During the thirty-one years of Project Censored’s existence, few stories, if any, have generated more controversy than our inclusion of physicist Dr. Steven E. Jones’s research on the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings on September 11, 2001 as story number eighteen in *Censored 2007*. Debates over the relevance of Jones’s work, not to mention the validity of the US government’s version of what happened on 9/11, have proven fractious again and again. The story is so sensitive that many people simply refused to even consider its investigation. Two of Project Censored’s esteemed national judges resigned because we included this story in the 2007 yearbook.

Dr. Jones is a founding member of Scholars for 9/11 Truth ([www.scholarsfor911truth.org](http://www.scholarsfor911truth.org)) an organization of over two hundred researchers who question the veracity of the US government’s official 9/11 Commission Report.

Scholars in the group have addressed a number of questions regarding 9/11 that remain unanswered: Why did the US government ignore numerous prewarnings from multiple sources, including a team of US military data experts? Why did NORAD fail to intercept the hijacked jets despite more than adequate time to intercede? What is the likelihood that the nineteen alleged terrorists acted without significant US or inside assistance?
Dr. Jones’s research focuses on the collapse of World Trade Center building 7 (WTC7) at 5:20PM on 9/11. Project Censored recognized Dr. Jones for this specific research in our Censored 2007 yearbook and invited him to speak at Sonoma State University (SSU). At SSU, Jones addressed over 250 people, and he emphasized that WTC7 was never hit by an airplane, suffered only minor debris damage from Tower 1, and fires burned on only a few of its floors. Yet, all twenty-four steel support columns in the building collapsed simultaneously, bringing the forty-seven-story building down in 6.6 seconds (at free-fall speed) in its own footprint. Dr. Jones believes that demolition by military-grade thermite is the only possible explanation for the building’s sudden, complete collapse. He reported that research on molten metal from the debris and analysis of WTC dust reveal chemical traces indicative of thermite reactions. At his SSU lecture, Dr. Jones was clear and adamant in stating that he does not know who placed thermite in the building. He has no conspiracy theory regarding who was involved.

Some scientists in the US (including two at our University) have challenged Dr. Jones’s research, but few have actually read or analyzed his work. Instead many prematurely dismiss Jones as a crazy conspiracy theorist, unworthy of consideration.

To the contrary, Dr. Jones has strong support from numerous academic researchers. The Scholars for 9/11 Truth Web site identifies two dozen structural engineers, chemists, and physicists who support his demolition hypothesis. Furthermore, two professors of structural analysis and construction from The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich (ETH)—the Swiss equivalent of Cal Tech or MIT—have expressed their support for Jones’s conclusions.

Additionally, over sixty US architects and engineers have petitioned for an independent investigation with subpoena power in order to uncover the full truth surrounding the events of 9/11/01—specifically the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers and Building 7. They believe that there is sufficient doubt about the official story and therefore that the 9/11 investigation must be reopened and must include a full inquiry into the possible use of explosives that may have been the actual cause behind the
destruction of the World Trade Center Towers and WTC Building 7. (See http://www.ae911truth.org/.)

Nonetheless, the troubling implications of Dr. Jones’s work have triggered widespread challenges, including our local New York Times-owned Press Democrat. On November 4, 2006, the Press Democrat ran a front-page article that labeled Jones a “discredited academic.”

When scientists dispute the interpretation of data regarding matters as important as the events of 9/11, it seems appropriate to us at Project Censored that the dispute be covered as a national news story and that a full review of the evidence take place. Including this story in our Censored yearbook and inviting Jones to present his work for public consideration at Project Censored’s annual Media Accountability Conference is what any university seeking truth in scholarship should do. Media organizations—both corporate and independent—must not shy away from the responsibility to report on serious issues, regardless of the public pressure and the controversial nature of the story (see Chapter 7).

For a video view of a recent Steven E. Jones lecture May 24, 2007 see: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=232719045585115400&q=Amercica+Rebuilding&hl=en

Censored #18, 2007 Physicist Challenges Official 9/11 Story

Research on the events of 9/11 by Brigham Young University physics professor Dr. Steven E. Jones concludes that the official explanation for the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings is implausible according to laws of physics. Dr. Jones is calling for an independent, international scientific investigation “guided not by politicized notions and constraints but rather by observations and calculations.”

Sources:
UPDATE ON RESEARCH CHALLENGING THE OFFICIAL STORY OF 9/11 BY STEVEN E. JONES, JUNE 8, 2007

In my first peer-reviewed paper regarding the events of 9/11, I challenged the “official story” that two hijacked planes alone were sufficient to cause the complete and rapid collapses of three Manhattan skyscrapers, the Towers and World Trade Center 7. The straight-down collapse of WTC 7 is particularly startling since it was not even hit by a jet, yet it collapsed at nearly free-fall speed at 5:20 p.m. on 9/11. The 9/11 Commission Report failed to mention the collapse of this forty-seven-story building in downtown Manhattan, a remarkable oversight. The FEMA report on its collapse admitted, “Our best hypothesis [fire plus some damage] has only a low probability of occurrence.”

Meanwhile, structural engineers and professors have added their voices challenging the official story during the past year. For example, structural engineer Joseph Phelps (who is on the editorial board for the Journal of 9/11 Studies) wrote, “the airplane couldn’t cause this . . . Something is cutting the columns, it’s called controlled demolition.” Hugo Bachmann, a structural professor at ETH in Switzerland, stated, “In my opinion WTC7
was with the highest probability brought down by controlled demolition done by experts.”

Likewise, structural professor Jörg Schneider stated: “WTC7 was with great probability brought down by explosives.” A group of architects and engineers who challenge the official 9/11 story has emerged during the past year along with a group of jet pilots.

One of the most compelling recent finds is that of many iron-rich microspheres in the WTC dust. The presence of metallic spherules implies that these metals were once molten, so that surface tension pulled the droplets into a roughly spherical shape. Then the molten droplets solidified in air, preserving the information that they were once molten in the spherical shape as well as chemical information.

Iron melts at 1538°C (2800°F), so the presence of these numerous iron-rich spheres implies a very high temperature in the WTC to form them. Too hot in fact for the fires in the WTC buildings since jet fuel (kerosene), paper, and wood furniture—and other office materials—cannot reach the temperatures needed to melt iron or steel. The iron-rich component of the WTC dust sample was analyzed in some detail by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and X-ray energy dispersive spectroscopy (X-EDS).

Using these advanced probes, we have determined that many of the spheres contain high aluminum and sulfur contents as well as high iron. (The presence of significant aluminum and sulfur in droplets rules out melted-steel as the source of these spherules.) Iron-aluminum-sulfur rich spheres are seen in both the WTC dust and in spherules produced in thermate-control reactions. Details of the spherules and comparisons will appear in a forthcoming paper. The information borne by these previously-molten microspheres found in large numbers in the WTC dust is striking—the spheres tell us much about what took place that remarkable day in history.

In addition to the work described above, research challenging the “official story” of 9/11 has advanced broadly in the past year as reflected in publications in the Journal of 9/11 Studies. Physicists, chemists, engineers, pilots, historians, and others have researched and published significant contributions in the Journal. A notable paper by Professor David Ray
Griffin is entitled: *The American Empire and 9/11*.\(^{10}\) Physics Professor and Fellow of the American Physical Society, David Griscom, wrote a stern response to an article in *Counterpunch* that belittled 9/11 research.\(^ {11}\) Mechanical engineer Gordon Ross and architect Eric Douglas performed analyses strongly challenging the NIST report. There are over sixty peer-reviewed publications in the *Journal* published during the past year and 9/11 research and teaching continues around the globe at a rapid pace.

**Sources:**

8. See [http://journalof911studies.com](http://journalof911studies.com).
UPDATE BY KEVIN STOLLE

Since our article came out in Censored 2007, Brigham Young University put Dr. Jones on paid leave. Six weeks later he decided to retire so he could “spend more time speaking and conducting research of my own choosing,” Jones said in a statement released by the university. More evidence has come to light, raising additional questions about the official narrative of 9/11. Several videos have surfaced on the Internet showing BBC journalists reporting that Building 7 had collapsed well before it had actually done so. Not only was the broadcast time-stamped at 21:54 (4:54PM EST), a full twenty-six minutes before the event had actually occurred, but the building in question was still standing clearly in the background. According to FEMA, WTC 7 collapsed at 5:20pm on the afternoon of 9/11. CNN also reported that Building 7, “has collapsed or is collapsing,” at 4:15pm. That was over an hour before it actually fell.

After the commotion over the BBC clips, Google removed the footage from Google Video. Google and the BBC are in an “advanced stage of talks” to share content on Google Video.

Another video that surfaced on the Internet is a clip of the PBS documentary “America Rebuilding.” The clip depicts Larry Silverstein, owner of three WTC buildings that collapsed. In the clip he says, “I remember getting a call for the Fire Department commander, telling me they were not sure they were gonna be able to contain the fire. I said ‘ya know, we’ve had such terrible loss of life. Maybe the smartest thing to do is pull it. And they made the decision to pull and we watched the building collapse.” “Pulling it” is jargon for controlled demolition. According to FEMA, NIST, and Frank Fellini, the Assistant Chief responsible for WTC 7 at that time, there were no firefighters in the building at the time. He couldn’t have been referring to “pulling” the firefighters.
Many have also come forward stating that they had been forewarned of the demolition of the building. A New Jersey EMT has gone public on how emergency workers were told that Building 7 was going to be “pulled,” before a twenty second demolition countdown broadcast over radio preceded its collapse. A former NYPD police officer, Craig Bartmer, had helped with rescue efforts on 9/11. He was in the immediate vicinity of building 7 when it collapsed and claims to have heard explosions.

Censored # 3, 2006 Another Year Of Distorted Election Coverage

Story #3 in Censored 2006 was about the uncovered controversy surrounding the presidential election of 2004. The unusual ten million-vote discrepancy between actual vote counts and exit polls in this election brought up the question of fraud. Almost two years later factors such as the purge of black voters, the million missing ballots cast but not counted, and the malfunctioning voting machines all added to the likelihood of fraud and corruption in the 2004 election.

Sources:


PROJECT CENSORED UPDATE TO OUR 2005 REPORTS QUESTIONING THE VERACITY OF THE 2004 US
When we first began investigating suspicious results and processes in the 2004 US Presidential Election, the possibility of a stolen presidential election seemed far-fetched, fantastic, staggering. Yes, there were widespread anecdotal reports of voting problems, the highly curious phenomenon of electronic voting, and the strangely suspect exit polls. But it was difficult to imagine that actual vote counts could be so dramatically altered. Florida 2000 was one thing, but a discrepancy of millions of votes that goes uncontested by the would-be victors, unreported in the media, and which goes unchallenged by scores of political experts, pollsters, and pundits, in what was probably the world’s most closely watched election in half a century—that was an entirely different matter. Surely, some institution in the world’s strongest democracy would prevent—or at least challenge—a crime of this magnitude.

But though American institutions systematically certified the results as legitimate, doubts about neither process nor outcome were resolved. Rather, the more we investigated, the more insistent those doubts became.

In presentations to the American Statistical Association, the American Association for Public Opinion Research, and the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, we showed how an overwhelming preponderance of evidence indicates that had the votes been counted as cast, Bush would have been denied a second term. Rather than providing him with a 120,000-vote plurality, Ohioans rejected Bush’s reelection by 500,000 votes. Had the votes been counted as cast, Bush would have lost Nevada, New Mexico, almost certainly Florida, and several other states as well. Rather than reelecting Bush by three million votes, a national plurality of six million Americans tried to vote Bush out of office.

The evidence proving these numbers are carefully and inescapably laid out in Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen? Exit Polls, Election Fraud, and the Official Count by Freeman and Joel Bleifuss (Seven Stories Press, June 2006. See www.electionintegrity.org/book). Further documentation of the exact mechanisms by which half a million votes were stolen in Ohio has been produced by Bob Fitrakis, Harvey Wasserman, and
Richard Hayes Phillips. Greg Palast has documented additional “lost” Democratic votes around the nation. Marc Crispin Miller added other examples nationwide and explained how and why the media ignore election theft and other critical issues.

It’s scandalous, of course, that the media has never reported these findings. Yet despite the continued neglect of evidence of election theft by the mainstream media, many positive developments have taken place.

First, there has been something of a break in media reporting. Although they haven’t been willing to take on election theft, electronic voting has been widely attacked. The Washington Post ran a full page graphic in March 2006 with the headline “How to Steal an Election” reproducing a chart from Freeman and Bleifuss contrasting the safeguards on Las Vegas slot machine versus the lack of any meaningful assurance on America’s voting machines. Post Editor noted that “Americans protect their vices more than they guard their rights.”(See http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/graphic/2006/03/16/GR2006031600213.html.)

Second, a newly skeptical public has woken up to official dissimulation and the failure of media, only 45 percent of Americans say they are confident that Bush really won the last election. This despite any reports in the media of election fraud.

Third, the values battle is secure. A Zogby poll commissioned by election defense attorney, Paul Lehto, indicated that Americans support the idea of transparent counts by 92 percent-4 percent. Such margins are virtually unheard of in public opinion polls. Essentially, the concept of open, transparent election processes enjoys far more support among Americans than even baseball, hot dogs, or apple pie. Moreover, there has been no abatement of official rhetoric of democracy. If anything it has been upped. That’s one of the main reasons we’re fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq after all.

Fourth, we have seen success elsewhere. E-voting abandoned in Holland; machine voting has been abandoned in entirety in Ireland, partly on the basis of our reports about what has happened here in the US.
And perhaps most important, a new Election Integrity movement has been born. “Election integrity” was not a term in use prior to the work that we began to publish in the aftermath of the 2004 election. But since December 2004, hundreds of groups have formed around the nation. We probably had a material impact in 2006. For the first time in many election cycles, those who had been continually more emboldened in producing more and more fanciful results, may well have been restrained. In states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and California, where our groups have been most active, egregious past results have not been repeated and proponents of election reform have won.

**UPDATE BY JOSH MITTELDORF**

We’ve seen much progress in the last year for mainstream recognition that the system that counts our votes needs cleaning up. As I write this, there is legislation under consideration in Congress, and there are articles, hearings, and open public debate on the subject. What is still missing is any recognition that this is not a potential problem for the future: that elections have been stolen in the past, and that the Bush regime in particular has no legitimacy. On the editorial pages of the “liberal media,” there is an eerie sense that solutions are being proposed, even as no problem is being defined. Of course, it’s all being done in the name of public confidence, to secure our democracy, not to rescue it.

In August 2005, the silence of the mainstream press was first broken. *Harper’s* published an article by Mark Crispin Miller, an eloquent compilation of the evidence that the 2004 presidential election had been stolen, framed in a meditation on the failure of the press to take note ([http://www.harpers.org/ExcerptNoneDare.html](http://www.harpers.org/ExcerptNoneDare.html)). Newsstands sold out. The article turned into a book in October: *Fooled Again: How the right stole the 2004 election, and how they’ll steal the next one too unless we stop them*, published by Basic Books in September 2005.

Eight months later, an article came out in *Rolling Stone* by Robert F Kennedy, Jr., reaching a much wider audience, both because of the circulation of *Rolling Stone* and the name recognition of the author. Some
of the article was based on interviews with Steve Freeman about exit polls and other evidence that the election had been corrupted (see http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/10432334/was_the_2004_election_stolen). Freeman’s book, Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen? was published by Seven Stories Press in June, and Kennedy wrote a follow-up article that appeared in Rolling Stone last October (see http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/11717105/robert_f_kennedy_jr_will_the_next_election_be_hacked/print).

By that time, much of the public had leapfrogged the newspapers and the politicians, and was suspicious of the electoral machinery. In a September Zogby poll, only 45 percent expressed confidence that Bush had won re-election ‘fair and square’ (see http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0609/S00346.htm).

Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) introduced a bill to Congress that will demand paper receipts from electronic voting machines, and which specifies a random audit procedure in an attempt to spot-check the honesty of those machines. But many people in the election integrity movement have already moved beyond the audit approach. As activist-attorney Paul Lehto has said, they’ve taken away the openness and transparency of a public vote count, and they want to give us in return a window through which some kinds of vote tampering can be detected. (As I write this, Holt’s bill is moving through committee in the 110th Congress as HR 811.)

Meanwhile, another election has come and gone. In 2006, Democrats took control of both houses of Congress. Many in the public were reassured, and took the Democratic victory as an indication that the people’s will was served. But the logic of this deduction is not so clear. In fact, the nationwide Democratic margin in November, 2006 was lower by 5 percent than pre-election polls and election-day exit polls would indicate. Jonathan Simon of the Election Defense Alliance estimates that, were it not for broad manipulation of the vote count, the Democrats might have won forty-seven seats, instead of twenty-seven (see http://electiondefensealliance.org/landslide_denied_exit_polls_vs_vote_count_2006).
In April, 2007, the Bob Fitrakis and Harvey Wasserman’s The Free Press Web site dropped a bombshell. Internet records for web address assignment indicate that the votes in the pivotal 2004 Ohio election were counted not on the official server of the Ohio Department of State, but on a private server, owned by a company that leases space to the Republican National Committee. This may explain how hundreds of thousands of votes could have been switched electronically from Kerry to Bush, turning the state of Ohio red, and assuring Bush’s reelection. Once again, Democrats in Congress took no note, and the mainstream press was silent (see http://www.freepress.org/departments/display/19/2007/2553).

All in all, we are in a curious situation indeed. The mainstream press has systematically declined to cover the issue of election theft. The American people—perhaps a majority—seem to have bypassed the press, and they suspect the truth that elections are being systematically subverted. In a sense, the truth has not been so well dissembled, but a key instrument for organizing and establishing legitimacy is AWOL, and our representatives in Congress feel little pressure to change the system that got them “elected.”

UPDATE BY KRISTINE MEDEIROS

In 2005, Rep. John Conyers asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine allegations of election fraud and corruption in the 2004 election. In September 2005 the GAO concluded that, while there is no evidence that the election was rigged, the US election system has a number of serious weaknesses. It found that electronic voting systems “have caused local problems in federal elections resulting in the loss of votes or miscounts of votes.”

One of the major concerns with electronic voting systems, the GAO reports, is that inadequate security systems make them vulnerable to hacking. The report cited a number of examples. On Diebold’s Accu-Vote-TS, the voter may touch the screen for one candidate and the vote will be recorded and counted for another. In Florida, security reviews showed that someone with access to an optical scan system could falsify election results without any record of the deed. Other computer security experts (in a test
environment) used smart cards and memory cards to improperly access administrator functions, vote multiple times, change vote totals and produce false elections reports. “It is incumbent upon Congress,” concluded Rep. Conyers, “to respond to this problem and to enact much needed reforms such as a voter verified paper audit trail that protects all Americans rights to vote.”

In the 2000 election two million African Americans votes were not cast and Kerry vowed to the NAACP that it would not happen again. But nearly 3 million votes were cast and not counted in the 2004 election. Journalist Greg Palast predicted what happened in 2004, and he is predicting it for the 2006 and 2008 elections. Behind the 2000 felon purge lists and behind the 2004 caging lists were databases from the same companies that now have homeland security contracts.

Palast claims that there is a pattern to the manipulation of national elections. This includes “spoiling” ballots (such as the hanging chads), rejecting “provisional ballots,” voters finding themselves at the “wrong” precinct or wrongly “scrubbed” from voter rolls, “caging” lists used to challenge voters with “suspect” addresses, not counting absentee ballots, and delayed registrations. Many of these were tactics used during the Jim Crow era following the Civil War. They are also tactics that the US has chastised dictatorships and rogue nations for using.

Meanwhile, for 2006 and 2008, the GOP is pushing new Voter ID requirements that, if passed, could quadruple the number of voters turned away from the polls for “wrong” ID (like a missing middle initial on your voter registration).

To learn more about Palast’s forecasts for the 2006 and 2008 elections, read Armed Madhouse by Greg Palast (see gregpalast.com). For more information about the controversy over the 2004 presidential election, read “Was the 2004 Election Stolen?” by Robert Kennedy Jr. in the June 1, 2006 edition of Rolling Stone and “Was the 2004 Election Stolen? NO” by Fahad Manjoo on Salon.com, June 6, 2006.

Sources:


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**Censored #1 2007 Future of Internet Debate Ignored by Media**

**Sources:**

[Buzzflash.com](http://www.buzzflash.com), July 18, 2005  
Title: “Web of Deceit: How Internet Freedom Got the Federal Ax, And Why Corporate News Censored the Story”  
Author: Elliot D. Cohen, Ph.D.

Throughout 2005-2006, a large underground debate raged regarding the future of the Internet. Groups advocating “Net Neutrality” want a legal mandate that would require cable companies to allow Internet service providers (ISPs) free access to their cable lines (called a “common carriage” agreement). This was the model used for dial-up Internet, and it is the way content providers want to keep it. They also want to make sure that cable companies cannot screen or interrupt Internet content without a court order.

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**The Battle Over Net Neutrality Continues**

By Steve Anderson
The discussion of Net Neutrality in our last edition left off noting that on June 8, 2006, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed the Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement (COPE) Act (HR 5252) with a 321-101 vote, without the accompanying Network Neutrality Act (HR 5273). The Net Neutrality Act would have essentially made Net Neutrality an enforceable law.¹

After the COPE Act passed the House, the bill moved to Senate, with advocates on either side engaging in a fierce battle to sway this critical vote. Supporters of the COPE Act claimed the bill would support innovation and freedom of choice. Net Neutrality advocates say that its passage would make Internet Service Providers (ISP’s) gate-keepers of the Internet.

The June 28, 2006 Senate vote on a Net Neutrality-friendly amendment offered by Sens. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) fell to a 11-11 tie, shortly after US Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) placed a “hold” on the COPE Act legislation essentially stalling the bill until changes were made.²

Shortly before the Senate voted on the COPE Act Alaska Republican Ted Stevens, head of the Senate Commerce Committee, made this fateful remark: “The Internet is not something that you just dump something on. It’s not a big truck. It’s, it’s a series of tubes.” The statement was humorously conveyed on The Daily Show, and even remixed into a techno song, which was widely distributed online.³ Shortly after the Ted Stevens debacle the SavetheInternet.com coalition received a further boost when Internet pioneer Sir Tim Berners-Lee forcefully argued in favor of Net Neutrality in a New York Times interview.⁴

Over the summer hundreds of Web users concerned about Net Neutrality inundated the Internet with videos and blog entries encouraging fellow citizens to get involved in the issue. As the Senate’s August recess drew to a close citizens supporting Net Neutrality rallied in twenty-five cities nationwide, delivering SavetheInternet petitions to their senators and urging them to oppose the phone and cable companies’ attempts to gut Net Neutrality. The citizen-led movement is what Salon would later describe as “a ragtag army of grassroots Internet groups, armed with low-budget
The telecoms employed Mike McCurry, Clinton’s former press secretary, to lead their lobbying effort with an industry funded group called Hands Off the Internet. The group produced its own online videos poking fun at the SavetheInternet.com coalition and relaying their view of Net Neutrality.

The HR 5252 bill died with the end of 109th Congress, and the situation looked positive for Net Neutrality proponents with the new Democrat-controlled House and Congress. On December 28, AT&T officials agreed to adhere to strict Network Neutrality if allowed to complete an $85 billion merger with BellSouth. The SaveTheInternet.com coalition called it “A victory we can hang our hats on.”

Over the course of 2006 the nation’s largest phone and cable companies spent more than $100 million on DC lobbyists, think tanks, ads and campaign contributions to defeat Network Neutrality. At the same time The SavetheInternet.com coalition grew to 850 groups including National Religious Broadcasters, the Service Employees International Union, the American Library Association, EDUCAUSE, Gun Owners of America, Future of Music Coalition, Parents Television Council, the ACLU, and every major consumer group in the country. The coalition also includes thousands of bloggers and hundreds of small companies that do business online. This diverse coalition resulted in more than 1.5 million Americans contacting their representatives urging them to support net neutrality.

A Victory With Historic Proportions

If the SavetheInternet.com coalition succeeds in making Net Neutrality, law citizens will have scored a victory “of historic proportions,” according to Geov Parrish of WorkingforChange.com. “Name the last time a lobby with that much power and money was stymied in its top legislative priority by a citizen movement,” Parrish wrote. “Offhand, I can’t think of any examples at all. And this during the most corrupt, lobbyist-pliant Congress in recent American history.”
In keeping with past success SaveTheInternet.com launched the latest manifestation of the campaign with an online video called Save The Internet: Independence Day. The video outlines how everyday Internet users and grassroots organizations can save Internet freedom. Save The Internet: Independence Day quickly made its way around the net through users sharing the video with friends and family. Also crucial to the circulation of this video are independent media outlets and bloggers, who are also threatened by a closed Internet.

Making Net Neutrality Law and More

In the new year The SaveTheInternet.com coalition began pushing congress to make Net Neutrality law. Using their (now award-winning) “Independence Day” video, the coalition began campaigning for a faster, more open, and accessible Internet. On January 8, Sen. Byron L. Dorgan (D-S.D.) and Sen. Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine) sponsored the Internet Freedom Preservation Act of 2007, which would protect net neutrality.

On June 11, 2007 at the Savetheinterent “Party for the Future” celebration of Net Neutrality victories, the SavetheInternet.com coalition unveiled the “Internet Freedom Declaration of 2007.” The Declaration sets forth a plan not just for winning Net Neutrality in Congress, but establishing faster, universal, and affordable broadband for everyone. The declaration calls for “world-class quality through competition,” “an open and neutral network,” and “universal affordable access.” The declaration is a big step in media reform, changing the terms of debate from defending against further media deregulation, to demanding a truly public media infrastructure.11

In March 2007 SavetheInternet.com supporters rallied for “in-district” meetings with members of Congress and their staff. The rallies resulted in several members pledged to support Net Neutrality legislation when it came to a vote in Congress.12

On March 15, 2007, all five FCC Commissioners were brought before the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet to testify
about their decisions regarding Net Neutrality. Members of the House pressed FCC Chairman Kevin Martin to take a stronger position in support of Net Neutrality. The hearing was the first time in three years that commissioners had appeared before the Subcommittee.  

In May 2007 an “Ad Hoc Public Interest Spectrum Coalition” made a proposal to the FCC on how the auction of the valuable 700 MHz spectrum should be conducted. The 700 MHz spectrum can be used to offer wireless Internet, and the proposal asserted the auction should provide “new entrants [with] the opportunity to enter the market in competition with incumbent providers.” The coalition includes the Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, EDUCAUSE, Free Press, Media Access Project, New America Foundation, and US Public Interest Research Group. As of June 4, a quarter-million people have contacted the FCC urging the agency to use the 700 MHz spectrum to offer a more open and competitive Internet service ecology.  

On March 22, 2007 The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unanimously voted to seek public comment on the possibility of adding a network neutrality principle to its 2005 Internet Policy Statement. The comment period ends on June 15, 2007, and already tens of thousands have made submissions.  

Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Barack Obama, and Bill Richardson, among others, have all stated their strong support for legal protections for Net Neutrality. Supporters were joined by GOP candidate Mike Huckabee (R-Arkansas), who told a collection of bloggers that Net Neutrality must be preserved.  

Steve Anderson is the Founder of The Center For Information Awareness and is the Publisher at COA News.  

Citations  

1. See  
   http://www.buzzflash.com/contributors/05/07/con05238.html
13. See http://www.infoworld.com/article/07/03/14/HNdemocratsgrillfcc_1.html.
The battle over “network neutrality” on the Internet continued to rage in 2006. In the last year, some triumphs have been made to protect Net Neutrality, yet the fight is far from decided. The House passed the Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement (COPE) Act (HR 5252) last year but the Act still sits in the Senate. In tandem with this Act, the Internet Freedom Preservation Act (S 215) was introduced into the Senate on January 9, 2007. As of this writing, no final vote had been taken and the Act still awaits analysis in the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. This Act would amend the Communications Act of 1934, protecting net neutrality against Internet providers who would limit access based on fees garnished by content providers.\(^1\)

Additionally, as part of the merger of AT&T and BellSouth, there was a stipulation that AT&T maintains Net Neutrality for at least the next two years.\(^2\) This may seem to be good precedent for future companies to uphold Net Neutrality, but as the Chairman of the FCC, Kevin Martin, clarifies, this is not meant to be enforceable on other companies and he “would oppose such policies in the future.”\(^3\) The contest over Net Neutrality has also achieved greater prominence in mainstream society since 2008 Democratic presidential candidates have helped position it among the issues to be covered in the race.\(^4\) This is coupled with Internet grassroots organizations taking part in the debate, such as MoveOn.org and SaveTheInternet.com. The fight marches on and is it yet to have any permanent resolution.

**Citations**


UPDATE: JUNE 12, 2007 Maine Is First State in Nation to Pass Net Neutrality Resolve

A diverse coalition of Mainers applauded the enactment today of the first Net Neutrality resolve in the nation. The resolution, LD 1675, recognizes the importance of “full, fair and non-discriminatory access to the Internet” and instructs the Public Advocate to study what can be done to protect the rights of Maine Internet users.

“Maine is the first state in the nation to stand up for its citizens’ rights to a nondiscriminatory Internet,” said Senator Ethan Strimling, the original sponsor of LD 1675. “The rest of the nation should follow suit and study what can be done to protect net neutrality.”

“This important legislation puts Maine first in affirming that Internet providers should not be allowed to discriminate by speeding up or slowing down Web content based on its source, ownership or destination,” said Tony Vigue of the Community Television Association of Maine.

Source: http://www.acmecoalition.org/

Censored #2 2007 Halliburton Charged with Selling Nuclear Technologies to Iran

Sources at Halliburton allege that, as recently as 2005, Halliburton sold key components for a nuclear reactor to an Iranian oil development company. Leopold says his Halliburton sources have intimate knowledge of the business dealings of both Halliburton and Oriental Oil Kish, one of Iran’s largest private oil companies.
Much has been made about the swirling controversy and connection between the current Bush Administration and Halliburton. It is widely known that Vice President Dick Cheney was the CEO of Halliburton from 1995-2000, before he came into office. Less known are allegations by sources of journalist Jason Leopold that Halliburton sold materials used in building nuclear reactors to an Iranian oil development company as recently as January 2005.

Federal law prohibits US companies from trading directly with Iran because of its ties to terrorist organizations. This federal law was enacted after Bush’s infamous declaration of Iran being a part of the “Axis of Evil.” However foreign subsidiaries are allowed to do business with Iran, as long the foreign business is independent of the US business.

Halliburton Products & Services Ltd., the foreign subsidiary in Iran, recently quit operations after current CEO David Lesar announced on Monday April 9, 2007 that the company would not take any more business in Iran. Several of these reasons included a poor business environment and low profit, as well as safety concerns. Halliburton’s announcement came on the same day that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that his country was now capable of producing nuclear fuel on an industrial scale.

“Halliburton had to be dragged kicking and screaming out of Iran,” said Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ). “If Halliburton wasn’t pressured by Congress, they would still be doing business in Iran,” he added.

Halliburton and its former KBR Inc. division have been heavy targets of criticism because of KBR’s more than $19 billion in Pentagon contracts as the sole provider of food and shelter services to the military in Iraq and
Afghanistan. In April 2007, Lesar announced the sell-off the KBR construction and services unit, which has been under heavy scrutiny for overcharging the US military in Iraq.

Lesar decided to move the headquarters of his large oil industry to Dubai. According to a press release on the Halliburton Web page, Lesar announced on March 11, 2007 that he would move the company to Dubai to further the company’s efforts in growing Halliburton’s business in the Eastern Hemisphere. He also said that over the next five years that Halliburton would shift 70 percent of its capital investment, which includes oil and gas zones in the Middle East, Russia, Africa, the North Sea and East Asia.

Halliburton is the first major western corporation to move its chief executive to Dubai. The Dubai office allows him to be closer to the world’s largest oil companies, such as Saudi Aramco and Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. Halliburton will continue to pay taxes on its global earnings and will remain a US-registered company trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

The move of the headquarters to Dubai is of great concern for the reason that this potentially allows for breaking of US sanctions, and potential illegal dealings that would help Iran or other such rogue nations to further develop their nuclear program.

**Sources**


Censored #3 2007 Oceans of the World in Extreme Danger

Oceanic problems once found on a local scale are now pandemic. Data from physical oceanography, marine biology, meteorology, fisheries science, and glaciology assert the seas are changing in every way. The world ocean is growing warmer and atmospheric litter has altered its chemistry radically. Thousands of toxic compounds poison marine creatures and devastate propagation, creating dead zones and laying waste to coastal nurseries, coral reefs, and kelp forests. Reckless fishing practices have ramped up, dredged ocean bottoms, and driven species toward extinction. Human failure in governance of the world’s largest public domain threatens critical elements of the global life support system.

Source

Mother Jones, March/April, 2006
Title: “The Fate of the Ocean”
Author: Julia Whitty

UPDATE BY JOCELYN THOMAS

In 2006, researchers from around the globe—including staff from the Zoological Society of London, and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition—called on the United Nations to ban dredging ocean bottoms. As of June 2007, the effort has seen little success.

In July of 2006, a study was published by the US National Center for Atmospheric Research showed continued over-acidification of the world’s oceans. The report claimed that since 1800 there has been a huge influx of carbon dioxide in the oceans. Now, in addition to warming the oceans, that influx has also being linked to rising acidity in the ocean waters, according to the researchers. According to one of the research team leaders, the ocean is currently experiencing “the most dramatic changes in marine chemistry in the past 650,000 years.”¹ This increase in acidity is causing the
breakdown of coral reefs, so much so that a 2004 study estimated that one-fifth of the world’s coral reefs are completely destroyed.\(^2\)

In November of 2006, the journal *Science* published a report that the “progressive unraveling of entire marine ecosystems . . . could lead to the ‘collapse’ of all commercial species.”\(^3\) The researchers’ findings were used as backbones for stories in the *New York Times*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Sacramento Bee*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

**Citations**


**Censored #4 2007 Hunger and Homelessness Increasing in the US**

The number of hungry and homeless people in US cities continued to grow in 2005, despite claims of an improved economy. Increased demand for vital services rose as needs of the most destitute went unmet, according to the annual *US Conference of Mayors Report*, which has documented increasing need since its 1982 inception.

**Sources:**

*The New Standard*, December 2005
Title: “New Report Shows Increase in Urban Hunger, Homelessness”
Author: Brendan Coyne

*OneWorld.net*, March, 2006
Title: “US Plan to Eliminate Survey of Needy Families Draws Fire”
According to the most recent report by the Conference of Mayors (December 2006) more people were homeless and hungry in 2006 than in 2005, with children making up a quarter of the homeless in emergency shelters.

In 2006 civic and government groups received 7 percent more requests for food than in 2005, with 74 percent of the cities registering an increase. Additionally, emergency assistance for the elderly increased by 18 percent. Of the emergency food requests, 23 percent were unmet, and 18 percent of the requests for emergency assistance were also unmet. Twenty-nine percent of requests made by homeless families (children and parents) were unmet in 2006. Additionally, 86 percent of the emergency shelters had to turn away homeless families, along with having to turn away 77 percent of other homeless people. People remain homeless an average of eight months in the survey cities. Thirty-two percent of the cities said that the length of time people were homeless increased during the last year.

The outlook for 2007 was bleak, as the Mayors’ Report expected an increase in requests for emergency food assistance and emergency shelters nationwide. Major media in the US again ignored the Mayors’ Report. A few regional newspapers such as the Boston Globe, that reported on January 11, 2007 that Project Bread, a nonprofit that is active in working to end hunger, recently issued a status report on hunger in Massachusetts finding that hunger was a serious problem in thirty-five cities and towns in the Commonwealth.

In the Congo six to seven million have died since 1996 as a consequence of invasions and wars sponsored by western powers trying to gain control of the region’s mineral wealth. At stake is control of natural resources that are sought by US corporations—diamonds, tin, copper, gold, and more significantly, coltan and niobum, two minerals necessary for production of cell phones and other high-tech electronics; and cobalt, an element essential to nuclear, chemical, aerospace, and defense industries.

In 1996 US-sponsored Rwandan and Ugandan forces entered eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. By 1998 they seized control and moved into strategic mining areas. The Rwandan Army was soon making $20 million or more a month from coltan mining. The mineral is shipped abroad, mostly through Rwanda then sold to companies like Nokia, Motorola, Compaq, Sony and other manufacturers for use in cell phones and other products. The process is tied to major multinational corporations at all levels. These include US-based Cabot Corporation, OM Group, GE, Boeing, Raytheon, and Bechtel.

**Sources:**

*The Taylor Report*, March 28, 2005
Title: “The World’s Most Neglected Emergency: Phil Taylor talks to Keith Harmon Snow”

*Earth First! Journal*, August 2005
Title: “High-Tech Genocide”
Author: Sprocket

*Z Magazine*, March 1, 2006
Title: “Behind the Numbers: Untold Suffering in the Congo”
Authors: Keith Harmon Snow and David Barouski

**UPDATE BY JEFF HULING**
In 2005, the Democratic Republic of Congo’s (DRC) transitional government under Joseph Kabila established a commission to uncover fraud in wartime contracts. Congolese lawmaker Christophe Lutundula headed the investigation panel.

The Lutundula Commission report investigated mining and other business contracts that rebels and government authorities signed between 1996-2003, uncovering illegal natural resource exploitation, profiteering from armed conflict, and fraud by international mining companies. The report denounces contracts signed by recently elected (November 2006) President Joseph Kabila, and it advises that others be renegotiated or canceled.

The World Bank has been reluctant to act on the commission’s recommendations. In February 2006, NGO Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID) called on World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz to investigate the Bank’s inadequate program for restructuring the DRC’s mining sector. RAID asked for the Bank’s nomination of an independent group of experts to examine the legality of mining contracts since 2003. So far the Bank has failed to heed RAID’s recommendation.

In November 2006, a confidential World Bank memo leaked to the Financial Times revealed that three of the DRC’s biggest mining contracts over which the World Bank had oversight were approved with “a complete lack of transparency.” Craig Andrews, the World Bank’s principal mining specialist, wrote the memo to Pedro Alba, the country director for Congo, saying that the deals had not undergone a “thorough analysis, appraisal, and evaluation” before being approved. The contracts, between state-owned Gécamines and three international mining groups, signed away 80 percent of Gécamines’s mineral asset base to private mining companies.

The World Bank’s country manager in Congo, Jean-Michel Happi, said legal and financial audits would proceed. Paul Fortin was appointed by World Bank to manage Gécamines, but President Kabila’s allies on Gécamines’s board have veto power on any recommendations made by Fortin.
Patricia Feeney, executive director of Rights and Accountability in Development, a British-based NGO, said it would be “a huge battle” to end corruption. “The group that has benefited the most from these mining contracts has been Kabila’s entourage.”

In October 2006, Sierra Leone’s mineral resource minister Mohamed Swarray Deen revealed that coltan (and platinum reserves) were discovered in the region. International companies have already submitted bids to extract the minerals.

Sources:

“Sierra Leone discovers coltan, platinum reserves,” Agence France-Presse, October 4, 2006.


Censored #6 2007 Federal Whistle-blower Protection in Jeopardy
Special Counsel Scott Bloch, appointed by President Bush in 2004, is overseeing the virtual elimination of federal whistle-blower rights in the US government. The US Office of Special Counsel (OSC), the agency that is supposed to protect federal employees who blow the whistle on waste, fraud, and abuse is simply dismissing hundreds of cases. According to the Annual Report for 2004 (which was not released until the end of 1st quarter FY 2006) less than 1.5 percent of whistle-blower claims were referred for investigation while more than 1,000 reports were closed before they were even opened.

On March 3, 2005 OSC staff members joined by a coalition of whistle-blower protection and civil rights organizations filed a complaint against Bloch. His own employees accused him of violating the very rules he is supposed to be enforcing. The complaint specifies instances of illegal gag orders, cronyism, invidious discrimination, and retaliation by forcing the resignation of one-fifth of the OSC headquarters legal and investigative staff.

Source:
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility Web site.

UPDATE BY TONI CATELANI

The Office of the Special Counsel (OSC) is the government agency mandated to protect federal whistle-blowers and is also in charge of policing whether federal employees are engaging in political activity on the job. Scott Bloch, the head of the OSC, has been the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Office of Personnel Management Inspector General at the behest of the Bush White House, because of a whistle-blower complaint alleging a host of misconduct charges against him by his own staff.
As this investigation reaches its final stages, Bloch has announced that he will investigate the White House over the firing of US Attorneys, missing Karl Rove e-mails, and political briefings for General Services Administration managers. “It makes no sense for Scott Bloch to investigate the White House while the White House investigates Bloch” according to PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch. Indeed, it seems unlikely that the OSC will be able to conduct a thorough investigation into the White House while Scott Bloch is under investigation himself. However, questions remain about whether OSC has the jurisdiction and legal authority to launch this type of investigation.

OSC has become a “black hole” for whistleblower disclosures and incidence of retaliation has increased exponentially under the Bush administration according to watchdog groups. On March 14, 2007, Congress finally got on board by passing H.R. 985, The Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2007, by a vote of 331- 94. Included in the bill is protection for employees in scientific agencies, and for CIA and FBI employees who have no federal whistle-blower protection under the original 1989 legislation. CIA and FBI employees have undergone extensive background investigations, obtained security clearances, and handled classified information on a routine basis, yet they receive no protection when they come forward to identify abuses that undermine national security. H.R. 985 is currently in Senate Committee and the White House has threatened to veto, citing national security concerns.

For more information and updates regarding this issue please visit the following websites:

http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/052207K.shtml

Sources:

Author: Jeff Ruch
Censored # 7 2007 US Operatives Torture Detainees to Death in Afghanistan and Iraq

On October 25, 2005, the American Civil Liberties Union released documents of forty-four autopsies held in Afghanistan and Iraq. Twenty-one of those deaths were listed as homicides. “These documents present irrefutable evidence that US operatives tortured detainees to death during interrogation,” said Amrit Singh, an attorney with the ACLU. “The public has a right to know who authorized the use of torture techniques and why these deaths have been covered up.”

The Department of Defense released the autopsy reports in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by the ACLU, the Center for Constitutional Rights, Physicians for Human Rights, and Veterans for Common Sense and Veterans for Peace.

An overwhelming majority of the so-called natural deaths covered in the autopsies were attributed to “arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease” (heart attack). Persons under extreme stress and pain may have heart attacks as a result of their treatment as detainees.

The Associated Press carried the story of the ACLU charges on their wire service. However, a thorough check of Lexus-Nexus and Proquest
electronic databases, using the keywords ACLU and autopsy, showed that fewer than two percent of US daily papers reported the story.

Sources:
American Civil Liberties Web site, October 24, 2005 Title: “US Operatives Killed Detainees During Interrogations in Afghanistan and Iraq”

Tom Dispatch.com, March 5, 2006
Title: “Tracing the Trail of Torture: Embedding Torture as Policy from Guantanamo to Iraq”
Author: Dahr Jamail

UPDATE BY REGINA MARCHESCHI

Since Censored 2007 appeared, only two newspapers—The Targeted News Service (May, June, and July of 2006) and the Miami Herald (June 2006)—covered these atrocities. Notably, however, the Herald reported that the detainees committed suicide, and did not report the actual autopsy findings. By contrast, The Targeted News Service stated that these atrocities violated domestic and international law, that the Defense Department allowed these abuses to flourish, and that some of the techniques used, such as stress positions, were similar to those authorized in Guantánamo in 2002 by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld. However, the perpetrators of these atrocities along with senior officials who sanctioned them, such as Rumsfeld, have escaped accountability.

This has not changed. In September 2006, President Bush defended torture, stating that it was an “alternative set of [interrogation] procedures” (Human Rights Watch 2007). In October of 2006, the US Congress, “acting on behest of the Bush administration, denied Guantánamo detainees the possibility of challenging their detention in court via the right of habeas corpus” (Human Rights Watch 2007). Secretary Rumsfeld stated that [any] “government official who authorizes or condones torture is entirely immune
from suit and cannot be held accountable for his actions” (Human Rights First Press Release, March 6, 2006).

More than 100,000 documents that have been turned over to the ACLU as a result of the Freedom of Information Act litigation are available at www.aclu.org/torture.

The ACLU released a full report on US torture to the United Nations Committee Against Torture in April of 2006. The report, “Enduring Abuse: Torture and Cruel Treatment by the United States at Home and Abroad,” states that: “The United States has failed to comply with its obligations under the Convention Against Torture at home and abroad. To justify torture and abuse in the ‘global war on terrorism,’ the government narrowly defined torture and argued that the prohibition against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment does not apply outside the United States. Its selective interpretation of the Convention justified the development of interrogation techniques that violated the treaty, created a climate of confusion among US soldiers, and led to widespread torture and abuse of detainees in Guantánamo Bay, Iraq, and Afghanistan.”

The report goes on to state that

[T]his abuse was the direct result of policies promulgated from high-level civilian and military leaders and the failure of these leaders to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by subordinate the widespread and systemic nature of the torture and abuse, the United States has refused to authorize any independent investigation into the abuses. No high-level official involved in developing or implementing the policies that led to torture and abuse has been charged with any crime related to the abuses. The government continues to assert that the abuse was simply the actions of a few rogue soldiers.

A provision was quietly tucked into the Military Commissions Act just before it passed through Congress and was signed into law by President Bush on October 17, 2006. It redefines torture, removing the harshest, most controversial techniques from the definition of war crimes, and exempts the perpetrators—interrogators and their bosses—from punishment all the way
back to November 1997. The provision could keep Bush Administration officials and former officials—such as Donald Rumsfeld—from prosecution for war crimes (see Chapter 1, Censored Story #14).

To stay current on this critical topic, please visit the following websites regularly:

http://www.amnesty.org/
http://www.hrw.org/
http://www.ccr-ny.org/v2/home.asp

Censored #9 2007 The World Bank Funds Israel-Palestine Wall

Despite the 2004 International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision that called for tearing down the Israel-Palestinian Wall and compensating affected communities, Israel has accelerated construction of the Wall. The barrier’s route runs deep into Palestinian territory, aiding Israeli annexation and fracturing Palestinian territorial continuity.

In December 2004, the World Bank outlined the framework for a Palestinian Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) policy. Central to World Bank proposals were the construction of massive industrial zones where Palestinians imprisoned by the Wall and dispossessed of land could be put to work for low wages. The MEFTA vision also set forth a plan for the construction of high-tech military gates and checkpoints along the Wall, allowing for complete control over the movement of Palestinians and exports. The project would be financed by the World Bank and other donors and controlled by the Israeli Occupation.

Sources:

Left Turn Issue #18
Title: “Cementing Israeli Apartheid: The Role of World Bank”
Author: Jamal Juma’
UPDATE BY JONATHAN KAUFMANN

In March 2007, the World Bank released an assessment of Gaza and the West Bank’s poor economic climate. The study stated that the Wall was the biggest impediment to growth in Palestine’s private sector, but omitted any mention of the barrier’s illegality. The report cited the over five hundred “checkpoints and obstacles” within the West Bank as the major challenges to economic development there, and said that the Occupied Territories’ industry was doomed to fail unless restrictions on Palestinian movement were relaxed.

The following April, a progress report written by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) recorded a significant decline of living conditions in the occupied territories between July and December of 2006. Unemployment was at 28.4 percent, and an estimated 165,000 employees in the public sector received reduced wages. As a result, the number of Palestinians living on less than a dollar a day increased to 40 percent in the West Bank and 80 percent in Gaza.

The Palestinian dependency on humanitarian assistance has grown, but the electoral victory of the Hamas party in January 2006 caused a boycott that froze international aid to the Palestinian Authority. According to the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), agencies have been struggling to raise funds necessary to assist Palestinians. Many aid workers have said that in order to solve the financial problems of the Occupied Territories, a long-term political solution is needed.

Works Cited


Censored #10, 2007

Deadly strikes by US warplanes are seen as a way to improve dramatically the combat capabilities of even the weakest Iraqi combat units. However, the overall level of violence and the number of Iraqi fatalities has increased dramatically.

Sources:


UPDATE BY DON NELSON

When the US entered into war with Iraq in 2003, few expected the ongoing war to last four years. Many speculated that, because of the President’s
diminishing approval ratings—including resistance from military leadership and within his own party—the US would begin to withdraw American troops from Iraq in 2006. This was not the case, of course, and in mid-2007 the President appears intent on escalating the US troop commitment in Iraq while intensifying air attacks.

According to the Associated Press, during the first four and a half months of 2007, American aircraft dropped 237 bombs and missiles in support of ground forces in Iraq. This surpasses the 229 expended in all of 2006. After the 2003 “shock and awe” invasion where thousands of missiles and bombs were dropped, US airpower has settled down a bit. Air Force figures show that there were 285 munitions dropped in 2004, 404 in 2005, and 229 in 2006. These totals don’t include warplanes’ often devastating use of 20mm and 30mm cannon or rocket fire, or firing by Marine Corps aircraft. Army Lt. Col Bryan Cox, a ground-forces liaison at the regional air headquarters says that the number of Air Force and Navy “close air support” missions, which usually involve a flyover show of force or surveillance work, rather than bombing, also has grown by 30 to 40 percent in spring 2007.

Iraq Body Count, a London based anti-war research group maintains a database compiling news media reports on Iraqi war deaths. In their report of Iraqi casualties from US air strikes, they found that Iraqi civilian deaths averaged just a few a month in early 2006 while climbing to forty a month by year’s end, and averaging more than fifty a month thus far in 2007.

The US military doesn’t record death totals for Iraqi civilians. “Air operations over Iraq have ratcheted up significantly, in the number of sorties (in the air)” said Col. Joe Guastella, the Air Force’s operations chief for the region. “It has a lot to do with increased pressure on the enemy by the MNC—the Multinational Corps—Iraq combined with more carriers.”

Reducing the number of troops in Iraq seems to be the furthest thing from President Bush’s mind. He aims to send at least another 28,000 troops to Iraq, mainly in the area of Baghdad as part of the US-led security plan. The plan involves moving troops from fortified bases to closer contact with civilians and insurgents. This has resulted in a higher number of casualties and is evident in the statistics that show that in April and May of 2007 that 231 US forces were killed. The 231 fatalities is the largest two-month total
for US deaths, exceeding the 215 that died in April-May 2004 when US troops fought insurgents in Fallujah. In January of 2007, Bush said there would be more than 150,000 troops in Iraq by the end of June. According to AP military writer Robert Burns, as of May 23, 2007 the U.S troop level stands at 147,000. Another 10,000 are scheduled to arrive over the course of the next month.

The most recent death tolls of American soldiers reflect fighting in areas south and east of Baghdad, with Diyala being a province northeast of the capital where a lot of the fighting is happening. The increased presence of aircraft carriers and the availability of fighter planes are largely responsible for the increased use of an air war strategy. A US Navy aircraft carrier on station since February in the Persian Gulf has added about eighty warplanes.

Sources:


The Pentagon has requested $1.3 billion for two new antipersonnel land mines, the first of which could roll out as early as 2007. The United States has not used antipersonnel land mines since the first Gulf War when 100,000 mines were scattered by plane across Iraq and Kuwait. This move would end a moratorium on land mine use signed into law by George H. W. Bush in 1992 and would call into question the United States’ previous intention to join the 145 country 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. There have been reports of US use of landmines in the war in Iraq, but the Pentagon has yet to either confirm or deny this claim. Human Rights Watch (HRW) has estimated that such weapons kill and maim five hundred people, mostly civilians, per week.

**Source:**

Inter Press Service, August 3, 2005  
Title: “After 10-Year Hiatus, Pentagon Eyes New Landmine”  
Author: Isaac Baker

Human Rights Watch Web site, August 2005  
Title: “Development and Production of Landmines”

**UPDATE BY DAVID ABBOTT**

The Pentagon’s 2006 budget request nearly tripled the previous year’s allotment, asking for nearly $90 million for each of the next three years. The Pentagon expects to spend $390 million on production of Track I (spider) land mines through fiscal year 2011. Research, development, and production of the Track I land mine system alone is approaching and will likely surpass $1 billion.1

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Bush administration plans to begin production of a new generation of antipersonnel mines. Seeking to avoid the images of soldiers in wheelchairs and dismembered children
associated with land mines, the administration has renamed these particular land mines “networked munitions systems.” Wrapping land mines in a new name—removing the stigma they deserve—makes selling them to Congress and the public easier. Still, these networked munitions systems are nothing but high-tech land mines, whose purpose, as before, is to maim and kill humans.

Fortunately Congress is not that easily fooled. On August 1, 2006 Senators Patrick Leahy (VT) and Arlen Specter (PA) introduced the bipartisan Victim-Activated Landmine Abolition Act of 2006. The bill prohibits the procurement of any victim-activated weapon, whether called a land mine or something else.²

In a related matter in February 2007, forty-six countries attended the Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions in order to launch a treaty-negotiating process signing onto the Oslo Declaration’s pledge to reach an international agreement to ban cluster munitions by the end of 2008. On May 25, sixty-eight states gathered in Lima, Peru for the second meeting of the so-called Oslo Process to ban the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of the weapons, although some states proposed exempting large categories of submunitions from the ban, such as those that have self-destruct mechanisms or a specific reliability rate.

The world’s leading producers of cluster bombs—the United States, Russia and China—did not attend the Oslo or Lima conferences, nor did Israel, which was criticized for using cluster munitions in Lebanon during the most recent Middle East conflict. The next full meeting in the Oslo Process will be in Vienna from December 5-7, 2007.

In September 2006, US Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) introduced an amendment to the annual defense spending bill that would have prevented US tax dollars from being used to “buy, use or transfer US-made cluster bombs until the Pentagon adopts rules of engagement ensuring the weapons are not used near any large concentrations of civilians.” The amendment failed in the Senate by a vote of 30-70, but in February 2007 the senators reintroduced the bill as Legislation (S. 594). However, the legislation allows the president authority
to “waive this provision if he certifies that it is vital to protect the security of the United States.”

Cluster bombs were used heavily in the most recent war between Israel and Lebanon, where it is estimated that 100,000 Israeli bombs failed to detonate, and UN figures estimate that 26 percent of south Lebanon’s cultivatable land is affected by the ordinance.

The proposed ban could have an impact on the 2008 US presidential election, as Washington’s main ally in the Middle East has taken harsh international criticism for its use of the weapons, and it is perceived to be a sensitive issue for Jewish-American voters.

The Leahy/Feinstein Legislation detailed the extent of the use of cluster munitions in recent conflicts:

➤ Combining the first and second Gulf Wars, the total number of unexploded bomblets in the region is approximately 1.2 million. An estimated 1,220 Kuwaitis and 400 Iraqi civilians have been killed since 1991.
➤ In Iraq in 2003, 13,000 cluster bombs with nearly 2 million bomblets were used.
➤ In Afghanistan in 2001, 1,228 cluster bombs with 248,056 bomblets were used. Between October 2001 and November 2002, 127 civilians were killed, 70 percent of them under the age of eighteen.
➤ Between nine and 27 million unexploded cluster bombs remain in Laos from US bombing campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s. Approximately 11,000 people, 30 percent of them children, have been killed or injured since the war ended. Most recently, it is estimated that Israel dropped 4 million bomblets in southern Lebanon, and 1 million of these bomblets failed to explode. Reports indicate that Hezbollah retaliated with cluster bomb strikes of their own.

Citations

Censored #25, 2007 US Military in Paraguay Threatens Region

Five hundred US troops arrived in Paraguay with planes, weapons, and ammunition in July 2005, shortly after the Paraguayan Senate granted US troops immunity from national and International Criminal Court (ICC) jurisdiction. Neighboring countries and human rights organizations are concerned that the massive air base at Mariscal Estigarribia, Paraguay is a potential site for US military regional expansion.

The Mariscal Estigarribia air base is within 124 miles of Bolivia and Argentina, and two hundred miles from Brazil, near the Triple Frontier where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet. Bolivia’s natural gas reserves are the second largest in South America, while the Triple Frontier region is home to Guarani Aquifer, one of the world’s largest fresh water sources.

Sources:

*Upside Down World*, October 5, 2005 Title: “Fears mount as US opens new military installation in Paraguay” Author: Benjamin Dangl

*Foreign Policy in Focus*, November 21, 2005
Title: “Dark Armies, Secret Bases, and Rummy, Oh My!”
By Conn Hallinan

International Relations Center, December 14, 2005
Title: US Military Moves in Paraguay Rattle Regional Relations”
Sam Logan and Matthew Flynn

UPDATE BY KAT PAT CRESPÁN
The Paraguayan government revoked US immunity from the ICC on October 2, 2006. According to Thomas Shannon, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, the US will not continue to provide military support without immunity for its soldiers. Yet, a day later President Bush signed a waiver allowing military aid in twenty-one countries that have refused to sign immunity, including Paraguay.

The US military has had increased interaction with the Paraguayan police and military, advising them on how to deal with farmer groups who protest the 90,000 poor families who have been forced off their land and displaced by the rapidly expanding soy industry. US military exercises have also been correlated with civilian deaths around the country, in areas where many farmer organizations operate. In Concepción, there have been eleven deaths and three US military exercises and near the Triple Frontier region, an area where intelligence officials initially believed to be terrorist activity by fundamentalist Islamic groups, there have been twelve deaths and three exercises. The US conducts training and classes to teach Paraguayan troops how to fight insurgency and internal enemies. However, the US Embassy rejects all claims that the US military is linked to the increased repression against political groups, and that the training missions are medical related. Yet, according to deputy speaker of the Paraguayan parliament, Alejandro Velazquez Ugarte, of the thirteen exercises only two are of civilian nature. Paraguayan officials use the threat of terrorism to justify their transgressions against campesino resistance leaders.

In October 2006, FBI director Robert Mueller arrived in Paraguay to check on preparations for a permanent FBI office in Asunción. Although journalist Hugo Olazar reported that in September 2006 US troops were operating out of Mariscal Estigarribia, the United States denies the allegation. The US said the same before operating an $80 million air base in Manta, Ecuador, which had been described as a “dirt strip.” Although the US stance on Mariscal Estigarribia remains the same, the correlation of the military exercises to the deaths of landless farmers raise human rights concerns as the US continues to be heavily involved training Paraguayan armed forces.

THE CONTROVERSIAL CASE OF MUMIA ABU JAMAL
Mumia Abu Jamal may be the most renowned political prisoner in the world today. He has been on Pennsylvania’s death row since he, as many believe, was falsely convicted and railroaded for the murder of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner in 1982. Mumia is a revolutionary journalist who continues to pursue his craft from behind bars in solitary confinement at Pennsylvania’s Penitentiary. In 2000, Mumia honored the pages of *Censored* by writing our introduction.

In May of 2007 a three-judge panel of the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals began hearing oral arguments on a retrial for Mumia’s case. Each day the court was packed with supporters, including people like former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and a delegation from Europe. Hundreds more protesters stood out side the court hearings. The Mumia case is highly controversial—supporters of the police have vilified him. But people who examine the trial with an open mind have found Judge Albert Sabo’s court to be one of the most discredited courts in US history. Around the world Mumia is so beloved that a suburb of Paris has named a street after him, an important avenue which leads to France’s Olympic stadium.

At the time of Mumia’s arrest he was already a well-known revolutionary journalist, radio commentator, and former Black Panther Minister of Information—at age 15. Shortly before dawn, on December 9, 1981, Mumia was moonlighting as a cab driver in downtown Philadelphia. He came upon a scene involving a confrontation with a white police officer and Mumia’s brother William Cook. Shortly thereafter Mumia was found lying on the sidewalk, shot in the chest, and Officer Faulkner lay dying from bullet wounds. The Police charged Mumia with murder.

Recently released crime scene photos reveal that the Police changed evidence. During oral arguments at the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, photos taken by press photographer Pedro P. Polakoff III show police actively manipulating evidence at the homicide scene. For example, they
moved the officer’s hat from the roof of Billy Cook’s vehicle to the sidewalk to make the scene more emotionally dramatic. One photograph shows Police Officer James Forbes holding both pistols found at the scene in one hand, bare-handed, getting his fingerprints all over the evidence and smudging existing prints. Forbes was caught lying on the witness stand because he had testified that he had not handled the firearms in a manner that would have gotten finger prints on the trigger or butt of the pistol, or smudged existing fingerprint evidence. The newly release photos show that he was not telling the truth to the courts.¹

Photos also show the cab driver Robert Chobert was not parked behind Mumia’s vehicle and Faulkner’s squad car. The witness was nowhere near where the prosecution says he was. Again, as with other witnesses, the police were caught using terror to coerce a witness to give false testimony.²

Journalist Michael Schiffman found from researching the newly released photos that a .38 revolver would leave divot holes, or ricochet marks, on the sidewalk had the defendant fired rounds at the prone officer Faulkner and missed as the prosecution had claimed. The photos do not show these marks.

A mass protest movement prevented Mumia’s execution in 1995, but he still was denied justice and remains locked away on Death Row. Mumia’s case became an international issue. The European Parliament, human rights groups like Amnesty International, and others have called for a new trial.

In 2001 a federal district court judge upheld Mumia’s conviction but overturned the death sentence hanging over his head on technical grounds. It was on the 2001 decision that the current federal appeals court is hearing arguments. Mumia’s defense team is asking for a new trial while prosecutors are asking that the death sentence be reinstated. The principal legal issues are whether the prosecution in the 1982 trial had deliberately excluded black jurors and whether the verdict form given the jurors misled them on how to decide a possible death sentence.

During the period of Mumia’s trials, the Philadelphia DA’s office produced a training tape for new assistant DAs on how to exclude black jurors. A federal district judge has already found that the jury form was
biased and federal courts, because of blatant racism and bias, have overturned a long list of Philadelphia convictions.

The appeals court, which may not rule for several months, may grant a new trial, order a new evidentiary hearing or reject the appeal, in which case Mumia would face execution within a short period.\(^3\)

Through twenty-five years in solitary confinement, Mumia Abu Jamal has held his head high despite the viciousness of the Philadelphia police, prison system and courts, and repeated threats of execution. Mumia’s books, weekly columns, and radio commentaries inspire not just people in the United States, but even encourage people across the globe.

**Citations**