Censored Déjà Vu
A REVIEW AND UPDATE ON IMPORTANT CENSORED STORIES FROM PRIOR YEARS

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Remembering Yugoslavia: Managed News and Weapons of Mass Destruction
BY BROOKE FINLEY

On March 24, 1999, the United States military along with NATO forces mounted one of the most extensive and devastating aerial bombings in the history of modern warfare on Yugoslavia. NATO’s “air campaign” was conducted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, over a 78-day period and dropped a total of 20,000 tons of bombs. The operations that ended on June 10, 1999 were in response to a supposed humanitarian crisis of “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing.”

On March 19, 2003, General Tommy Franks, under the orders of George W. Bush’s White House began the U.S. invasion of Iraq, code-named “Operation Iraqi Freedom.” It began with the “Shock and Awe” campaign, an aerial attack over Baghdad, consisting of 1,663 U.S. aircraft, including B-52, B-1, and B-2 stealth bombers. It was the first time ever that all three bomber types were used simultaneously. These aircraft flew 20,753 combat missions, dropping 18,467 smart bombs and 9,251 dumb bombs. The Navy also fired 802 cruise missiles. The ground invasion ended April 9, 2003, when the U.S. declared “victory.” Despite the so-called
victory, the occupation of Iraq continues. As of June 10, 2004, between 9,284 and 11,147 innocent civilians have died as a direct result of this military action.\textsuperscript{3} This operation is a continuation of the United States’ “War on Terror,” a response to Saddam’s supposed “weapons of mass destruction.” The stated goal of this invasion was to free the Iraqi people from a torturous regime.\textsuperscript{4}

At first glance, it would seem as though these two acts of war have very little in common. They occurred in two different parts of the world with two completely different reasons for involvement, but with closer examination, similarities become visible. In both cases, there were real, albeit unspoken, reasons for invading: Strategic economic interests as well as military geopolitical positioning were the driving forces behind United States involvement. However, in order to guarantee international support, there were false justifications, and the corporate media was the willing mechanism for spreading the fabrications. The media have always played a large role in shaping public opinion during times of war, but never before had they actually dictated foreign policy (as in Bosnia) or become such an exclusive propaganda arm of the war machine (as in Iraq).

**BACKGROUND**

Prior to the late 1980s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—a nation built of six loosely affiliated republics, two autonomous provinces, 25 separate ethnic groups, and a multitude of religions—was an example of a cooperative struggle towards unity. The government of Yugoslavia shared a collective presidency composed of one representative from each of the republics, with the objective of establishing a balance within the leadership of the regional and national interests. Its economy, “the system which has come to be known as ‘self-management’ reached its most developed form in the Law of Associated Labor of 1976, under which the means of production and other major resources are not regarded as state property (as in the Soviet Union) but as social property.” From this
basis of democratic socialism, Yugoslavia was making a bold attempt to push diversity and progress forward. Among its achievements were a literacy rate that had gone from 55 percent in 1953 to 90 percent in 1986, an infant mortality rate that dropped from 116.5 per 1,000 births to 27.1 per 1,000 births over the same period, free medical coverage, free education, and an evergrowing national identity that crossed traditional boundaries. According to the 1992 Encyclopedia Britannica, “Since World War II, largely in Serbo-Croatian speaking areas, there has been the gradual emergence of a sizable section of the population who prefer to describe themselves as ‘Yugoslavs.’ ” It also notes, “their numbers are growing steadily, more as a result of ethnically-mixed marriages than because of high natural increase.”

The quotations above describe a vastly different Yugoslavia than the one later depicted by NATO and allied leaders. As early as 1984, the Reagan Administration produced a classified National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 133), entitled “United States Policy Toward Yugoslavia,” calling for a “quiet revolution” and then integration into a neoliberal free-market economy. By 1989, Yugoslavia had undergone a drastic shift. Needing to stabilize its economy, it borrowed heavily from creditors including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. A western economic recession lead to an interest-driven spiral of debt, and the IMF demanded “restructuring,” including massive cuts in social spending, forced privatization, and wage freezes. In the one-year span of 1989–1990 an estimated 600,000 Yugoslavian workers were laid off due to over 1,000 company bankruptcies.

Michel Chossudovsky provides data that shows how 6.1 percent GDP growth in the 1960s and 1970s became a 7.5 percent decline by 1990, with real wages falling 41 percent. In 1991, the GDP fell 15 percent further, while industrial output shrank by 21 percent. The World Bank stated that an additional 2,435 companies were to be liquidated; “their 1.3 million workers—half the remaining industrial work force—were considered redundant,” states Chossudovsky. “The IMF-induced budgetary crisis created an economic fait accompli that paved the way for Croatia’s and
Slovenia’s formal secession in June [25] 1991.”\(^8\) Two days later, Bosnia and Macedonia followed. Wanting to remain a united federation, Serbia and Montenegro refused the Western ideals of capitalism and on June 27, 1991, the civil war of the Republics of Yugoslavia began.

**WESTERN INTERESTS IN THE BALKANS**

Western economic and military interests set the stage for the civil war that peaked with NATO air strikes on Serbian Yugoslavia. *Censored #6* in 2000 explained specific reasons for U.S./NATO involvement. Since the weakening and collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. had been hungrily eyeing an estimated $5 trillion in vast oil reserves in the Caspian Sea. In addition Yugoslavia held valuable resources in the Trepca mines complex in the Balkans—gold, lead, silver, zinc, and coal that was worth in excess of $5 billion. After the war, NATO used trumped-up reports of mass graves and crematories at Trepca in order to take over the mines although no evidence was ever brought forward to prove NATO’s accusations. The mines, which were once run by Kosovo with the revenue reinvested in its economy, continue to be controlled under NATO forces by private corporations. The profits from these resources are now denied to the people of Kosovo.

After the destruction of Yugoslavia, the U.S. gained control over the Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil pipeline (AMBO), which has become their gateway to the Caspian Sea. AMBO Pipeline Corporation, based in New York, has exclusive rights to the development of the project and is expected to begin construction in 2005 with completion in 2008.\(^9\)

These assets (oil and mineral resources) made Yugoslavia a golden fleece in the eyes of the West. When the U.S. “stick-and-carrot” approach to foreign policy failed to cull the “quiet revolution” so strongly desired and instead ended in civil war, the use of force became a necessity. The problem arose of how to do it within the
boundaries of international law. We needed a smoke screen. And the media was very effective in providing just that.

MEDIA PROMOTES BIAS COVERAGE

Nothing convinced the public more of Serbian atrocities than the fabricated, Nazi-esque photos of a Bosnian Serb camp at Trnopolji doctored from a videotape shot on August 5, 1992, by a British television team lead by Penny Marshall (ITN). Marshall’s team went out of their way to depict the most atrocious images (Censored #17, 1999) Coincidentally, another Serbian news team shot the same camp, on the same day, capturing Marshall in much of their footage. The Serbian camera crew filmed Trnopolji as a voluntary refugee camp, as well as Marshall sensationalizing a story that never existed. What was later uncovered was the fact that U.N. forces never found such “death camps” when they gained access to all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. There were no signs of metal cages, cremation furnaces, or mass graves, but even this story went unnoticed in the press. The reports of “rape camps” allegedly maintained by the Serbs were also found to be fabricated. After U.N. troops occupied Bosnia, evidence of such camps was never unearthed, and no medical records of the waves of pregnant victims ever materialized.

Ruder-Finn Global Public Affairs, a Washington, DC-based public relations firm, was hired by the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the parliamentary opposition of Kosovo in order to “manufacture” public opinion during the destabilization of Yugoslavia. When the director of Ruder-Finn, James Harff, was interviewed by Jacques Merlino, associate director of French TV2 in April 1993, he boasted about his company’s manipulation of Jewish opinion. “Tens of thousands of Jews perished in Croatian camps, so there was every reason for intellectuals and Jewish organizations to be hostile toward the Croats and the [Muslim] Bosnians. Our challenge was to reverse this attitude, and we succeeded masterfully.”

Harff explains that by mobilizing the Jewish organizations after reports from a Newsday article came out about
the reputed Serbian death camps, Ruder-Finn was able to “present a simple story of good guys and bad guys which would hereafter play itself.” Ruder-Finn did what most public relations firms do: manipulate images, target key groups, bend information, plant stories, and lobby Congress. But what made Ruder-Finn so successful was the receptivity of the Western media, who had already been creating an anti-Serbian climate.

**U.S./KLA CREATE DISINFORMATION**

The “Racak massacre” was (as described in *Censored #12, 2000*) was “the turning point” in NATO’s decision to go to war against Yugoslavia. According to *The New York Times*, U.S. diplomat William Walker led an Associated Press (AP) film crew to a supposed massacre of 45 Albanians at the hands of Serbian forces. Challenges to Walker’s massacre story were published in *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. Belarusian and Finnish forensic experts were later unable to verify that a massacre had actually occurred in Racak. In his update, author Mark Cook compared the massacre to the stories of the Battleship Maine and the Gulf of Tonkin. War correspondent Renaud Girard remarks, “What is disturbing is that the pictures filmed by the AP journalists radically contradict Walker’s accusations.”

In January 2004, the Finnish pathologist Helena Ranta, who led forensic investigations into the case, said that Serb security troops were also killed. She questioned why the photographs taken before the arrival of international monitors had not been published. Only the photos taken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) appeared in public. Ranta claims that the OSCE observers forgot to take necessary steps to secure the crime scene. She also said that the work of the Hague tribunal (against Slobodan Milosevic) regarding the supposed Racak massacre was incomprehensible. Ranta and other forensic experts suggested that the bodies were from a fight the night before involving the Serbian police and the KLA and could have been staged in the manner that they were found. In February 2000, PBS’s *Frontline* reported the
“Racak massacre” exactly as the media had originally, posing no questions or further investigations.¹⁴ Once again, in the face of substantial evidence to the contrary, with mounting questions as to its validity, the mainstream media of the West towed the government story line, forsaking journalistic integrity and objectivity.

In Athens, Greece, a tribunal of over 10,000, declared President Clinton a war criminal in November 1999.¹⁵ In June 2000, an international panel of judges gathered in New York and found U.S. and NATO political and military leaders guilty of war crimes against Yugoslavia during and before the assault on that country from March 24 to June 10, 1999. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark was the lead prosecutor in the tribunal on U.S./NATO war crimes against Yugoslavia. Witnesses described the use of media to demonize Serbs, demonstrated how Washington had rigged the Racak massacre for the media, and recounted how the Rambouillet accord (Censored #10, 2000) had been used to force war and occupation. Testimony included material illustrating the deliberate targeting of civilians in the bombing of a Belgrade television station, the bombing of refugees, and the bombing of the Chinese Embassy (Censored #4, 2001). While the Western media has extensively covered Slobodan Milosevic’s indictment for war crimes, there has been barely any mention of Clinton’s violation of the War Powers Act during the invasion of Yugoslavia or of either of his two civil indictments.

IRAQ BACKGROUND

In July of 1979, a CIA “asset” by the name of Saddam Hussein gained control of the Bathe party and became president of Iraq. In September 1980, fearing Ayatollah Khomeini’s influence on the Shiite majority, Hussein invaded Iran. But by early 1982, Iran was winning. Fearing the spread of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Middle East, the U.S. launched covert operations to arm and aid Iraq. By the end of 1983, the U.S. was providing satellite images of
Iran forces and funneling $5.5 billion in loans intended to “promote American farm exports” to assist Iraq in purchasing weapons. In December 1983 and again in March 1984, Reagan sent his personal envoy Donald Rumsfeld to meet with Hussein. The latter visit came at a time when the U.N. was accusing Iraq of using chemical weapons against Iran. From 1986 to 1989 (two years after diplomatic relations had been officially restored), “73 [weapons] transactions took place that included bacterial cultures to make weapons grade anthrax ...” In 1988, Iraq gassed 5,000 Kurds, using helicopters purchased from the U.S. On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and Hussein’s honeymoon with the U.S. ended. Desert Storm, an operation of 573,000 U.S. troops, 100,000 sorties, and 85 tons of bombs, was launched on January 16, 1999, and declared over, barely one month later, on February 28. Saddam Hussein, however, remained in power. During the Clinton years, despite U.S. imposed economic sanctions that, according to the U.N., took the lives of over 500,000 Iraqis (Censored #5, 2003), the “Neocons,” newly deposed from power, formed the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). In a letter written by Trent Lott and Newt Gingrich and signed January 26, 1998, the PNAC called for “the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime from power.” The signers included Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliot Abrahams, Richard Armitage, Richard Pearle, and John Bolton. Other PNAC members include Dick Cheney, I. Lewis Libby, and Stephen Cambone (Censored #1, 2004). Two years later, all of these men would have positions in George W. Bush’s White House and war would become unavoidable.16

U.S. INTERESTS IN IRAQ

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has displayed profound interest in the Middle East. CIA operations in Iran, the support of Iraq during the Iran/Iraq wars, and the first Gulf War are only a few examples of the extent we have been willing to go to secure a compliant Middle East. The aforementioned letter by Lott and
Gingrich also stated that “we should establish and maintain strong military presence in the region and be prepared to use that force to protect our vital interests in the [Persian] Gulf.” The Joint Chiefs of Staff’s *Strategic Assessment 1999* stated an “oil war” could be necessary and that “U.S. forces might be used to ensure adequate supplies.”\(^{17}\) Iraq has the second largest oil reserves on earth, only behind those of Saudi Arabia. It also provides strategic placement of military bases, as it borders Iran, Syria, Turkey, and Kuwait. Bases in a post-Saddam, submissive Iraq would ensure protection of U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf for many years to come. To this line of reasoning, author Chalmers Johnson stated, “It would be hard to deny that oil, Israel, and domestic politics all played crucial roles in the Bush Administration’s war against Iraq, but I believe the encompassing explanation for our second war with Iraq is no different from that of our wars in the Balkans in 1999 or in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002: the inexorable pressures of imperialism and militarism.”\(^{18}\)

**MEDIA MANIPULATION IN IRAQ**

During the toppling of a statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square in Baghdad, the media turned a stage-managed affair into a “feel-good” story with commentary comparing the scene to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. A cropped photo created the appearance of a crowd surrounding the statue and cheering as it fell. Of the crowd assembled, the majority were American soldiers and journalists. A report from the BBC stated that only “dozens” of Iraqis were in the crowd. Others were Iraqi political agents of the American military.\(^{19}\)

While Americans were left with warm hearts after being told that the U.S. military was “freeing” the Iraqi people, what was never mentioned was that, by Pentagon figures, more Iraqis were killed in Baghdad on Saturday, April 5, than Americans killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. What was also never mentioned was that the total number of Iraqis killed in three weeks
of war exceeded the 50,000 Americans killed over 12 years in Vietnam.  

While the media had helped create the reasons for U.S. involvement in Yugoslavia, the media was now transmitting government perspectives about its motives for invading Iraq. As before, the press preferred to passively receive and relay indoctrination, as opposed to actively pursuing facts. During the period from September 2002 to June 2003, national paper headlines were filled daily with stories about weapons of mass destruction, and on the nightly news, the Bush Administration claimed to have conclusive evidence of those weapons in Iraq.

Nearly one year later, with the promised “smoking gun” still not found, *The New York Times* finally issued a statement of apology. On May 26, 2004, a letter from the editors was published in the *New York Times* on page A10, acknowledging the lack of investigation and objectivity of their stories dealing with the war in Iraq. They claimed to have rushed for “scoops,” using unsubstantiated evidence and single-person testimonies in above-the-fold stories. Follow-up articles questioning the validity of the originals were buried on back pages or never mentioned at all. Many times, useful information was hidden in the middle of an article rather than presented in the very beginning. In most cases, information presented by the government was allowed to stand unchallenged.  


According to *Harper’s Index*, at least 237 misleading statements on Iraq were made by the Bush Administration’s top officials since March 2002. One hundred percent of these statements contradicted, made selected use of, or mischaracterized existing government intelligence. This stand in sharp contrast to “the number of articles
in major U.S. newspapers that have called any White House statement on Iraq a lie: zero.”

As with Clinton in Kosovo, the Bush Administration has been managing the news and feeding the public disinformation about U.S. involvement in Iraq. Instead of verifying, questioning, or investigating these stories, corporate media has eagerly published every shaky claim in a rush to be the first to cover the next front-page scoop. In the world of journalism, disseminating unverified information is an equal sin, with the same overall effect of skewing public opinion as fabricating a story in its entirety. No matter how you split hairs, a lie is still a lie. The rush to print, which shaped public opinion, is now partially responsible for a situation that has cost thousands of lives.

CENSORED #1 2004

THE NEOCONSERVATIVE PLAN FOR GLOBAL DOMINANCE

The corporate media have made much of Saddam Hussein and his stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. Rarely have the press addressed the possibility that larger strategies might also have driven the decision to invade Iraq. Broad political strategies regarding foreign policy do indeed exist and are part of public record.

In the 1970s, American military presence in the Gulf was minimal, so gaining control of Arab oil fields by force was unattainable. Still, the idea of full domination was very attractive to a group of hard-line, pro-military Washington insiders that included both Democrats and Republicans. Eventually labeled “neoconservatives,” this circle of influential strategists played important roles in the Defense Departments of Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush Sr., and in conservative think tanks throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Today this same circle occupies several key posts in the White House, Pentagon, and State Department. The principals among them are:
Vice President Dick Cheney, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who have been closely aligned since they served with the Ford Administration in the 1970s;

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the key architect of the postwar construction of Iraq;

Richard Perle, former chairman and current member of the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Board, which has great influence over foreign military policies;

and William Kristol, editor of The Weekly Standard and founder of Project for the New American Century, the powerful, neoconservative think tank.

Since the first Gulf War, the U.S. has built a network of military bases that now almost completely encircle the oil fields of the Persian Gulf.

In 1989, following the end of the Cold War and just prior to the Gulf War, Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, and Paul Wolfowitz produced the Defense Planning Guidance Report advocating U.S. military dominance around the globe. The plan called for the United States to maintain and grow in military superiority and prevent new rivals from raising up to challenge us on the world stage. Using words like “preemptive” and military “forward presence,” the plan called for the U.S. to be dominant over friends and foes alike. It concluded with the assertion that the U.S. can best attain this position by making itself “absolutely powerful.”

On August 2, 1990, President Bush called a press conference. He explained that the threat of global war had significantly receded, but in its wake, a new danger arose. This unforeseen threat to national security could come from any angle and from any power.

Iraq, by a remarkable coincidence, invaded Northern Kuwait later the same day.

Cheney et al. were out of political power for the eight years of Bill Clinton’s presidency. During this time, the neoconservatives founded the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). The most
influential product of the PNAC was a report entitled “Rebuilding America’s Defense,” <www.newamericancentury.org>, which called for U.S. military dominance and control of global economic markets.

With the election of George W. Bush, the authors of the plan were returned to power: Cheney as vice president, Powell as secretary of state, and Wolfowitz in the number-two spot at the Pentagon. With the old Defense Planning Guidance as the skeleton, the three went back to the drawing board. When their new plan was complete, it included contributions from Wolfowitz’s boss Donald Rumsfeld. The old “preemptive” attacks have now become “unwarned attacks.” The Powell-Cheney doctrine of military “forward presence” has been replaced by “forward deterrence.” The U.S. stands ready to invade any country deemed a possible threat to our economic interests.

UPDATE BY CHRISTOPHER ROBIN COX: The neoconservative contingent within the Bush Administration remains small in number, highly elusive, and full of influence. After the overthrow and capture of Saddam Hussein, the fabled weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which were given as the main reason for preemptive, unilaterally-led war in the region, still have not been found. The first chore on the list of the neoconservative plan for global dominance was accomplished when the U.S. occupied Iraq and took control of its oil reserves.

We now know that much of the information that was used to gain consent for going to war in Iraq originated not from the CIA or the intelligence gathered by weapons inspectors, but from a small cadre of very powerful and secretive government organizations whose sole job was to develop evidence of Iraq’s connection to 9/11 and its possession of WMDs. Primarily, neoconservative hawks manned these organizations. In the last year, there has been official testimony by David Kay, former top U.S. weapons inspector, stating, “We were all wrong.” Additional devastating statements were made about the actions of this Administration by Paul O’Neill, former secretary of the treasury, and Richard Clarke, former counterterrorism czar under the past four presidential
administrations. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D–MA) said in *The Nation*, “What happened was not merely a failure of intelligence; it was the result of manipulation of intelligence and selective use of questionable intelligence to justify a decision already made.”

What follows is a brief analysis of the various governmental and nongovernmental offices, run primarily by neoconservatives, responsible for providing the “strategic intelligence” necessary to build the case for war in Iraq:

The two most active offices in the quest of gathering intelligence outside of the normal official channels were the Office of Special Plans (OSP) and its parallel, the Counter-Terrorism Evaluation Group (CTEG). Both the OSP and the CTEG were organized by Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith and his superior Donald Rumsfeld, literally days after 9/11. They were charged with finding any evidence that the CIA, NSA, FBI, and DIA may have missed, specifically in regard to Iraq’s connections to 9/11 and/or Al Qaeda, a tall order indeed. These organizations under Feith commonly chose the “worst-case scenarios” due to a lack of “actionable” evidence.

The Defense Policy Board, also known as the Defense Policy Group (DPG): The chairman was Richard Perle, Feith’s mentor, long-time member of PNAC and a close personal friend to Iraqi National Congress (INC) leader Ahmed Chalabi. The DPG worked closely with the OSP. The DPG was so bold as to meet with Chalabi to “discuss ways in which the terrorist attacks could be tied to Hussein,” says Jim Lobe of Inter Press Service News Agency. Chalabi will be devastating to the administration and its neocons if his intimate involvement in their cadre is made public in congressional hearings. In response to accusations that he and the INC had provided misleading intelligence to George W. Bush, Chalabi said: “What was said before is not important. The Bush Administration is looking for a scapegoat. We’re ready to fall on our swords if he wants.”

The OSP and the CTEG operated permissively outside of the official United States intelligence apparatus, producing the “strategic intelligence” that was often utilized by neoconservative hard-liners and hawks. The timely building up and breaking down
of these small offices, often with only a handful of full-time staffers, shows an organized and versatile neoconservative network. The goal of the OSP and CTEG was to gather the intelligence necessary to get the U.S. legally into Iraq and quickly in control of its oil reserves. Upon the “end of official hostilities” in Iraq, the OSP and CTEG quickly disappeared and very little mention was ever made in corporate news.

The most clear and present danger of the neoconservative clique is the nearly direct line of influence they continue to have on national and international governmental policy making. It is important to note that the vice president, secretary of state, attorney general, secretary of defense, and the deputy secretary of defense all defiantly support unilateral United States global supremacy, by both economic and military means, clearly shown to be against the mind of the majority of the American demos.

The tenets of neoconservatism also provide the basis for our close strategic alliance with Israel, perhaps the most important aspect of the so-called “war on terror.” Without the total support of Israel, there is little chance of controlling the Gulf region and its famed oil reserves. The reliance we have on the Israelis, as a strategic alliance and the reliance they have upon us for massive financial support, makes for an extremely codependent relationship. For 30 years, the majority of the world’s civilized countries, including many of our allies, have been calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and the West Bank, while the United States sheepishly supports Israel in their unpopular devastation of the Palestinians. There are many Israelis who protest this, but to no avail. This is largely due to the intense influence of the neocons in current and past administrations. “No group in Israel can gain much credibility within unless it has strong support from the society of the bossman,” said Noam Chomsky in an interview with M. Junaid Alam.

The size and funding of PNAC is absolutely miniscule when compared with the think tanks that are associated with the neoconservative agenda. Since 9/11 a few of these tanks have come forward in transparent support of the propagandistic “global war on terrorism.” The most powerful is certainly the American Enterprise
Institute (AEI), with a member list that includes well over 20 neocons who have done work for the Bush Administration in various capacities. Richard Perle, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, Newt Gingrich, and Elliot Cohen are but a few on the AEI roster. The Hudson Institute and the Heritage Foundation are also widely known for their neoconservativist slant.

Organizations similar to PNAC have also cropped up, but only long enough to stay clear of congressional oversight. One of those was the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq (CLI), which was founded by Bruce P. Jackson, one of the directors of PNAC and former vice president for strategy and planning at Lockheed Martin Corporation. Like the OSP, the CLI quickly disappeared after the fall of the Hussein regime.

The neoconservative plan for global dominance has indeed reached a point of no return. The secret offices that facilitated the propaganda for the war in Iraq and the government officials who ran them are quite visible now. Both David Kay and most of the administration have been quick to lay blame upon George Tenet and the CIA for providing false or misleading intelligence. Increasingly less mention of the intelligence supplied by OSP and CTEG is being made by the neocons in the administration. On the other hand, Representative Jane Harmon (D–CA), in a speech at AEI of all places, said, “disclaimers notwithstanding, many in Congress and intelligence operatives in the field now believe these entities fed unreliable and ‘unvetted’ intelligence to [Pentagon] policymakers and the office of the vice president.”

HOMELAND SECURITY THREATENS CIVIL LIBERTY

The new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) combines over 100 separate entities of the executive branch, including the Secret Service, the Coast Guard, and the Border Patrol, among others. The DHS employs over 170,000 federal workers and commands a total annual budget of $37 billion. One DHS mandate largely ignored by the press requires the FBI, CIA, state, and local governments to share intelligence reports with the department upon command, without explanation. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Department of Homeland Security will be “100 percent secret and 0 percent accountable.” Meanwhile, the gathering, retention, and use of information collected are central focuses of the Bush Administration’s new agenda. Officially established to track down terrorists, information can be collected on any American citizen.

No member of Congress was given sufficient time to study the first Patriot Act that was passed by the House on October 27, 2001. In some cases, while driving the act through Congress, Vice President Cheney would not allow the legislation to be read; publicly threatening members of Congress that they would be blamed for the next terrorist attack if they did not vote for the Patriot Act.

UPDATE BY ANNA MIRANDA: Hastily and stealthily passed in October 2001, the USA Patriot Act continues to undermine rights of American citizens. From libraries and booksellers to financial and educational institutions to our rights to travel and to live in the United States, every single American is affected by the intrusion of the government’s right to conduct surveillance on our personal lives as if we were each potential terrorists.

Since 2001, many of the Patriot Acts potential effects have become reality. Applying for credit? Read the fine print. “To help the government fight the funding of terrorism and money-laundering activities, federal law requires all financial institutions to obtain, verify, and record information that identifies each person who opens an account. What this means for you: When you open an account, we will ask for your name, address, date of birth, and other information that will allow us to identify you.”

Buying or selling property? Considered a “financial institution,” title companies are required to check your background against a list of people who have been identified as potential terrorists known as “specifically designated nationals.”

Traveling? Once you’ve been placed on the government’s “no-fly list” through a program called CAPPS II, you can be banned from flying within or outside of the United States. Those who have been identified and placed on the list are finding difficulty determining how it was they were placed on the list in the first place or how they will get off.

Legal resident of the United States with a green card? According to the Department of Homeland Security, over 63,000 immigrants—many of whom possessed green cards and have been living in the United States for years—have been detained, with up to 70 percent having already been deported.

The Patriot Act, however, is receiving resistance in many circles, including bipartisan groups. The Campaign for Reader Privacy combines Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in sponsoring the Freedom to Read Protection Act (H.R. 1157) and the Security and Freedom Ensured (SAFE) Act (S. 1709) to amend Section 215 of
the Patriot Act which gives the FBI unlimited access to bookstore and library records.

Together, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) are challenging the constitutionality of National Security Letters (NSL). Finally, a bipartisan group of senators have introduced the SAFE Act (S. 1709) that calls for revisions of Section 213, the “sneak and peak” provision, which allows searches to be conducted and property seized without prior notification. The SAFE Act requires a warrant to be issued and protection of the person being searched.


CENSORED #3 2004

U.S. ILLEGALLY REMOVES PAGES FROM IRAQ U.N. REPORT

On December 19, 2002, a Berlin newspaper, Die Tagezeitung, broke the story that the U.S. had illegally removed pages from an Iraq U.N. report. Iraq had sent copies of the complete report to journalists throughout Europe. There were 8,000 pages missing from the 11,800 page original report. The question is why did the U.S. remove these pages?

Michael Niman says, “The missing pages implicated 24 U.S.-based corporations and the successive Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr. Administrations in connection with illegally supplying Saddam Hussein’s government with myriad weapons of mass destruction and the training on how to use them.” The U.S. convinced Colombia, chair of the Security Council and current target of U.S. military occupation and recipient of financial aid, to look the other way while the report was removed, edited, and returned. Other members of the Security Council, such as Britain, France, China, and Russia, were implicated in the missing pages as well (China and Russia were
still arming Iraq) and had little desire to expose the U.S.’s transgression. So all members accepted the new, abbreviated version.

Perhaps most importantly, the missing pages contain information that could potentially make a case for war crimes against officials within the Reagan and the Bush Sr. Administrations. This includes the current Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld—for his collaboration with Saddam Hussein leading up to the massacres of Iraqi Kurds and for acting as liaison for U.S. military aid during the war between Iraq and Iran.


UPDATE BY MATTHEW HAGAN: There is no update to this story. Searching numerous databases (LexisNexis, Proquest, Factiva, JSTOR, and Alt-Press Watch) as well as contacting people originally involved with the story resulted in the discovery that no media attention has been given to this story. Not one development or even the smallest blurb of information was uncovered.

Not only was nothing new exposed, but also coverage of the original story was limited. It is as if the mystery of the missing papers has conveniently evaporated in the year since it was covered in the pages of *Censored*.

CENSORED #4 2004

**RUMSFELD’S PLAN TO PROVOKE TERRORISTS**

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s Defense Science Board (DSB) has created a new organization called the Proactive Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG) to thwart potential terrorist attacks on the United States. A group of 100 counterintelligence
agents are responsible for secret missions designed to “stimulate reactions” among terrorist groups, in order to provoke them into committing violent acts, exposing them to a counterattack by U.S. forces. At least $100 million a year is needed for these secret missions and other strategies, including tricking terrorist cells with fake communication and stealing money from the terrorist cells.


**UPDATE BY BROOKE FINLEY:** Although there have been no signs of action from Rumsfeld’s Proactive Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG) in the past year, there has been more information available about what the P2OG entails.

When the Defense Science Board (DSB) recommended the P2OG to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, they suggested that a special operations executive within the National Security Council (NSC) should be responsible for the P2OG. The NSC would be in charge of planning operations, but would then hand over the duty of executing the plans to the Pentagon and the CIA, in order to avoid repeating past abuses. One person would oversee the NSC and would answer directly to the White House. This special operations executive is John A. Gordon, the current deputy assistant national security advisor on combatting terrorism. During Gordon’s career, he helped in the research and development of the Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles and later commanded the 90th missile wing (the only Peacekeeper unit). As special operations executive, Gordon’s position would entail defining national strategy, enunciating policy, and holding accountability and responsibility for the entirety of the P2OG.

The entire package of the P2OG will cost close to $7 billion. Over a five-year period beginning in 2004, $1.7 billion would be used for an intelligence community’s ability to penetrate terrorist cells in order to collect information. Over the next six years, $1.6 billion
would go toward intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance enhancement. Research and development of sensor and agent defeat technologies would cost $1 billion per year. Paying an additional 500 people needed for the reporting of the effects of globalization, radicalism, economics, religions, and cultures in order to be able to characterize potential enemies would cost $800 million. A special team of specifically trained forces, able to take action against suspected weapons sites and to offer force protection for nearby soldiers, would cost $500 million. A force consisting of former intelligence retirees would need $100 million in order to meet once a year to participate in counterterrorist exercises. Finally, for $20 million, the DSB suggests creating a panel of two dozen analysts, who would conger up ways in which a terrorist might attack and then report their findings to the CIA director.


**TREATY BUSTING BY THE UNITED STATES**

The U.S. is a signatory to nine multilateral treaties that it has either blatantly violated or gradually subverted. The Bush Administration is now outright rejecting a number of those treaties, and in doing so, places global security in jeopardy, as other nations feel entitled to do the same. The rejected treaties include: The Comprehensive Test
Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Treaty Banning Antipersonnel Mines, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), a protocol to create a compliance regime for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). The U.S. is also not complying with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Commission (CWC), the BWC, and the U.N. framework Convention on Climate Change.

This unprecedented rejection of and rapid retreat from global treaties that have in effect kept the peace through the decades will not only continue to isolate U.S. policy, but will also render these treaties and conventions invalid without the support and participation of the world’s foremost superpower.


UPDATE BY BRITTANY ROELAND: Current U.S. trends concerning foreign policy represent a lack of acknowledgment and violations of nine international treaties. This truth may be a crucial explanation for the way the rest of the world considers our country.

In November 2002, the Bush Administration announced their plans to construct biowarfare agent facilities at the Lawrence Livermore lab in northern California and at the Los Alamos lab in New Mexico. These plans are in violation of the Biological Weapons
Convention (BWC). In response to the Bush Administration’s proposed plans, the Nuclear Watch of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Tri-Valley CAREs of Livermore, California, filed litigation on August 26, 2003, in the federal district court in northern California. The suit is charging the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) with violating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The DOE approved advanced research on bioweapon agents at Los Alamos and Livermore labs without performing a detailed evaluation of the environmental hazards and influence on international non-proliferation agreements. The lawsuit asks the court to require specific Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and public hearings before the DOE can begin operating at either lab.

The DOE announced that it has cancelled approval for its newly constructed biowarfare agent research facility at the Los Alamos lab. The DOE withdrew the original Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment (EA) that it had issued before the construction of the labs. The Los Alamos facility, a “Biosafety Level-3” (BSL-3), would have been used for experiments—including genetic modification—with live anthrax, botulism, bubonic plague, and other agents. As of now, the Lawrence Livermore National lab in California still remains under construction. A DOE press release admits that “it will now need to go back to square one, produce a new environmental assessment, and review anew whether the agency will undertake a full Environmental Impact Statement, a key demand in the lawsuit.”

“We remain concerned that construction continues on the extremely dangerous Livermore biolab,” stated Marylia Kelley, the executive director of Tri-Valley CAREs. “The risks to public health and safety posed by the deadly pathogens DOE proposed to use in Los Alamos are even greater here in Livermore. The Livermore site is adjacent to the active Los Positas earthquake fault and next to a large metropolitan area,” explained Kelley. “Surely, we deserve no less than an immediate halt to the construction of the Livermore biowarfare agent facility and for DOE to withdraw its approval.”

Responding to congressional pressure, the DOE announced on January 28, 2004, that it would postpone plans for the Modern Pit
Facility (MPF). MPF is a new plutonium bomb factory capable of mass-producing 250 to 900 bomb cores, called pits, each year.

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability announced the delay, referring to “the inevitable health and environmental risks of plutonium manufacturing” and the simple lack of need, as well as the possibility of causing destructive international relations in regards to the facility. “The MPF is one project America can live without,” declared the national alliance of groups, including Tri-Valley CAREs. Senator Feinstein (D–CA) said she welcomed the delay and pointed out that if the new bomb factory were to operate at only half of its capacity, it could equal or exceed China’s entire nuclear arsenal in a single year. “I believe the development of new nuclear weapons will hurt our relations with other nations around the globe, our non-proliferation efforts, and the environment,” Feinstein concluded. DOE’s draft EIS made it clear that the MPF would include the capability to make new design pits, meaning that it could facilitate production of entirely new types of nuclear weapons. The MPF facility would be in opposition to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

According to Tri-Valley CAREs, “The U.S. has deployed an estimated 150 to 180 nuclear weapons on seven European NATO states, six of which are non-nuclear weapon states. As long as these policies endure, NATO countries cannot in good faith claim they are making the progress towards disarmament that has been demanded as an NPT Article VI obligation since 1995. The 2005 Review Conference of the NPT is likely to be chaotic even if the U.S. does change its nuclear policy for the better. All NATO states, except the U.S., have ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and have committed to ensuring its entry into force. The test ban is intimately linked with the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament goals of the NPT.”

The 2005 fiscal-year budget specifies that the Bush Administration will make plans to increase and speed up its strategy to organize a missile defense, plus a possible third deployment site. Despite previous claims that the Missile Defense Agency would put off space-based missile defense activities due to technical
challenges, the 2005 fiscal-year budget incorporates development activities on a space-based interceptor test bed. This is in violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM).

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has recently come into full operation with the selection of its chief prosecutor, Oscar Moreno-Ocampo of Argentina. Most of the 199 nations of the U.N. are truly celebrating this long sought accomplishment. Of the 134 signatories of the Rome statute, 92 have already ratified their commitment to the ICC. The U.S. surprised the world by un-signing the ICC. Ambassador David Scheffer, the U.S. representative, declared that he worried the document would hinder U.S. military duties and that the U.S. service personnel might be vulnerable. Of the first 499 communications from 66 countries that were received by the new court, more than 100 of them were allegations against the U.S., 16 related directly to acts allegedly committed by U.S. troops in Iraq, but neither Iraq nor the U.S. had become a party to the Rome statute, so the court has no jurisdiction over either of them at this time. As the court struggles with difficult decisions, nations, groups, and individuals are saluting it as a hope for a peaceful, nonviolent world. It is truly a shame that the U.S. refuses to be a part of it.

The Kyoto Protocol was catapulted back onto the global agenda as Russia committed to signing the climate treaty in the spring of 2004, at the same time as Hollywood released a blockbuster in which rising temperatures trigger an ice age that freeze-dries New York. Europe, Canada, and Japan have ratified the Kyoto Protocol. While it now appears that Russia will sign, the Bush Administration has ruled out U.S. participation. “Even if Russia joins and the Kyoto Protocol takes effect, the absence of the world’s largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters, the U.S. and China, means that Kyoto will have little impact on future climate change,” explains Richard B. Stewart and Richard B. Weiner in their Science and Technology article “The Practical Climate Change.” China will not act without the U.S. both because of perceived unfairness if the U.S. does not adopt limitations and because of its major incentive for joining the climate management agreement, selling allowances to U.S. companies. It is in our planet’s best interest for the Kyoto Protocol to be ratified, but
the capitalistic values of our society are standing in the way of long-term survival.


CENSORED #8 2004

U.S./BRITISH FORCES CONTINUE USE OF DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS DESPITE MASSIVE EVIDENCE OF NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS

British and American coalition forces used depleted uranium (DU) shells in the war against Iraq and deliberately flouted a U.N. resolution that classifies the munitions as illegal weapons of mass destruction. An August 2002 U.N. report states that the use of the DU weapons is in violation of numerous laws and U.N. conventions. Maj. Doug Rokke, ex-director of the Pentagon’s DU project says, “We must do what is right for the citizens of the world—ban DU.” Reportedly, more than 9,600 veterans have died since serving in Iraq during the first Gulf War, a statistical anomaly. The Pentagon has blamed the extraordinary number of illnesses and deaths on a variety of factors, including stress, pesticides, vaccines, and oil-well fire smoke. However, according to top-level U.S. Army reports and military contractors, “short-term effects of high doses (of DU) can result in death, while long-term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer and birth defects.”

UPDATE BY LAUREN KETTNER: For years, the U.S. government has known the danger of depleted uranium (DU). Even after reports of increased cancer rates in the Middle East and a mysterious illness known as the Gulf War Syndrome, the U.S. used DU during the 2003 bombing of Baghdad.

DU is used to harden bombs, shells, and tanks. It is both toxic and radioactive, affecting an individual’s DNA, so the consequences will last for generations. The children’s leukemia rate in Iraq tripled after 300 tons of DU was dispersed into the air, soil, and water during the 1991 Gulf War. Since then, the statistical evidence of increased cancer cases in Iraq correlates with the use of depleted uranium and nuclear arms in the Gulf War. In 1989, there were 11 abnormalities per 100,000 births; in 2001, there were 116 per 100,000. In 1988, 34 people died of cancer; in 1998, 450 people died of cancer; in 2001, there were 603 cancer deaths. The use of depleted uranium is illegal by international law, and at a meeting of the International Court Tribunal for Afghanistan, the court ruled the U.S. guilty of this war crime.

While medical research connecting DU exposure to cancer and other adverse health conditions exists, the U.S., British, and NATO officials continue to refuse to acknowledge the relationship. Despite continued contamination in Iraq, for political and economic reasons, the U.S. and Great Britain have ignored the environmental and health hazards. Gulf War soldiers, and Iraqi and Serbian representatives, along with health care professionals, continue to request medical care and environmental decontamination.

Washington continues to deny the impact of DU weapons on either the Iraqi people or U.S. and British soldiers. Currently, the U.S. has refused to disclose specific information about use of DU in Iraq. It also refuses to let a group from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) study the environmental impact of DU in Iraq. In a report by UNEP, dated October 20, 2003, officials claim that immediate attention is necessary. It suggests that
residents should be tested and monitored and that awareness of the danger should be raised among the Iraqi people. However, there are no plans for the removal of debris.

Deliberate denial of medical screening and health care to individuals exposed to DU continues into this year. In a landmark case, a Gulf War veteran from Scotland was awarded the first war pension for the effects of DU. However, other suits are under reconsideration as substantial scientific evidence is questioned. Although this one case gives hope to veterans fighting for compensation, many other U.S. soldiers have been denied health benefits or recognition of their diseases.

Reports by the Christian Science Monitor of children playing on and around bomb sites proves that the Iraqis have not received proper warning of the danger of DU. The Los Angeles Times along with other mainstream media sources have featured stories related to the impacts of DU, but these stories have not created enough widespread demand for U.S. responsibility.

Ten thousand Americans have already been evacuated from Iraq, many reporting illnesses similar to those suffered by veterans from the first Gulf War. Despite documented respiratory problems, miscarriages, hair loss, and other health problems plaguing residents surrounding Baghdad, the U.S. and Great Britain refuse to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct systematic monitoring of the effects of uranium contamination.

IN AFGHANISTAN: POVERTY, WOMEN’S RIGHTS, AND CIVIL DISRUPTION WORSE THAN EVER

While all eyes have turned to Iraq, the people of Afghanistan continue to silently suffer what is considered their worst poverty in decades. The promised democratic government is too concerned with assassination attempts to worry about the suffering of the people. They still have no new constitution, no new laws, and little food. Ethnic and political rivalries plague the country and the military power of the warlords has increased. While the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the 4,500-strong foreign peacekeeping unit, is assigned to defend only the capital, private armies of an estimated 700,000 people roam the country continuing a traditional system of fiefdoms.

Despite the fanfare (stripping the burqa and the signing of the new Declaration of Essential Rights of Afghan Women), little has changed for the average Afghani. The new Interior Ministry still requires women to receive permission from their male relatives before they travel. As for the future loya jirga, or grand council, that will help determine governmental policies, only 160 seats out of 1,450 have been guaranteed to women.

As of July 2002, the average life expectancy for the people of Afghanistan is 46 years. The average yearly income per capita is $280. As for the children, 90 percent are not in school. More than one out of every four children in Afghanistan will die before the age of five. A UNICEF study found that the majority of children are highly traumatized and expect to die before reaching adulthood. Beyond this, the region is just overcoming a three-year drought,
which killed half the crops and 80 percent of livestock in some areas.


**Update by Patrick Carlson:** The United States invasion of Afghanistan ousted the Taliban but instead of aiding the country, U.S. resources were turned to Iraq. In place of the Taliban, the U.S. placed “friendlier” President Hamid Karzai in charge along with the mujahideen warlords who helped the U.S. fight against the Taliban. “The problem with the mujahideen warlords is that they are just as bad if not worse than the Taliban. Thieves in their own right, these men loot, extort money, and have little care for the people of Afghanistan,” said John Sifton, the Afghanistan researcher at Human Rights Watch, in an interview with Terry Gross. “The country is in disarray as corrupt warlords sit idle as chaos reigns. There is no justice, no laws, and no help as the looting, raping, and overall poverty continues on. No real progress on the reconstruction of cities has been made. Many buildings and cities are still completely devastated. Part of it is that the country’s economy is barely existent, so the weakened country has become a wasteland. The only accomplishment being a road constructed from Kabul to Kandahar. On top of all this is the pollution from the uranium bullets.”

High numbers of the population are exposed to uranium dust and debris from the fighting. Scientists found medically significant levels of non-depleted uranium in the urine of 100 percent of civilians tested, who live near bomb sites, 400 percent to 2,000 percent higher than the normal population baseline. Eight million people
face food shortages. People are starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, and suffering. There are at least 500,000 disabled orphans and hundreds of thousands of widows. Shells in the major cities have hit many walls, buildings, and landmarks. One in every 10 land mines in the world is littered in Afghanistan, claiming an average of 25 victims a day. Children are forced to help their families by working horrific jobs for little to no pay.

Life for Afghan women has not improved. Fear for safety still plagues their lives, as they get harassed by men for not wearing the burqa, and parents, afraid their daughters will be kidnapped or sexually assaulted if not supervised at all times, refuse to allow them to attend school. Afghan women have little to no access to obstetric or postnatal care in the postwar chaos. Reproductive health care is completely unavailable in two-thirds of the country’s provinces. Many clinics have been closed or bombed.

Afghanistan’s hopes lie in a constitutional draft written by President Karzai at the loya jirga convention. “The constitutional draft was finally approved in January of this year but the document is full of poorly crafted promises, missed opportunities, and does not address some key issues,” explained Sifton. Vote buying, bullying, and even death threats by certain powerful criminals who are now the “appointed” leaders of the country overshadowed the entire process. These leaders are not recognizing women or the poor.

AFRICA FACES THREAT OF NEW COLONIALISM

In June 2002, leaders from the eight most powerful countries in the world (the G8) met to form the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), an agency intended to get the countries of Africa “on track” with the global economy. Not one of the eight leaders, however, was from Africa. NEPAD’s objective is to provide aid to African countries that embrace the required development model. The danger of NEPAD is that it fails to protect Africa from exploitation of its resources. If this game plan sounds familiar to the structural adjustment programs implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that is because they are essentially the same, and NEPAD is essentially controlled by the same neoliberal interests.

The African countries that have officially embraced NEPAD membership are Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon, Ghana, Mauritius, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Gabon, Uganda, Burkina Faso and Mali. Angola also joined the group at the most recent summit meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda, in February of this year. This brings the membership total up to 17 African nations. Protests against NEPAD have, however, continued to erupt all over Africa. One exceptionally large demonstration took place at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

While the ongoing wars in the Middle East have lowered the new colonization of Africa on the list of U.S. priorities, disease, war, poverty, and political instability are still reeking havoc on the African continent. More than 5 million people have died in the
Congo Wars since 1998, and Uganda has suffered over 11,400 deaths due to war, disease, and starvation.


**UPDATE BY TIMOTHY ZOLEZZI:** Little has transpired in terms of “progress” since our story on NEPAD was published in *Censored 2004*, and even less transpired in terms of media coverage. At the beginning of 2003, Canada was due to hand over a highly publicized $500 million in aid, but only $70 million ever materialized. What the Canadian government, along with the IMF, World Bank, and the G8, fail to address, is that a simple cancellation of Africa’s imposed debt would go a long way to initiating recovery.

Most of the aid promised to Africa in 2001 has been withheld because of “unfavorable political, economic, and/or social conditions” in the participating countries. In March 2003, under the recommendation of the G8 countries, the members of NEPAD decided to erect the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). APRM was established as an internal watchdog, assessing the performance and progress of participating countries. At the NEPAD summit conference held in February 2004, it was decided that countries the APRM found to be in compliance with colonizer-friendly NEPAD standards should receive the bulk of the meager aid.

Currently, the only aid offered to Africa by the G8 is $15 billion to establish the Rapid Development Force, which is essentially an army that enforces the policies established by NEPAD. Furthermore,
the $15 billion in aid President Bush offered is conditional upon Africa’s acceptance of genetically modified crops.

The fact that the main motive behind the G8’s construction of NEPAD was to secure colonial-style commerce for Western profit is no secret; yet in a recent interview with the BBC, NEPAD secretary chairman Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu stated, “Through NEPAD, we now have a platform to tackle the G8 countries on a level playing field. The number of African countries actively talking with G8 countries has increased from 5 to 20. There has also been a rise in the number of international organizations funding NEPAD projects.”

Many analysts, both those in favor of and those opposed to NEPAD, speculate that even in light of the newly instituted APRM, NEPAD is on its last legs. With or without NEPAD, however, one thing is certain; Africa is still being ravaged and exploited by the same foreign menaces that have been raping its landscape and people for the last three centuries.


CENSORED #11 2004

U.S. IMPLICATED IN TALIBAN MASSACRE

A documentary entitled Massacre at Mazar, released in 2002 by Scottish film producer Jamie Doran, implicates U.S. troops in the torturing and deaths of approximately 3,000 men from Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. In the documentary, two witnesses claim that they were forced to drive into the desert with hundreds of Taliban
prisoners sealed in cargo containers. The witnesses said that the orders came from a local U.S. commander.

When they reached their destination, Northern Alliance gunmen shot the prisoners who had not yet suffocated to death inside the vans, while 30 to 40 U.S. soldiers stood watching. “They crammed us into sealed cargo containers. We had no water for 20 hours. We banged on the side of the container. There was no air and it was very hot. There were 300 of us in my container. By the time we arrived in Sheberghan, only 10 of us were alive,” described one survivor. Another witness stated that he observed a U.S. soldier break an Afghani prisoner’s neck and pour acid on others.

Afghani warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the man whose forces allegedly carried out the killings, said there were only 200 such deaths and that the prisoners died before the transfer.

“They’re hiding behind a wall of secrecy, hoping this story will go away, but it won’t,” said director Jamie Doran.


**Update by Emilio Licea:** The documentary by Jamie Doran, which implicates American soldiers in the massacre, has been shown throughout Europe, but has yet to be shown in the U.S. The only media attention the massacre has received is from *Newsweek* magazine in the August 26, 2002, issue. Although *Newsweek* did break the story to the U.S. audience, they did not report any information of U.S. involvement.

Jamie Doran was interviewed for the *Newsweek* piece, and the article was based solely on Doran’s documentary, yet when the story was published there was no mention of Jamie Doran or any U.S. implication in the massacre. The article stated that, “nothing *Newsweek* learned suggests that American forces had advance knowledge of the killings, witnessed the prisoners being stuffed into
unventilated trucks, or were in a position to prevent that.” Doran claims that the original article contained much more information, but when the final publication was released, the U.S. involvement portion had been deleted.

The Newsweek piece did verify a crucial fact: that there was an American presence at Sheberghan Prison. U.S. presence near the massacre reveals that it would have been nearly impossible for U.S. soldiers not to have had knowledge of, or to have been involved in, the massacre. The Pentagon has yet to answer any specific questions about a presence in the area, but claims U.S. troops were not involved in the killings.

The most compelling evidence was provided by a U.N.-backed investigation by American forensic anthropologist William Haglund, published in The Observer on March 21, 2004. In the article “U.S. Afghan Allies Committed Massacre,” Haglund reported that he “exhumed 15 bodies, a tiny sample of what may be a very large total.” Luckily, the cold, dry climate of Dast-I-Leili provided a great environment for the preservation of the bodies. This gave Haglund the opportunity to perform thorough autopsies. Haglund concluded that they died from suffocation, which exactly corroborates the stories provided by eyewitness accounts. The combination of Haglund’s investigation and eyewitness accounts reveals that the slaughter of thousands of people occurred. The killing of these Taliban prisoners (even if indirectly by asphyxiation) is a violation of the Third Geneva Convention, and the next step should be a full and thorough investigation of the Afghan massacre.

General Dostum, the suspected leader of the brutal and ruthless massacre, has become even more powerful in the area of Mazar-i-Sharif, due in large part to his alliance with the U.S. military. Dostum’s production of opium has greatly increased, and he continues to control much of northern Afghanistan. The most crucial evidence of the massacre is still under the control of General Dostum: a videotape, which contains footage of U.S. soldier’s direct involvement. It appears that General Dostum is keeping the tape for leverage with U.S. forces.
The hypocrisy of U.S. policy and corporate media complicity is evident in the coverage of Donald Rumsfeld’s stopover in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, on December 4, 2003, to meet General Abdul Rashid Dostum and his rival General Ustad Atta Mohammed. Rumsfeld was there to finalize a deal with the warlords to begin the decommissioning of their military forces in exchange for millions of dollars in international aid and increased power in the central Afghan government.

During the meeting with Dostum, Donald Rumsfeld is quoted as saying, “I spent many weeks in the Pentagon following closely your activities, I should say your successful activities” (Washington Post, December 5, 2003). The Post reported the fact that General Dostum had been instrumental in routing Taliban forces from northern Afghanistan in the early weeks of the war two years ago, but said nothing about General Dostum’s brutal past.


**CORPORATE PERSONHOOD CHALLENGED**

When the founding fathers wrote the Bill of Rights—especially the First Amendment—they did not have corporations in mind. They were leery of dominating interest groups and factions that could undermine democracy and were adamant in bestowing power to the
people. Yet today, corporations claim that rights intended for physical persons somehow pertain to them. It seems like it should just be a matter of common sense. Is a corporation a person?

The claim that corporations use to assert that they have rights as “persons” comes from a defunct 1886 Supreme Court case summary from *Santa Clara County v. the Southern Pacific Railroad Company* that says “the defendant corporations are persons within the intent of the clause in Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which forbids a state to deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The summary came from a court clerk—a former railroad president—and was not really legal, but because it was on the case document, it was treated as such. The notion that corporations have the same rights as people is called corporate personhood. The main use of corporate personhood by corporations is to be exempt from the laws that would normally hold them responsible for their actions. Through the claim that they are persons deserving of equal protection under the Constitution, including free speech, corporations gain the liberty to deceive at will. Since the 1886 case, courts have been reluctant to make a decisive ruling on the legality of corporate personhood itself, but rather have chosen to concentrate on the individual context of each court case.

In 1998, Mark Kasky, an amateur marathon runner and labor activist, sued Nike Inc. over their statements in a PR campaign that misrepresented the work conditions of its overseas factories. In 2002, the California Supreme Court ruled 4-3 that Nike was accountable for its speech and that the corporation’s right to misrepresent itself was not protected by the Constitution. Because Nike’s statements could affect consumers’ choices, their speech was declared commercial expression, for which the corporation is accountable. Nike appealed the free speech case, and it was sent to the Supreme Court for review.

On December 9, 2002, Porter Township, Pennsylvania, became the first municipality to deny corporations personhood and passed an ordinance declaring that “the judicial bestowal of civil and political rights upon corporations interferes with the administrations
of laws within Porter Township and usurps the basic human and Constitutional rights exercised by the people of Porter Township.” Because Porter Township and other small municipals in Pennsylvania are near dumping sites for corporations’ waste and sludge, they are tremendously affected by corporate personhood. Assuming the same Constitutional rights meant for actual persons gives these corporations exemption from responsibility for the people and environments they harm.

**Sources:** Thom Hartmann, “Americans Revolt in Pennsylvania: New Battle Lines are Drawn,” *Wild Matters*, February 2003.

**Update by Melody Lindsey:** The *Nike v. Kasky* case, named as such because Nike was the party appealing, should have set the new precedent in the courts that corporations would no longer be considered persons with constitutional rights to deceive and injure the public. Instead, the case was settled out of court on September 12, 2003, in California after being refused by the Supreme Court in June 2003. Nike, the multinational corporation that pulls in about $10.7 billion in annual sales, agreed to pay $1.5 million to the Fair Labor Association (FLA) for “program operations and worker development programs focused on education and economic opportunity.” The donation to the FLA may be beneficial to overseas labor, but the concept of corporate personhood went unchecked.

In Pennsylvania, there is a new battle with corporations concerning genetically modified seeds grown on family farms in rural townships. In Second-Class Township, Pennsylvania, an ordinance was recently passed to protect the township’s democracy from corporate influence and to protect their farmers from being forced to use genetically modified seeds produced by corporations. The ordinance declares in unison with Porter Township and Licking Township that corporations are not people and that being forced to legally consider them as such hinders the welfare of citizens, environment, and democracy.

CENSORED #14 2004

UNWANTED REFUGEES A GLOBAL PROBLEM

According to the 2002 World Refugee Survey, there are as many as 40 million displaced people throughout the world. Fifteen million are seeking asylum in other countries. In addition, there are at least 22 million “internally displaced” within their country of origin who are not protected by international law and are therefore at even greater risk of oppression and abuse.

Living in the margins of unwilling host communities, long-term refugees are victims, not only of the war and persecution that forced them from their homes, but of the neglect of an international community, unwilling to devote attention and resources this social and humanitarian issue. Herded into huge refugee camps, where the prospect of emigration is slim, they can be deported at any time.

Corporate profiteers from developed countries are finding ways of benefiting from this global misfortune. Wackenhut, one of the largest operators of for-profit prisons, is now setting up, with local subsidies, for-profit internment camps that charge penniless exiles a daily fee and then deport them when they are unable to pay.

Across the globe, increasing numbers of unwanted people are fleeing their homelands and seeking safety in foreign lands. These refugees, in attempts to escape hostile homeland environments, often encounter an unwelcome reception. Most nations are unwilling to accept the responsibility of housing these immigrants, resulting in abuse and neglect of those seeking help.

Mainstream media outlets generally fail to communicate the suffering of these many millions of people. Recently, however, there was coverage of floods of Haitian refugees attempting to enter the U.S. as the Bush Administration denied them political asylum. The Human Rights Organization fears the return of these individuals to Haiti will result in persecution, torture, and death. Similar denials of asylum are occurring around the world, and many refugees are experiencing inhumane treatment.

Studies have shown that children in detention camps suffer from psychological damage and often may need a lifetime of counseling. The Woomera Detention Center in Australia was the site of a research study in which experts compared the practice of detaining children to "child abuse." Despite the closing of Woomera, other detention centers in Australia have come under fierce fire by critics who claim that they serve as for-profit prisons. Inhabitants of Woomera were moved to Baxter, where an electric fence surrounds the area and the compounds face inward, preventing communication with the outside world. In Baxter, Nauru, and Papua New Guinea, refugees can be detained for an indefinite period of time, and individuals often spend years without placement in the community.

Australia’s harsh refugee policies are reflected in similar adaptations by the U.S., Great Britain, and other European countries. Northern Ireland houses refugees in actual prisons. Locked in cells like convicts, many are suffering mental as well as physical health problems. Austria’s largest refugee center, Traiskirchen, is familiar to controversy, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has urged an investigation
into the center. Austria’s hostile attitude toward foreigners includes allegedly rampant racism, sexual assault, and abuse in detention centers where police practice brutal tactics.

The Sudan government has been accused of targeting its own displaced civilians using air strikes and ground attacks on villages. The UNHCR is seeking $16 million to help the refugees cross the boarder into Chad where lack of water and resources hinder the process. With little or no cooperation from the broader international community, the UNHCR and watchdog groups are struggling to ease conditions for refugees.


CENSORED #15 2004

U.S. MILITARY’S WAR ON THE EARTH

The U.S. military is the world’s largest polluter, generating 750,000 tons of toxic material annually. In the U.S., there are 27,000 toxic hot spots on 8,500 military properties. The U.S. military’s pollution also occurs globally, as the U.S. maintains bases in dozens of countries. The military is emitting toxic material into the air and water, poisoning nearby communities, resulting in increased rates of
Rather than cleaning up the problem, the Pentagon claims that focusing on this issue stands in the way of troop readiness. A December 10, 2002, document entitled *Sustainable Ranges 2003 Decision Briefing to the Deputy Secretary of Defense*, unleashed a three-year campaign to exempt all U.S. military activity from all environmental restrictions. The Pentagon already operates military bases as “federal reservations,” which fall outside of normal restrictions. Now the Department of Defense is seeking further exemptions from the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaties Act, the Wildlife Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Air Act.


**Update by Brooke Finley:** Although it seemed that the military couldn’t get any worse in the destruction of our planet, the Bush Administration is now trying to make the military exempt from responsibility for the pollution it causes. The Readiness and Range Preservation Initiative has been submitted to Congress by the Pentagon. Congress has already passed portions of this initiative, including exemptions from the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammals Act, and the Migratory Birds Act. The military can now redefine “harassment” of mammals during sonar testing under the Marine Mammals Act and not be concerned with endangered species or migratory birds when training for war.

Undermining local, state, and federal agency oversight, the next military exemptions planned for discussion with Congress have to do with the Clean Air Act and two pollution laws. These would excuse military bases from toxic dumping restrictions, from mandatory cleanup of unspent munitions, and from restrictions on emissions from military vehicles written into the Clean Air Act.
While the Bush Administration claims that these exemptions will boost the readiness of our military in our time of “war and crisis,” experts disagree. “I don’t believe that there is a training mission anywhere in the country that is being held up or not taking place because of environmental protection regulations,” stated Christine Todd Whitman, former Environmental Protection Agency chief, before she retired from her position. Shortly after Whitman’s retirement, Bush appointed his “old friend” Mike Leavitt to the job. Leavitt, the former governor of Utah, has been involved with some environmental exemptions of his own. Leavitt downplayed the seriousness of toxic releases produced by the Utah mining industry and failed to bring U.S. Magnesium, one of the nation’s top polluters, under control, allowing 42 million tons of chlorine emissions per year into Utah’s environment. Eventually, the EPA had to sue U.S. Magnesium to stop the pollution.

The hazardous waste proposal failed to pass Congress, but it will be reintroduced. A report from the EPA’s staff to the president’s Office of Management and Budget warned against relaxing hazardous-waste regulations, noting that munitions residue could present “an imminent and substantial endangerment of health and the environment.” John Suarez, the EPA’s enforcement chief, however, assured Congress that the easing of the hazardous waste regulations were “appropriate.” If the Bush Administration furthers the military exemptions of hazardous waste cleanup and Congress decides to take advice from John Suarez, per chlorate, a rocket-fuel additive that has been found in ground water and surface water of 27 Defense Department facilities, will continue to contaminate drinking water supplies. Per chlorate has seeped into the Colorado River and has contaminated crops of lettuce and supermarket milk.

In addition to environmental degradation at home, the U.S. military is perpetrating this lack of responsibility globally. U.S. District judge James Ware recently ruled that the nation’s toxic cleanup laws and the 1980 Superfund law do not apply to any U.S. military bases. This ruling, specifically pertaining to two former bases in the Philippines, sets a dangerous precedent, allowing U.S.
armed forces freedom to contaminate foreign nations without being held liable for their actions.


**CENSORED #17 2004**

**CLEAR CHANNEL MONOPOLY DRAWS CRITICISM**

Clear Channel Communications of San Antonio, Texas, may not yet be a household name, but since 1996, the radio station conglomerate has rocketed to a place alongside NBC and Gannett as one of the largest media companies in the United States.

Before passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, a company could not own more than 40 radio stations in the entire country. With the act's sweeping relaxation of ownership limits, the cap on radio ownership was eliminated. As a result, Clear Channel has dominated the industry by growing from 40 radio stations nationally in the mid-'90s, to approximately 1,225 stations nationally by 2003. The station also dominates the audience share in 100 of 112 major markets. In addition to its radio stations, Clear
Channel also owns television station affiliates, billboards, and outdoor advertising and owns or exclusively books the vast majority of concert venues, amphitheaters, and clubs in the country. In 2000, Clear Channel purchased the nation's largest concert and events promoter, and in 2001, Clear Channel did 70 percent of national ticket sales.


UPDATE BY JULIE MAYEDA: Clear Channel Communications is now a $27-billion corporation. Clear Channel operates in 65 countries worldwide. One hundred million listeners tune in daily. Clear Channel makes up 20 percent of all radio industry revenues, controlling 11 percent of all the stations in the country, and owns five times as many stations as its closest competitor.

Clear Channel owns 106 live entertainment venues, including Broadway touring businesses and sporting events, and controls 70 percent of live music venues in the country. In 2002, Clear Channel sold upwards of 30 million concert tickets, 23 million more than the closest competitor, leading to accusations of anticompetitive behavior. Worldwide, the company owns, leases, operates, or books a total of 135 venues. They stage over 135 live entertainment venues across the country.

The third largest revenue maker for the conglomerate is outdoor advertising. They own 716,000 displays, 114,094 in the U.S. and 571,942 in 65 other countries. A significant portion of the outdoor business is in foreign markets. These include billboards, taxi tops, mobile truck panels, and bus, train, shopping mall, and airport displays. Through these displays, the company boasts to reach over half of the overall U.S. population and 75 percent of the nation's Hispanics.

Clear Channel owns 39 TV stations including affiliates of ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, WB, PAX, and UPN, and is within the top 15 TV
groups in terms of audience reach. Clear Channel has ties to Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation (HBC), the largest Hispanic radio network in the U.S. HBC has recently merged with Univision Communications, the largest Hispanic television network in the country.

Clear Channel’s ultimate goal is to dominate broadcast programming and control concert promotion. The company has effectively shut down local competition nationwide, reducing local on-air talent and regionally relevant news and views.

As explained by Clear Channel’s CEO Lowry Mays, “this company is not in the business of providing music, news or information, but rather in the business of selling advertising to its customers.”


CENSORED #19 2004

**U.S. DOLLAR VS. THE EURO: ANOTHER REASON FOR THE INVASION OF IRAQ**
President Richard Nixon removed U.S. currency from the gold standard in 1971. Since then, the world’s supply of oil has been traded in U.S. fiat dollars, making the dollar the dominant world reserve currency. Countries must provide the U.S. with goods and services for dollars—which the U.S. can freely print. To purchase energy and pay off any IMF debts, countries must hold vast dollar reserves. This means that in addition to controlling world trade, the United States is importing substantial quantities of goods and services for very low relative costs.

The euro has begun to emerge as a serious threat to dollar hegemony and U.S. economic dominance. The dollar may prevail throughout the Western Hemisphere, but the euro and dollar are clashing in the former Soviet Union, Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East.

In November 2000, Iraq became the first OPEC nation to begin selling its oil for euros. Since then, the value of the euro has increased 17 percent, and the dollar has declined. One important reason for the invasion and installation of a U.S. dominated government in Iraq was to force the country back onto the dollar. Another reason for the invasion was to dissuade further OPEC momentum toward the euro, especially from Iran, the second largest OPEC producer, which was actively discussing a switch to euros for its oil exports.

Because of huge trade deficits, it is estimated that the dollar is currently overvalued by at least 40 percent. Conversely, the euro-zone does not run huge deficits, uses higher interest rates, and has an increasingly larger share of world trade. As the euro establishes its durability and comes into wider use, the dollar will no longer be the world’s only option. At that point, it would be easier for other countries to exercise financial leverage against the United States without damaging themselves or the global financial system as a whole.

Faced with waning international economic power, military superiority is the United States’ only tool for world domination. Although the expense of this military control is unsustainable, says journalist William Clark, “one of the dirty little secrets of today’s
international order is that the rest of the globe could topple the United States from its hegemonic status whenever they so choose with a concerted abandonment of the dollar standard. This is America’s preeminent, inescapable Achilles’ heel.” If American power is ever perceived globally as a greater liability than the dangers of toppling the international order, the U.S. systems of control can be eliminated and collapsed. When acting against world opinion—as in Iraq—an international consensus could brand the United States as a “rogue nation.”


Update by Ambrosia Pardue: The U.S. is still battling OPEC and other countries that are considering using the euro as a payment for petrol. A trader at the Rothschild bank in London notes, “If the dollar loses its role as a currency of reference, the United States, the world’s largest oil importer, will no longer be able to have outside countries finance its abyssal trade deficit.” The dollar is in fact becoming less and less stable against the euro. On February 12, 2004, the euro was at $1.2804 versus the dollar.

As it stands, oil can only be bought from OPEC in dollars. Non-oil-producing countries sell their goods in order to earn dollars with which to purchase oil. If a country does not have enough dollars, they must borrow them from the World Bank/IMF, incurring debt to be paid back, with interest, in dollars. This increases the demand for dollars, which boosts the U.S. economy. Foreign deposited dollars strengthen the U.S. dollar and give the United States enormous power to manipulate the world economy, set rules, and prevail in the international market. Allowing the U.S. to act as the “world’s central bank,” the dollar becomes oil-backed, rather than gold-backed.

In December 2003, OPEC held a meeting in Vienna, in which its members voiced complaints that oil profits were down 25 to 30
percent due to primarily to attachment to the dollar. Several members are considering a move away from the dollar, including Venezuela, Russia, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Japan has shifted a modest amount of dollar bonds to euro bonds. China announced in July 2003 that it would switch part of its dollar reserves into the euro. After September 11, 2001, Islamic financiers repatriated their investments, which were worth billions of dollars, to Arab banks because there was worry of the possible seizure of assets under the USA Patriot Act. Much of Iran’s reserve fund has also switched to the euro. Some suggest that European countries will pressure OPEC to trade in euros to reduce currency risks.

The Bush Administration presented the U.N. Security Council with “Resolution 1483” on May 9, 2003, which proposed dropping all sanctions against Iraq and giving the U.S./U.K. complete control of Iraq’s oil production revenue. Iraq’s oil was to remain under U.N. control under the “oil for food” program until the U.N. sanctions were lifted but Resolution 1483 establishes a U.S./U.K. administered “Iraqi Assistance Fund” instead. According to William Clark, the “Iraqi Assistance Fund provided the mechanism to quietly and legally reconvert Iraq’s oil exports back to the dollar.” With U.S. control over Iraq, the Bush Administration does not have to worry about that government switching to the euro.

*Z Magazine* reported in February 2004 that the “shock and awe” attack on Iraq served several economic purposes: “(1) Safeguard the U.S. economy by resecuring Iraqi oil in U.S. dollars, instead of the euro, to try to lock the World Bank into dollar oil trading so the U.S. would remain the dominant world power—militarily and economically. (2) Send a clear message to other oil producers as to what will happen to them if they abandon the dollar matrix. (3) Place the second largest oil reserve under direct U.S. control. (4) Create a state where the U.S. can maintain a huge force to dominate the Middle East and its oil. (5) Create a severe setback to the European Union and its euro, the only trading block and currency strong enough to attack U.S. dominance of the world through trade. (6) Free its forces (ultimately) so that it can begin operations against those countries that are trying to disengage themselves from the
U.S. dollar imperialism—such as Venezuela, where the U.S. has supported the attempted overthrow of a democratic government by a junta more friendly to U.S. business/oil interests.”

The U.S. has been encouraging Nigeria with offers of expanded aid to withdraw from OPEC. The U.S. would like to create a new oil cartel in the Middle East and Africa in order to replace OPEC. The U.S. is also pressuring non-OPEC producers to flood the oil market in order to retain the domination in dollars in an attempt to weaken OPEC’s market control.


CENSORED #24

U.S. AID TO ISRAEL FUELS REPRESSIVE OCCUPATION IN PALESTINE

During the last 25 years, U.S. aid to Israel has been about 60 percent military aid and 40 percent economic aid. There is a new plan to phase out all economic aid by 2008 in order to have all the aid going to military. Israel receives about $3 billion a year in direct aid
and $3 billion a year in indirect aid in the form of special loans and grants.

It is with this aid that Israel has been able to continue the comprehensive and unrelenting occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Now, Israel is building a 30-foot high cement wall with gun towers and electric fencing to imprison Palestinians and the entire West Bank.


Update by Anna Miranda: Billions of dollars continues to flow to Israel every year from the U.S. In December 2003, in a move that undermined and threatened the “roadmap to peace,” Ariel Sharon’s unilateral disengagement speech proposed to create an independent Palestinian state. The plan includes redrawing Israel’s border, relocating Israeli Arabs to Palestine, and the removal of some of the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. Sharon’s “generous offer” is contingent on the Palestinian’s agreement to come to the table and negotiate a final settlement.

Concerns over the plan include the redrawing of the border, which would “relocate” Israeli Arab towns and villages into Palestine. The reduction of the Arab population in Israel would reduce the impact and representation of their voice in elections. In addition, Palestinians fear the apartheid wall will become a de facto border where nearly half of the West Bank would be ceded to Israel. The Palestine National Authority has rejected the disengagement plan and views it as “a serious violation and an attempt to destroy the peace process.” Sharon threatens he will not wait for the Palestinians to come to a decision. If they are unable to come to an agreement, Israel will proceed with unilateral disengagement from
the Palestinians “politically and militarily to prevent any contact between them and us.”

Sharon’s oppressive policies continue to devastate the lives of Palestinians. In October 2003, the U.N. General Assembly approved a resolution demanding that the construction of the wall be stopped and reversed and that the killings of both Israelis and Palestinians end. Sharon ignored the resolution and continues to build the wall. According to Israel’s Vice-Premier Ehud Olmert, “The fence will continue to be built. We have to worry about Israel’s security, and it is clear that we will not act according to the instructions of a hostile, automatic majority … which has always acted against Israel.”

Another issue is the continued development of settlements despite its conflict with the road map. The U.S. State Department has stated, “We have made our policy clear, which is that under the road map, Israel has made a commitment to stop settlement activity. Sticking to that commitment is important.” In October 2003, an announcement was made by the Israeli government that 300 new apartments would be built in the West Bank in two settlements—one in Nablus, the other in Jerusalem. More settlers result in more soldiers. More soldiers result in more violence.

In December 2003, 200 people were left homeless in Khan Yunis when the Israeli occupation army destroyed 22 Palestinian homes. In October 2003, the military destroyed 100 homes, leaving 1,500 people homeless and eight people dead, including two children. Death and violence is not limited to the Palestinian people. In April 2003, Tom Hurndall, an activist with the International Solidarity Movement, was shot in the head while shepherding children from the line of fire of Israeli soldiers. Hurndall passed away in January 2004 after being in a coma for nine months. The soldier who shot him was charged with manslaughter, a charge Hurndall’s family says should have been murder. Although violent incidences with the army continue to escalate, there is also a rise in military dissent.

A group of air force pilots, soldiers, and would-be draftees have openly expressed their disagreement with the government’s policies and object to taking part in killing innocent Palestinians. Black
Hawk helicopter and F-16 fighter pilots have been dismissed from the air force and denounced as traitors. These “refuseniks” have been joined by over 30 other pilots who have endorsed a letter refusing to bomb Palestinian cities. Sayaret Matka, an elite commando unit, has received a letter from 13 reserve soldiers who refuse to serve in the West Bank and Gaza strip. A petition supporting the Israeli pilots’ refusal to serve was signed by 64 Israeli movie directors and producers. As protests within the military rise, unprecedented dissent outside the ranks among would-be draftees is causing more trouble for the military.

Five young men have refused to be drafted, not only to serve in the occupied territories, but also to serve in the military altogether. They have been sentenced to serve one-year sentences in jail as well as an additional 14 months while they wait for their trial, a sentence longer than those served by previous dissenters who have only spent one month in jail. These dissenters are unique because instead of avoiding the draft by faking an illness or lying, they have chosen to speak the truth and openly express their disagreement with their government’s policies.


NOTES:


11. *Ibid*.


20. *Ibid*.

