with failing to cover the East Timor issue.

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Project Censored.

Here are updates on the most Censored stories from Censored 2001 and other past featured stories.

2001 #1 CENSORED STORY

WORLD BANK AND MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS SEEK TO PRIVATIZE WATER

Our finite sources of fresh water (less than one-half of 1 percent of the world’s total water stock) are being diverted, depleted, and polluted. If current trends persist, by the year 2025, two-thirds of the world’s population will be living in a state of serious water deprivation. Global consumption of water is doubling every 20 years, more than twice the rate of human population growth. According to the United Nations, more than one billion people already lack access to fresh drinking water.

Multinational corporations recognize these trends and are trying to monopolize water supplies around the world. Monsanto, Bechtel, and other global multinationals are seeking control of world water systems and supplies. Monsanto estimates that water will become a multibillion-dollar market in the coming decades.

Governments are signing away their control over domestic water supplies by participating in trade treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and in institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). These agreements give transnational corporations the unprecedented right to the water of signatory companies.

Grassroots resistance to the privatization of water emerges as companies expand profit-taking. Bechtel was contracted to manage the water system in Cochabamba, Bolivia, after the World Bank required Bolivia to privatize. When Bechtel pushed up the price of water, the entire city went on a general strike. The military killed a seventeen-year-old boy and arrested the water rights leaders. But

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
after four months of unrest, the Bolivian government forced Bechtel out of Cochambamba.


UPDATE 2002: Is water a right or a commodity? Murray Dobbin, in National Editions, February 8, 2001, says that water, the “most common of elements, the thing of life itself, is rapidly being drawn into the madness and ruin that is corporate globalization.” He believes that who controls it and who will die because they can’t afford it, will be the most divisive issue of this century. Massive public opposition to corporate globalizers prevails, as water is deemed a means of life.

The clash in the Third World community of Cochabamba, Bolivia, instigated a flood of discourse on water rights and the road to privatization. According to Sophie Tremolet, writing for the Manchester Guardian Weekly, “The World Bank places the value of the current water market at more than one trillion dollars” and Fortune argues that “water is the best investment sector of the century.” Fortune estimates the global water market to be a $405 billion-a-year industry. Fresh water supplies are dwindling and less than 1 percent of the earth’s water is drinkable. Currently 95 percent
of the world’s fresh water supply is owned publicly. Corporations see this as a huge profit making opportunity and are acting in concert with global power structures to transfer water rights into private ownership.

The market for water and sanitation services is increasingly global. International conglomerates such as Vivendi and Suez, Lyonnaise des Eaux in France, Thames Water in England, RWE in Germany, and Bechtel and Azurix in the United States are competing for giant contracts to manage and set up provisions for cities’ water services, and to acquire rights to local water supplies. Other corporations are trying to buy bulk quantities of water from nations like Canada or Norway and ship it in tankers or huge floating bags to water-scarce regions.

Author Maude Barlow states that the earth’s water system will only support one more doubling of demand and this is estimated to occur within 30 years. Water in the future will be as lucrative as oil has been in the twentieth century. Worldwide, more than five million people, mostly children, die every year from drinking poor quality water.

U.S. Global Corporation recently signed an agreement with Sitka, Alaska in which 18 billion gallons of glacier water per year will be exported to China. The water will be bottled and labeled by low-paid Chinese workers and then exported to other countries.

Loans from the World Bank to help fund development projects are conditional, requiring municipal governments receiving the loans to privatize their water systems. This worsens conditions, as in Cochabamba in February of 2000, when the World Bank backed water pricing increases to guarantee that Bechtel would earn a 16 percent profit. As water prices tripled, some people in Cochabamba had to pay 20 percent of their income for water. Residents who were not hooked up to the water system had meters put on their private wells and were forced to pay Bechtel for the water that they drew.

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
According to author Jim Schultz, after Bechtel was forced out of Bolivia, the company filed a $25 million lawsuit for lost “potential” profits from the Bolivian government. Bechtel’s suit was filed with the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes, a branch of the World Bank that operates in secrecy. In order to qualify for this legal “arbitration,” Bechtel shifted the registration of its subsidiary corporation IWL (International Water Ltd.) to Holland. In the *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 11, 2001, Lewis Dolinsky writes, “under the terms of a bilateral agreement between Bolivia and the Netherlands, where IWL is incorporated, IWL is entitled to out-of-pocket expenses plus unrealized profits projected over the life of the deal.”

In the U.S., 86 percent of residential water comes from public utilities and 13 percent comes from private companies. Private water companies are expanding their foothold by establishing operations and maintenance contracts for water delivery and wastewater treatment services. In the past few years dozens of cities like Atlanta, Indianapolis, Jersey City, and Gary, Indiana, have signed such long-term contracts.

According to Maude Barlow, pollution and scarcity are the major problems with water availability and control. Allowing the WTO or globalization treaties like the NAFTA to make decisions about our water supplies and how prices are to be set is a dangerous proposition. Pete Gleick from the *Boston Globe* states that privatization of our water systems runs the risk of turning over control of our most precious resource to “corporations without financial interest in protecting the long-term interests of our local communities or natural ecosystems.”

The expanding privatization of water has spurred a growing number of activists, and organizations to respond to the actions of large multinational corporations. Perhaps most notable among these activists is Oscar Olivera, the trade union leader and organizer who played a large role in the ousting of Bechtel and its consortium from Cochabamba. In October of 2001, Olivera was in Washington, DC, to
receive the Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award for his actions in Cochabamba and his history of labor organizing in Bolivia. Marcela Olivera, Oscar’s sister, made a trip to San Francisco last year to speak on water rights as a spokesperson for the Coordinating Committee for the Defense of Water and Life. Commonly referred to as La Coordinadora, this group consists of the workers, peasants, environmentalists, and human rights groups that took control over the water system in Bolivia when Bechtel was forced out. In an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle* in February of 2001, Olivera claims, “The [Bolivian] government has taken many actions against many people since April—raided houses, wiretapped phones. Death threats, most recently in October. Harassment is continual.”

According to a report by Savannah Blackwell in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, November 7, 2001, Bechtel was denied access to San Francisco’s water system. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a plan on November 5, 2001, that would end Bechtel’s contract with the Public Utilities Commission, which had been leaning toward privatizing the city’s water system. Bechtel was working with several other private companies to form the San Francisco Water Alliance. The International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Local 21, protested this action when it was discovered that out of the nearly $8 million that the city had paid to the Alliance, “nearly $5 million went for work that was unnecessary, that duplicated work already performed by city staffers, or that wasn’t specialized enough to require the use of a highly paid outside consultant.”

Throughout the world, proposals to privatize water systems or let bulk water enter international trade are running into increasing opposition. When water rates doubled and water quality dropped earlier this year in Tucuman, Argentina, the government terminated a 1995 contract with a private concern. The Canadian government has been prompted to pass laws prohibiting the bulk export of its water from Canada. The 1980s privatization of Britain’s water system has been heavily modified to allow for stronger government oversight and regulation.
Two-thirds of the world live in areas that are experiencing water “stress,” with some 1.4 billion people lacking access to safe water and sanitation. Countries where the crisis is greatest lack not only the water, but the funds needed for building the necessary infrastructure to deliver safe water. Water is generally safe and plentiful in rich countries, but those in developing countries use public taps or water from vendors. The poor pay much more per liter than the rich pay for their piped water. Private vendors or tanker trucks bring water into the slums at great cost to the buyers. In Haiti, Indonesia, and Peru, some of the world’s poorest people are buying water of dubious quality from private vendors for as much as 50 or even 100 times what wealthier residents connected to municipal systems pay.


2001 # 2 CENSORED STORY

OSHA FAILS TO PROTECT U.S. WORKERS

United States labor laws are poorly enforced and fail to meet the basic human rights of U.S. workers. Each year, about 6,000 workers die on the job from accidents and another 50,000 to 70,000 workers die annually from “occupationally acquired diseases.” The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is not
capable of effectively overseeing U.S. workplaces.

The entire federal and state worker health and safety apparatus involves just 2,300 inspectors, who must cover America’s 102 million workers in 6.7 million workplaces. That comes to one inspector for every 44,348 workers. Theoretically, it would take OSHA 110 years to inspect each workplace under its jurisdiction just once.

Titan International, an Illinois-based company, had been under fire at its plant and at other subsidiary locations. Despite a lengthy recent record of safety violations and injuries—including two deaths—Titan’s Des Moines plant has stymied five attempts by Iowa OSHA to inspect some 23 complaints lodged by workers. Titan Tire refused entry to OSHA even with an inspection warrant—a violation of law and a direct assault on the integrity of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Titan was held responsible by the Polk County District Court in Des Moines and was fined Iowa’s maximum civil-contempt penalty of just $500.

Titan workers are being maimed across the country. Workers say it is usually the result of decrepit machines, minimal training, and punishing hours. Since May 1999, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) has been challenging Titan with a slew of unfair labor practice charges. These include, but are not limited to, illegally moving jobs and equipment to avoid a union contract, refusing to bargain in good faith, discriminating against union members, and trying to permanently replace striking workers. Union officials say that fines are too low and that companies, even in worker death cases, are only getting slapped on the wrist.

Titan often develops close relationships with job-starved cities. In 1997, Brownsville, Texas, gave Titan $6.5 million in free land, site improvements, and utility and wage subsidies. The state of Texas added $448,000 for job training for 168 workers. Titan received similar subsidies from the state of Virginia to the tune of $500,000.


Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
UPDATE 2002: Titan International Corporation continues to be embroiled in labor and workplace safety issues. *Censored 2001* noted that in November 1999, a heptane chemical spill at Titan Tire’s Des Moines, Iowa, plant resulted in a chemical explosion that killed truck driver Douglas Oswald. In March 2000, PR Newswire picked up a news release from the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). The Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Bureau (IOSH) had proposed to fine Titan Tire Corp. $150,000 for a number of “willful” and “serious” violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, including Oswald’s death.

Coverage of workplace safety issues and OSHA has been significant since last year’s book release. In April 2000, the *Boston Globe* reported that workplace deaths were up in Massachusetts from 1998 to 1999. The *Globe* also noted that OSHA only employs 45 inspectors for its 166,986 workplaces in the state.

The *Los Angeles Times*, on August 18, 2000, documented California’s dot com building boom and the fact that construction sites are killing more people than any other industry. According to the article, between 1995 and 2000, 433 people died on construction sites in California. In 1999, there were 747 reported accidents, up nearly 40 percent since 1995. “Let’s face it, this is an industry that hasn’t been policed in a long time,” said Vicky Heza, acting deputy chief of enforcement for Cal-OSHA.

Also in August 2000, Associated Press Newswires reported that OSHA added eight inspectors to its South Florida regional office due to a high number of construction-related deaths in the 10-county area.

In August 2001, Knight Ridder’s *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* noted that while workplace deaths decreased nationally in 2000, Texas recorded a 22 percent increase in workplace deaths. The state recorded 572 workers killed in 2000, 33 percent of whom were Hispanic.

Throughout October and November 2001, the *Orange County*
Register (Orange County, California) conducted a series of articles highlighting workplace deaths in the county. The articles also examined the failings of Cal-OSHA with these workplace deaths. The Register notes that 64 workers died countywide from 1998 to 2000. The paper also documents how Cal OSHA investigators have taken several days, even months, to show up at a workplace after a worker’s death. On November 1, the paper reported that state Senator John Burton began urging California to exempt Cal-OSHA from a new governmental hiring freeze. In a letter to Stephen Smith, head of the Department of Industrial Relations, Burton wrote, “While the heavy workload is no excuse for sloppy practices when lives are at stake, it is recognized that Cal-OSHA has never had the optimal number of investigators.” This series of articles by the Register prompted a legislative committee to question the heads of the California Health and Safety Administration. The Administration was questioned about issues including skipping interviews with witnesses who do not speak English, the low rate of fines issued against companies, and why some inspectors waited 82 days to begin accident probes.

In May 2002, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported that OSHA was trying to reduce construction-related dangers to Hispanic workers. In North Texas, there are about 100 OSHA inspectors for about 500,000 construction workers. About 46 percent of these construction workers are Hispanic. In 1999, 54 percent of OSHA-investigated workplace deaths in Texas were Hispanics.

**SOURCES:** PR Newswire, March 9, 2000; Boston Globe, April 28, 2000; Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2000; Associated Press Newswires, August 19, 2000; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 16, 2001; The Orange County Register, October 20, 2001; The Orange County Register, November 1, 2001; Orange County Register, November 26, 2001; Fort Worth Star Telegram, May 29, 2002.

2001 #3 CENSORED STORY
U.S. ARMY’S PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL WORKED AT CNN

From June 1999 to March 2000, CNN employed military specialists in “psychological operations” (Psyops) in their Southeast TV bureau and CNN radio division.

CNN had hosted a total of five interns from U.S. Army Psyops, two in television, two in radio, and one in satellite operations. The military/CNN personnel belonged to the airmobile Fourth Psychological Operations Group stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One of the main tasks of this group of almost 1,200 soldiers and officers is to spread “selected information.” The propaganda group was involved in the Gulf War, the war in Bosnia, and the crisis in Kosovo.

CNN and other media coverage of the war in Kosovo and of other media, has attracted criticism for having been one-sided, overly emotional, oversimplified, and relying too heavily on NATO officials. On the other hand, journalists have complained about the lack of the reliable information from NATO; for almost all of them, it was impossible to be on the battlefield and file first-hand reports. The question remains: Did the military learn from TV people how to hold viewers’ attention? Or did the Psyops people teach CNN how to help the U.S. government garner political support?

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
TV Guide reported in April that Psyops also had team members working at National Public Radio (NPR). This prompted two NPR stories on the program All Things Considered. Jeffrey Dvorkin, NPR’s vice president for news, stated, “We recruited from the army and got three interns, and that was a mistake. And when we discovered that they were from Psyops branch, we finished the arrangement, and it won’t happen again.”


UPDATE 2002: After the furor that resulted from reports that Psyops Interns were working at CNN and NPR in the early part of 2000, the program was discontinued and the interns were sent back to their U.S. Army base in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. With the events of 9-11, however, U.S. Army Psyops agents were once again deployed from Washington, but this time from the Pentagon’s new Office of Strategic Influence (OSI). Their mission was to target foreign media organizations with disinformation campaigns in an effort to convince foreign leaders and citizens to support the U.S. “war on terrorism.”

The difference this time is that certain Pentagon officials leaked the OSI plans to The New York Times. According to one senior Pentagon official, “Everybody understands using information operations to go after non friendlies. When people get uncomfortable is when people
use the same tools and tactics on friendlies.” Once this information became known within the public sphere, Donald Rumsfeld was forced, on February 26, 2002, to close the OSI program. However, considering the eagerly acquiescent nature of the news networks post-9-11, any disinformation campaign on the part of the Pentagon seemed hardly necessary.

**SOURCE:** Joel Bleifuss, “Disinformation Follies,” *In These Times*, April 1, 2002.

2001 #4 CENSORED STORY

**DID THE U.S. DELIBERATELY BOMB THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN BELGRADE?**

Elements within the CIA may have deliberately targeted the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, without NATO approval, because it was serving as a rebroadcast station for the Yugoslav Army.

*The Observer* (London) and Copenhagen’s *Politiken* reported that, according to senior U.S. and European military sources, NATO knew very well where the Chinese embassy was located and listed it as a “strictly prohibited target” at the beginning of the war. *The Observer* stated that the CIA and its British equivalent, M16, had been listening to communications from the Chinese embassy routinely since it moved to its new site in 1996. The Chinese embassy was taken off the prohibited target list after NATO detected it, sending Yugoslavian
army signals to forces in the field. “Nearly everyone involved in NATO air operations (radio) signals command knows that the bombing was deliberate,” said Jens Holsoe of Politiken, lead investigative reporter on the news team reporting on the story.

President Clinton called the bombing a “tragic mistake” and said it was the result of a mix-up. NATO claimed that they were using old maps and got the address wrong. However, Observer reporters quoted a Naples-based flight controller who said the NATO maps that were used during the campaign had correctly identified the Chinese embassy.

A French Ministry of Defense report stated that the flight that targeted the Chinese embassy was not under NATO command, but rather an independent U.S. bombing raid. In July 1999, CIA director George Tenet testified before Congress that of the 900 sites struck by NATO during the bombing campaign, the only one targeted by the CIA was the Chinese embassy.


**UPDATE 2002:** Since 2000, several reports have surfaced indicating that the Chinese embassy bombing on May 7, 1999 was not an accident.

Details of Steven Lee Myers' investigation, reported April 17, 2000 in The New York Times, reveal that the CIA Counter-Proliferation Division (CPD) proposed the embassy target, apparently without being solicited by NATO or the Pentagon. This covert operations unit is responsible for the spread of missiles and nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Using an unclassified 1997 map of Belgrade
provided by the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA), a CPD analyst is claimed to have set up the targeting, misidentifying the Yugoslav Directorate of Supply and Procurement, a military supply facility. The analyst had downloaded a targeting form from a secure Pentagon computer, filled it out, and sent the joint chiefs of staff what “appeared to be a more advanced proposal than it was,” according to Myers. He states that “the reasons are not clear” why the joint chiefs never conducted a thorough review of the target.

The Pentagon blamed the CIA because it is the agency that gave the green light to bomb. Yet logistically the CIA could not have been the sole source of target information. Planning each target involves dozens of military officers in Europe and the U.S. who collect intelligence, calculate the risk of civilian casualties, decide which munitions to use, and mark the Designated Mean Point of Impact (DMPI) where the bomb would do the most damage. Targets are nominated at the Aviano Air Force Base in Italy, verified at NATO headquarters in Belgium, designated on lists sent to the Pentagon for confirmation, and then sent to Washington and other NATO capitals for authorization. The smart bombs are very expensive weapons, indicating that the target was highly valued and there would be ample time taken to study it.

Author Chris Marsden says according to The Observer (London) of November 28. 1999, a U.S. B2-bomber that flew from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri carried out the bombing. It released the “most accurate air-drop munitions in the world—the JDAM flying bomb,” which, says Marsden, is accurate to a range of less than two meters. The JDAM uses “adjustable fins to control its position, which is in turn continually checked and rechecked by fixes from seven satellites.” A senior NATO Air Force officer is quoted as saying “far from not knowing the target was an embassy, they must have been given architect’s drawings.” The bombing was so precise that it demolished the office of the military attaché, killing the three journalists, while leaving the embassy’s northern end untouched, which included the front entrance. An American colonel, responding to criticisms by British, French, and Canadian personnel, said of the supposed
mistake, “Bullshit, that was great targeting…we put two JDAMs down into the attaché’s office and took out the exact room we wanted. They [the Chinese] won’t be using that place for rebro any more, and it will have given that bastard Arkan a headache.”

Zeljko Raznatovic (alias Arkan) headed the Serbian militia known as the White Tigers. They were using the embassy to rebroadcast intelligence information. U.K. Foreign Secretary Cook said that the bombing had been meant for the war room. An unnamed NATO intelligence officer, who monitored Yugoslav radio traffic from Macedonia, told The Observer: “NATO had been hunting the radio transmitters in Belgrade.”

As Mike Head said in his May 10, 1999 article, “Of one thing there is no doubt: the most reckless and aggressive elements are exercising enormous influence over American foreign policy, with incalculable consequences for world affairs.”


2001 #5 CENSORED STORY

**U.S. TAXPAYERS UNDERWRITE GLOBAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT SALES**

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
The U.S. tax-supported Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im) is backing major U.S. nuclear contractors such as Westinghouse, Bechtel, and General Electric in their efforts to seek foreign markets for nuclear reactors. Between 1959 and 1993, Ex-Im spent $7.7 billion to help sell American-made reactors abroad.

Most countries do not have the capital to buy nuclear power, so contractors, in order to be competitive, provide 100 percent of the financing. Ex-Im offers terms too good for Third World countries and Eastern European buyers to pass up. If the host country defaults on its loan, the Ex-Im steps in with American taxpayer dollars.

Westinghouse built the Bataan nuclear power facility in the Philippines in 1985 at a cost of $1.2 billion, 150 percent above their projections. However, the Bataan plant was never brought on line due to the fact it was near an active volcano. Despite the fact that the plant never generated a single kilowatt of energy, the Philippines still pays about $300,000 a day in interest on the Ex-Im loan that funded the project. Should the Philippines default, U.S. taxpayers will pick up the tab.

The Clinton Administration allowed American contractors to sell reactors to China, claiming the nuclear energy market of China is vital to the U.S. nuclear supply industry. Ex-Im has guaranteed a $322 million loan for two Westinghouse nuclear deals in China. This approval comes despite Beijing’s refusal to abide by nonproliferation rules established by the International Atomic Energy Act. The decision to allow the sales was reportedly made over the objections of national security advisor Sandy Berger, who cited Chinese exports of “dual-use” technology to Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. Estimates are that some 70 nuclear power plants will be built in Asia in the next 25 years.


Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
UPDATE 2002: American taxpayers continue to finance the construction of foreign nuclear power plants and the upgrade/renovation costs of several aging nuclear plants.

In July of 2000, Dow Jones International News reported that the U.S. Ex Im Bank would guarantee a $77 million loan for upgrading and modernizing the Kozloduy nuclear power plant in Bulgaria. The loan (provided by Citigroup North America and released to Bulgaria’s National Electricity Co.) will “finance sales of instrumentation and control equipment, radiation monitoring equipment and related goods,” by U.S. company Westinghouse Electric. Ex-Im Bank claims that, “The Kozloduy nuclear safety upgrade will ensure a safe, dependable energy infrastructure for Bulgaria, contributing to the country’s economic growth potential and paving the way for increased trade opportunities between our two countries.” What Ex-Im Bank and Dow Jones fail to note is that the $77 million is in the form of a U.S. taxpayer subsidy for nuclear power plants.

The $77 million release to Bulgaria’s National Electricity Co. is only a portion of the taxpayer subsidized financing for U.S. investment in Southeastern Europe. Overall, throughout 1999 and much of 2000, the Ex Im Bank has provided approximately $500 million in loans and guarantees in support of U.S. exports to this region.

Ex-Im Bank’s original goals were to create U.S. jobs by increasing U.S. exports. However, according to a Congressional Research Service study, “most economists doubt that a nation can improve its welfare over the long run by subsidizing exports.” A Congressional Budget Office study concluded, “little evidence exists that Ex-Im Bank credits create jobs.” A General Accounting Office (GAO) study also found that “U.S. subsidies don’t just level a playing field, they tilt it in favor of U.S. exporters. Ex-Im Bank provides 100 percent unconditional risk protection on most medium and long-term coverage that it issues.” Another GAO study found that Ex Im Bank engages in “dual-use” exports. These are exports that have both military and civilian applications. Between 1995-1997, nine loans given to three countries
(Indonesia, Venezuela, and Brazil) were used to purchase equipment for their militaries that included aircraft, trucks and radio systems.

In October of 2001, the Ex-Im Bank authorized a $178 million loan to engineering company Bechtel to build and put into operation a power plant in Araucaria, Brazil. The plant will receive gas turbines and other equipment from U.S. companies Siemens Westinghouse, Sulzer Bingham Pumps, and ABB Automation Inc. Ex-Im Bank President John Robson says that, “This transaction will support numerous U.S. jobs and help Brazil diversify its energy resources.” Yet if previous occurrences are any indication, this remains to be seen.

**SOURCES:** *Foreign Policy in Focus, July 31, 1999; Dow Jones International News, July 10, 2000; Nucleonics Week, July 13, 2000; U.S. Newswire, July 26, 2000; Business News Americas, October 8, 2001.*

**2001 #6 CENSORED STORY**

**INTERNATIONAL REPORT BLAMES U.S. AND OTHERS FOR GENOCIDE IN RWANDA**

Bill Clinton and his administration allowed the genocide of 500,000 to 800,000 people in Rwanda in 1994.

The Organization for African unity (OAU) set up a panel comprised of two African heads of state, chairwomen of the Swedish Committee for UNICEF, a former chief justice to the Indian Supreme Court, and a former Canadian ambassador to the U.N. The panel was asked to review the 1994 genocide, the actions preceding the massacre, and the world’s response to the killings. The panel concluded that the nations and international bodies that should have attempted to stop the killing chose not to do so. The report condemned the United Nations, Belgium (a former colonial occupier), France (which maintained close relations with Rwanda), and the United States. The report found that after the genocide
began, the Clinton Administration chose not to acknowledge that it was taking place. Killings could have been stopped before they began.

Canadian Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire, commander of the U.N. peacekeeping troops in Rwanda warned that an extermination campaign was coming. In fact, three days before the genocide started, a Hutu leader told several high-ranking U.N. officials that “the only plausible solution for Rwanda would be the elimination of the Tutsi.” While the panel’s report states that, “there were a thousand early warnings that something appalling was about to occur in Rwanda,” the Clinton Administration took every step possible to avoid acknowledging that genocide was taking place.

Dallaire asked for an additional 3 thousand U.N. troops, which would have brought the total to 5,000, a number likely to have been able to prevent the genocide. However, Madeleine Albright played a key role in the Security Council of the U.N. in blocking the troop expansion. In fact Albright is cited by the report as “tossing up roadblocks…at every stage.”


**UPDATE 2002:** The Boston Globe reported on August 30, 2001 that journalist Samantha Power, a seasoned war correspondent now based at Harvard’s Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, spent three years investigating the failure of the U.S. government to take the genocide in Rwanda seriously. Her findings are set out in the September 2001 issue of The Atlantic Monthly. Anyone who takes seriously the great post Auschwitz imperative—“Never Again”—will find them heartbreaking and infuriating.

“The U.S. government,” Power writes, “knew enough about the genocide early on to save lives, but passed up countless opportunities to intervene.”

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
The American response was so minimal that Clinton’s Rwanda “apology”—“we…did not do as much as we could have and should have done to try to limit what occurred,” he said during a trip to Africa in 1998—was actually a wild exaggeration.

“This implied that the United States had done a good deal but not quite enough,” Power says. “In reality the United States…led a successful effort to remove most of the U.N. peacekeepers who were already in Rwanda. It aggressively worked to block the subsequent authorization of U.N. reinforcements. It refused to use its technology to jam radio broadcasts that were a crucial instrument in the coordination and perpetuation of the genocide. And even as, on average, 8,000 Rwandans were being butchered each day, U.S. officials shunned the term ‘genocide’ for fear of being obliged to act. The United States in fact did virtually nothing ‘to try to limit what occurred.’”

*The Atlantic Monthly* report came only days after The National Security Archive released sixteen declassified U.S. government documents detailing how U.S. policymakers chose to be “bystanders” during the genocide that decimated Rwanda in 1994. The documents showed that, contrary to later public statements, the U.S. lobbied the U.N. for a total withdrawal of forces in Rwanda in April of 1994.

INDEPENDENT STUDY POINTS TO DANGERS OF GENETICALLY ALTERED FOODS

In 1998, Arpad Pusztai, a researcher at Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland, performed the first independent non-industry sponsored study analyzing genetically engineered food and its effects on mammals. The study had been undertaken to determine whether or not the spliced genes themselves could be damaging to the mammal ingesting them. However, preliminary data from the study suggests something even more startling. The actual process of genetic alteration itself may cause damage to the mammalian digestive and immune systems.

Pusztai’s study found that rats fed transgenic potatoes (artificially bioengineered to include a gene from another species) showed evidence of organ damage, thickening of the small intestine, and poor brain development. The transgenic potatoes used in the study had been genetically engineered to contain lectin, a sugar-binding protein, to make the plants pest-resistant. The adverse reactions only occurred in the group that was fed the transgenic potatoes. The control group, fed plain potatoes mixed with lectin from the same source, were normal.

In August 1998 Pusztai appeared on the British television program *The World in Action* to report the findings of his study. In an attempt to quell the resulting public furor, Rowett Institute director Philip James (who had approved Pusztai’s TV appearance) said the research didn’t exist. He fired Pusztai, broke up his research team, seized the data, and halted six other similar projects. It came out later that Monsanto, a leading U.S. biotech firm, had given the Rowett Institute a $224,000 grant prior to Pusztai’s interview and subsequent firing.

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action

UPDATE 2002: The unknown dangers of genetically modified food is an issue of which Americans are aware. Corporate media continues to choose not to cast light on the issue.

In a thorough national/international search of news databases, no mention of Pusztai’s research was found in mainstream newspapers in the United States since the article first appeared in last year’s edition of Censored.

International articles about Pusztai tended to focus mainly on his firing from the Rowett Institute, rather than on the implications his research on genetically modified crops had presented. Europeans have been much more concerned than Americans regarding genetically engineered foods. Even Prince Charles urged the removal “Frankenfoods” from shelves in England.

On August 8, 2001, 60 Minutes II did an interview with Pusztai as part of a show featuring a segment about genetically engineered foods. In it, Pusztai’s answer to the question, “Do you think genetically engineered foods have moved into the marketplace too quickly [in the U.S.] ,”was an emphatic, “Far, far, too quickly.”

The segment also pointed out the resistance in Europe and Japan to these types of foods, which often invokes violence among protesting groups. Unfortunately these were small pieces of the entire segment, which promoted an intriguing and positive spin on the matter.

In December 2001, after more than a year of protest by the Northwest Resistance Against Genetic Engineering (NW RAGE), Trader Joe’s finally promised to pull all GE ingredients from their
house brand products. This is a fairly large step in the fight against genetically modified food. NW RAGE plans to step up their battle by going after Safeway. Grassroots organizer Phil Howard, a member of NW RAGE, states, “This is the first mainstream grocery store chain to drop GE ingredients in response to consumer activism, but it won’t be the last.” Yet even their successful Trader Joe’s campaign found little coverage in the in the corporate media.

For now, it seems, the majority of Americans will continue to be blissfully unaware as to why their cornflakes get a little less soggy these days, and why tomatoes aren’t rotting so quickly. Virtually everyone in the U.S. is eating some genetically modified food. The frightening part is we have yet to determine the full extent of the inherent dangers of eating these foods. In response to that concern, Pusztai says, “Well, I think that we don’t know what the consequences are or what the effect will be long-term. It’s like smoking. You smoke a cigarette, you don’t drop dead; but you may develop some real problems in 20, 30, 40 years.”

**SOURCES:** London AFX News, February 12, 1999; The Patriot Ledger, October 19, 1999; Times of India, October 2, 2000; Toronto Star, February 13, 2001; The Portland Alliance, December 2001

2001 #8 CENSORED STORY

**DRUG COMPANIES INFLUENCE DOCTORS AND HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS TO PUSH MEDS**

More than 130 million prescriptions were written in 1999 for depression and mental health related symptoms at a cost of $8.58 billion. Physicians know that antidepressants are only part of the answer for mental health, but marketing by drug companies has created the mythology of pills as cure alls. A 1999 federal research study found that the newer antidepressants were effective in only half of the cases and only outperformed placebos by 18 percent.

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
Drug companies spend $5 billion annually to send sales representatives to doctors’ offices. Sales reps keep FBI-style dossiers on physicians that include information such as the names of family members, golf handicaps, and clothing preferences. Hard sales tactics and small gifts are part of the pitch. In addition, pharmaceutical companies provide perks (such as tickets to sporting events) and outright compensation to doctors for their participation in the prescribing of particular drugs to their mental health patients.

On another front, pharmaceutical companies are reaping big profits by promoting forced drug use through programs at the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). With drug company funding, NAMI promotes a program of in-home forced drug treatment, called the Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). The money is funneled through a suborganization of NAMI called the NAMI Campaign to End Discrimination. Janet Foner, a co-coordinator of Support Coalition International, an activist organization of “psychiatric survivors,” says NAMI does a good job in some areas, but argues that the group’s corporate sponsors help shape its agenda. “They appear to be a completely independent organization, but they parrot the line of the drug companies in saying that drugs are essential [in treating mental health disorders].”

NAMI has a policy of never disclosing its drug company funding. Mother Jones researchers used internal documents to prove that NAMI received $11.72 million from the psychiatric drug industry in just two-and-a-half years. NAMI’s leading donor is Eli Lilly and Company, which is the maker of Prozac.


Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
UPDATE: 2002: Considering the serious health consequences of marketing practices by drug companies, and the funding of forced drug use programs like the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), little coverage about these tactics and programs was seen last year. Brief television coverage was found, and London newspapers and USA Today provided some print coverage.

The Video Monitoring Services of America noted brief coverage on June 12, 2000 on three separate television stations. Good Morning Washington (WJLA), 13 News Daybreak (WVEC), and Tampa Bay News (WFTS) reported that “According to USA Today, federal investigators are warning that patients may be getting talked into and misled into participating in a risky drug trial. Drug companies were found to offer money and other incentives to doctors who enroll patients in studies in an effort to speed up commercial development of drugs.”

In March 2001, The Guardian of London noted that clinical trials remain highly risky. The paper notes that, “the United States government produced a report which revealed that a number of research institutes were not taking risk and ethical considerations fully into account.” Research was suspended at Duke University and the University of California, Los Angeles. The Guardian, however, does not mention whether these poor ethical considerations meant incentives or monetary compensation to doctors for the patients that they enroll.

In April 2001, 60 Minutes provided probably the most informative and in-depth coverage from television. They reported how drug companies paid Dr. Robert Fitis an average of $50,000 to $250,000 per clinical study. He apparently ran 30 to 40 at a time. Drug companies paid him more to experiment than to heal. One of Fitis’ patients, Tom Parn, was enrolled in a new prostate treatment, which posed a great risk due to Parn’s history of heart problems.
Parn was told that he would need a pacemaker as a result of the risky trial, Fitis removed all reference of the new prostate treatment from Parn’s record. Fitis lowered standards on qualifications for studies and he eventually began falsifying data.

In December 2001, *The Financial Times* of London noted that a World Health Organization (WHO) official blasted the “growing interference by pharmaceutical companies in the conduct of clinical trials and the publication of their results.” WHO’s concern, according to the *Times*, reflects growing evidence of “commercial manipulation of trials or their results.” In addition, editors of 13 leading medical journals made a joint statement saying “they would refuse to publish studies where the researchers did not appear to have professional independence in the conduct of the trial and interpretation of the results.”

**SOURCES:** Video Monitoring Services, June 12, 2000; *The Guardian*, March 15, 2001; *60 Minutes*, April 1, 2001; *The Financial Times*, December 18, 2001.

**2001 #9 CENSORED STORY**

**EPA PLANS TO DISBURSE TOXIC/RADIOACTIVE WASTES INTO DENVER’S SEWAGE SYSTEM**

Between 1950 and 1980, at the Lowry landfill near Denver, millions of gallons of hazardous industrial wastes were dumped into shallow unlined pits. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) now plans to pump toxic waste water into Denver’s sewer system in order to clean up the Superfund site. The sewage system would then use the sludge from the treated water to fertilize Colorado farmlands.

Citizen groups say that the landfill is widely contaminated with highly radioactive plutonium and other deadly wastes. Adrienne Anderson, an instructor at the University of Boulder, stated that EPA’s plan is a way to “legally pump plutonium into the sewer line.” Plutonium is widely considered one of the most deadly substances on the planet.
Gwen Hooten, at EPA’s region 8 office in Denver, is in charge of the Lowry cleanup. She and other EPA officials deny that the site is poisoned by plutonium or any other nuclear wastes.


**UPDATE 2002:** A *Rocky Mountain News* article revealed that after months of protests led by activists, such as Adrienne Anderson, the EPA finally decided to release a 12-page report in late 2001 detailing the various contaminants at the Lowry Landfill. The report titled “Radionuclides and the Lowry landfill Superfund Site” continues to support the EPA’s staunch denial of any high radioactive materials in the landfill. In an odd new move, officials say that much of the contamination that was previously reported could have come from decades-old disposal of such items as smoke detectors, gas lanterns, and other consumer-related items.

Anderson herself was quoted in the article as saying that the report is “the unraveling of a complex web of collusion, corruption, and conflicts of interest between EPA, its contractors, and the major dumpers at Lowry.” Barry Levene, the regional head of EPA’s Superfund program, was also quoted in the article saying the report gives a “more thorough explanation and interpretation” of radionuclide data.

An Associated Press article in September 2001 reported that the metro wastewater site’s smear attacks against Anderson from previous years were recently called into question by a judge. Judge David Di Nardi said, “that the district and its board members waged a campaign of defamation against Anderson.” Di Nardi proceeded to award Anderson $425,000 in damages for all the illegal actions that had been done to her in recent years by the metro district. The district would also have to put out a one-page ad in the Sunday *Denver Post* and issue an apology for its treatment of Anderson. The judge concluded that the district had also limited access to its records and that Steve Frank, the metro spokesman, had lied under oath.
about the district’s attacks against Anderson. It was reported that the district had circulated inflammatory e-mail attacks against Anderson. Anderson was pleased with the outcome of the trial and was quoted as saying it was “gratifying.”

A *Denver Post* article in late September revealed that the metro agency had decided to appeal Judge Di Nardi’s earlier rulings. While Anderson may have won a temporary battle, the problems and the controversy around the wastewater plant continue to thrive in the Denver community. A September *Denver Post* editorial pointed out that while the recent report from the metro plant showed minimal damage, there has definitely been damage to the surrounding environment in the groundwater in “contaminated areas”.

There is some good news from the cleanup of the Lowry site, though. As the landfill’s north face has been covered, a new system has been developed to treat some of the more hazardous aspects of the various landfill gases. Unfortunately, it was recently disclosed that some of the contaminated water is moving northwest on an old river that leaves the “containment areas.” The EPA has tried to counter their liability by expanding the designated boundaries, but the problem of contaminated water moving downstream still plagues the site and local rural communities.


2001 #10 CENSORED STORY

**SILICON VALLEY USES IMMIGRANT ENGINEERS TO KEEP SALARIES LOW**

Extract from *Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action*
Immigrant workers are being exploited by high-tech employers in Silicon Valley. AFL-CIO vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson accuses the industry of using the H1-B visa program to keep foreign workers in a position of dependence. She points out that these workers are often hired under individual contracts, which by U.S. law means they don’t have the right to organize. For the high-tech industry this protection against strikes and unions is a key attraction of the H1-B program, especially in the aftermath of the Boeing Corp. engineers who mounted one of the most successful strikes in recent history.

Like other contract labor programs for lower wage and factory laborers, the H1-B program gives employers the power not only to hire and fire workers, but to grant legal immigration status as well. If an employer does not like something a worker does, such as defending themselves by filing discrimination complaints, the employer has the power to deport the worker.

The use of non-union, immigrant labor protects high-tech companies from strikes and union demands. Civil rights groups add that if Silicon Valley companies were interested in increasing the domestic high-tech labor market, they could train American workers—an approach that could also increase minority representation in the high-tech sector. The industry’s resistance to such alternatives indicates that its reliance on immigrant workers is not about a domestic labor shortage but about a desire for dependent employees and higher profits.


**UPDATE 2002:** Since this story first appeared in *Censored 2001*, conditions have only worsened in Silicon Valley. According to a number of reports, “Bridging the situation has declined for immigrant workers, both financially and socially. Kim Singh of the Asian Pacific Publicity Policy Institute of Stanford says, ‘What I have seen is
rampant discrimination and exploitation…Employers use the laws to their convenience and immigrant workers are denied their rights.”

Due to the increased costs of living in the Bay Area, immigrants find it harder each year to support themselves in Silicon Valley. Yet spouses are often not allowed to be stationed at the same workplace. Companies such as Hewlett-Packard and Sun Microsystems pay their workers about $25-$30 an hour. The average salary for an American worker is about $75-$175 an hour. In addition, Indian women earn about $10 less an hour than Indian men.

The legal fees for H1-B visa workers can range from $2,500-$3,000 per employee. Employers themselves are required to pay $1,000 to the government for each employee that is hired under the visa program. These costs are part of the rationale for paying Indian workers less than American workers. Business Week revealed that, in Silicon Valley, immigrants account for at least a third of the personnel in the computer industry. Many Silicon Valley companies cite H1-B employees as vital to their continued profits.

Companies like TCS in New York claim they have a hard time finding American citizens qualified to work. TCS currently employees about 4,800 workers in the United States; only about 400 of them are actually American citizens. Workers at the John Pickle Company in Tulsa have stated that they worked 12-18 hours a day, earned an hourly wage of $2.31 to $3.17, and were forced to live in a warehouse, sleeping on bunk beds. A.K. Shaji, a former worker for the company, said, “we had no freedom...It was work, work, work, and if you were complaining, then they were packing you up, and were shipping you back to India.”

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, the requests for HB-1 visas have dropped between 30 and 50 percent of last year’s rates. However, the HB-1 visa program continues to be used as a source of cheap labor.

The AFL-CIO has proposed reforms to laws governing the use of immigrant labor. In an historical move, they called for a general amnesty for undocumented families already here and for employer
sanctions to be lifted and immigrants to be given the right to protest unfair and exploitative treatment from employers.


1998 #5 CENSORED STORY

**UNITED STATES COMPANIES ARE WORLD LEADERS IN THE MANUFACTURE OF TORTURE DEVICES FOR INTERNAL USE AND EXPORT**

In its March 1997 report entitled “Recent Cases of the use of Electroshock Weapons for Torture or Ill-Treatment,” Amnesty International lists 100 companies worldwide that produce and sell instruments of torture. Forty two of these firms are in the United States. This places the U.S. as the leader in the manufacture of stun guns, stun belts, cattle probe-like devices, and other equipment which can cause devastating pain in the hands of torturers.

These weapons are currently in use in the U.S. and are being exported to countries all over the world. The U.S. government is a large purchaser of stun devices—especially stun guns, electroshock
batons, and electric shields. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Amnesty both claim the devices are unsafe and may encourage sadistic acts by police officers and prison guards—both here and abroad. “Stun belts offer enormous possibilities for abuse and the infliction of gratuitous pain,” says Jenni Gainsbourough of the ACLU’s National Prison Project. She adds that because use of the belt leaves little physical evidence, this increases the likelihood of sadistic, but hard-to-prove, misuse of these weapons. In June 1996, Amnesty International asked the Federal Bureau of Prisons to suspend the use of electroshock belts, citing the possibility of physical danger to inmates and the potential for misuse.


**UPDATE 2002:** According to the Chinese Human Rights Report on USA, which was published by the Chinese Xinhua News Agency, March 11, 2002, in the United States, close to 100 companies manufacture and export considerable quantities of instruments of torture that are banned in international trade. They have set up sales networks overseas. In its February 26, 2001 report, Amnesty International said some 80 American companies were involved in the manufacture, marketing, and export of instruments of torture, including electric-shock tools, shackles and handcuffs with sawteeth. Many instruments of torture and police tools are high-tech products, which can cause serious harm to the human body. For instance, handcuffs, which tear apart the flesh if the victim slightly exerts himself, are very cruel, as is a high-pressure rope for tying up a person. Although categorically prohibited by U.S. law, the Commerce Department of the United States has given official licenses for exporting such tools. According to statistics, American companies have secured export licenses and sold tools of torture overseas valued at 97 million U. S. dollars since 1997 under the category of “crime control equipment.” It is inconceivable that, while the U.S. State Department is talking about human rights, the U.S. Department of Commerce has given export licenses for products determined to be instruments of torture according to the
statutes of the U.S. government.

1999 #25 CENSORED STORY

ABC BROADCASTS SLANTED REPORT ON MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

On May 7 and 8, 1998, KGO-TV, an ABC affiliate in San Francisco, broadcast a two-part series attacking the international movement dedicated to preventing the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia, a black activist, has been on death row in the state of Pennsylvania for 16 years for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. KGO claimed to do an objective review of the case. The final broadcast presented a very one-sided story.


UPDATE 2002: There have been numerous developments in the past year regarding the case of death row inmate/political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal. The most recent of these developments came on December 23, 2001, when federal Judge William Yohn decided to overturn the death penalty ruling in Jamal’s case. He cited a Supreme Court decision that leaves death penalty sentencing up to the jury as opposed to the judge; the latter made the decision in Jamal’s trial. As a result, there will be a new penalty trial for Jamal, who was sentenced to death row in 1981 for the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner. Neither the prosecution nor the defense are entirely satisfied with the ruling. The prosecution is appealing the most recent decision, while Jamal’s lawyers are seeking a new trial all together.

In May of 2000, new affidavits were released regarding this controversial case. Mumia spoke out for the first time, telling his own story about what happened on the night the police officer Faulkner was killed. Statements were also made by Mumia’s brother, who was at the scene the night the crime was committed, and a man named Arnold Beverly, who claims to

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
have been the real killer. Beverly said in his affidavit, “I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner. I had heard that Faulkner was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with graft and payoffs…” According to Beverly, he and his accomplice, not Jamal, shot Faulkner. His story corroborates with those told by Jamal and his brother, William Cook. In July of 2001, Judge Yohn refused to take the deposition of Arnold Beverly, citing in part, the Anti Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, as well as the late timing of the confession. Beverly’s signed affidavit was dated June 8, 1999, and was in the possession of Jamal’s legal team, but his former attorney Leonard Weinglass, had for an unknown reason, decided not to release the statement, nor make any comments about its release. Mumia has since gotten new legal counsel that has brought this information to the surface.

Jamal’s attorneys have also filed with Judge Yohn an article in The Atlantic Monthly written by Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter that exposed the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. These two men were innocent Italian immigrants who were executed after a state court refused to hear the confession of the real murderer and grant a new trial. The similarities in the two cases are remarkable, especially the prejudice both Sacco and Vanzetti faced for being anarchists, as well as immigrants, and the prejudice faced by Mumia for being a black political activist. The original trial judge for Mumia’s case, Judge Alfred Sabo, was even overheard by a court reporter saying, “fry the ni**er.” The hope is that this comparison will justify a new trial. A new trial has yet to be granted, but it appears the filing of The Atlantic Monthly article did have some affect. This article was filed in November of 2001, and approximately one month later, Judge Yohn overturned Mumia’s death sentence.

Depleted uranium (DU) weapons were used for the first time in a war situation in the Persian Gulf in 1991 and were hailed as a new and incredibly effective weapon by the Department of Defense. Since the Manhattan Project of World War II, numerous government studies have indicated that while DU weapons are highly effective, they are still extremely toxic and need to be handled with special precautionary tools and protective gear.

The effects of depleted uranium exposure, however, are just beginning to be known. DU has now been linked to many illnesses, including the mysterious “Gulf War Syndrome.” Despite widespread concern among Gulf War vets and in U.S. communities about the dangers of DU weapons, the Pentagon, Department of Energy, and military defense contractors are all excited about the sales potential of DU weapons as well as the transfer of DU to allies for their own weapons production. According to Nuclear Regulatory Commission shipment records, steady transfers—amounting to several million pounds of DU—have been flowing to U.S. allies over the past decade, with Britain, France, and Canada being the largest recipients.

Dan Fahey, an activist who works with Swords to Plowshares, a veterans’ rights organization, cowrote a report, “Radioactive Battlefields of the 1990s: The United States Army’s use of Depleted Uranium and Its Consequences for Human Health and the Environment,” which was released by the Maine-based Military Toxics Project’s Depleted Uranium Citizens’ Network in January 1996. Says Fahey, “The health and environmental effects of the 300 tons of DU shot in the Gulf is just a glimpse of the dangers that our society, and the world, will be forced to deal with if and when DU weapons are used in future conflicts. Because DU has a half-life of 4.5 billion years, and because it is extremely difficult and costly to
clean up after it has been shot on a testing range or battlefield, DU threatens to pollute future battlefields and poison and kill people for thousands of generations.”


UPDATE 2002: John LaForge reported in Nukewatch, Winter 2001, that opposition has mounted regarding depleted uranium (DU) munitions that have been used as warfare weapons by the United States against Iraq and Kuwait in 1991 and against Bosnia and Kosovo in 1994 and 1995. The U.S. has used the DU, U-238, because of its high density that, when turned into munitions, can pierce through outer shells of tanks made of heavy metal. The problem is that 16 Europeans who participated in military missions in Bosnia and Kosovo have died from leukemia. European Parliament and 11 European governments and major news groups are calling for an investigation into the use of weaponry made with this toxic radioactive waste material.

NATO hastily studied the situation and after one week, proclaimed that DU used in the Balkans can be ruled out as a significant health hazard. Scientists such as Dr. John Boice and physicist Steve Fetter said that, for leukemia to occur, radiation needs to get to the bone marrow. They claim that uranium-238 can not do that. This has been contradicted by Jean Francois Lacronique, director of France’s National Radiation Protection Agency, who says that it has been found stored in bone and from there it can reach bone marrow. Dr. Frank von Hippel says that particles of U-238 can be inhaled and

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
build up in lung tissue, and enter into the bloodstream, and then accumulate in the bone.

Later it was disclosed that plutonium and other nuclear wastes far more radioactive and carcinogenic than uranium-238 were also being used. Dr. von Hippel says that plutonium-239 is roughly 200,000 times more radioactive than U-238. U.S. officials say that the shells contained mere traces of plutonium and that amount wouldn’t cause harm. Yet it is one of the most carcinogenic substance known for its power to cause cancer.

NATO officials say that the small levels of plutonium were not “relevant to soldier’s health.” However, the World Health Organization wants to know just how much plutonium is in contemporary DU ammunition. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) says that there are transuraics at low level.

The Hague Conventions of 1907, the Geneva Gas Protocol of 1925, and the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War of 1949 all outlaw the use of poisonous gas, and “biological or chemical substances causing death or disability with permanent effects, when in even small quantities they are ingested, enter the lungs or bloodstream or touch the skin.” Still, DU has never been declared illegal by any international body.

A shocking study by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and Johns Hop-kins University found that children of veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf bombardment are two to three times as likely as those of other vets to have birth defects. Persian Gulf vets also reported more miscarriages. Even the U.S. EPA acknowledges that radiation can cause “genetic defects in the children of exposed parents.” Toxic, plutonium contaminated depleted uranium-238 (DU) weapons were Used extensively in the bombardment.

The DVA questioned 21,000 active and retired military, reserve, and National Guard members. Male veterans of the 1991 action reported having infants with birth defects at twice the rate of non-Gulf

Extract from Censored 2003: Media Democracy in Action
veterans. Women vets were almost three times more likely to report children with birth defects than non-Gulf veterans.

Official Iraqi figures show an increase in cancer cases from 6,555 in 1989 to 10,931 in 1997, mostly in areas bombed in 1991 by the U.S.-led assault on the Persian Gulf. A team from the World Health Organization arrived in Baghdad last August to begin research on a possible link between cancer and the hundreds of tons of DU munitions used by U.S. and British warplanes. But after a lobbying campaign by the U.S., the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) voted November 29 to reject a call for a formal U.N. investigation. The vote was 45-54 with 45 abstentions. The UNGA’s committee on disarmament and international security had approved the DU study earlier in November.

The Pentagon continues to deny that health problems can be linked with exposure to DU. During a January 4 briefing, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon was asked, “The Italians have called for a moratorium on the use of depleted uranium munitions. Is that something that the United States would consider doing?” Mr. Bacon answered, “We don’t see any health reasons to consider a moratorium at this stage. We will work with our allies, as I said, in health studies, but we see no reason to consider a moratorium now.”

In the first move by someone in Congress to investigate the military’s use of DU weapons, U.S. Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) has introduced the Depleted Uranium Munitions Suspension and Study Act of 2001. McKinney’s bill would: a) suspend the U.S. military’s use of DU munitions, pending a certification from the Secretary of HHS that DU munitions will not: 1) pose a long-term residual threat to the health of U.S. or NATO military personnel, and 2) jeopardize the health of civilian populations in the area of use; b) Suspend the foreign sale and export of DU munitions; c) Initiate a GAO investigation of contamination of DU munitions by plutonium; d) Initiate a study of the health effects of DU munitions on current or former U.S. military personnel who may have been exposed and medical personnel who treated such affected personnel.
Additional information is available at www.nukewatch.com. 