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Dedicated to Drug, Environmental and Socio-Economic Reform

This is basically a web log (blog) of what Professor Hemp, editor of NAC, reads and thinks is important or at least interesting. It is printed in \*.PDF format so that our internet activists can read offline as to alternative sources of news which are purposely kept out of the corporate controlled media (e.g., CNN, FOX, and MSNBC).

We encourage web activists to follow the links and peruse the home pages from which these articles have originated. Not only will you find additional content, but you will also get a better idea as to alternative sources of news which are purposely kept out of the corporate controlled media (e.g., CNN, FOX, and MSNBC).

What we demand of our representatives will effect ourselves and future generations. We can no longer stand by and allow Multi-national interests to usurp the interests of working Americans. Now is the time to get off the sidelines and get involved.

Yours in Freedom,
Professor Hemp (PH)

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GREAT WEBSITES:..... 1

ARTICLES: ..... 1

LOU DOBB'S ..... 1
HTTP://WWW.CNN.COM/TRANSCRIPTS/0409/21/LDT.00.HTML ..... 1
HTTP://WWW.CNN.COM/TRANSCRIPTS/0409/21/LDT.00.HTML ..... 4
ELECTIONS IN EAST GERMANY; LEFT; RIGHT AND IN BETWEEN ..... 8
TIME FOR A CHECKUP ..... 9
HOW TAX CUTS FEED THE BEAST ..... 10
THE LAST DECEPTION ..... 11
LOTS OF CHEMICALS, LITTLE REACTION ..... 11
PEPPER-SPRAY CASE GOES TO JURY IN CALIFORNIA ..... 11
WHY WE CANNOT WIN ..... 12
DON'T MESS WITH THE BUSHES ..... 13
LATIN AMERICA HAS HAD ENOUGH OF BUSH ..... 15
PICKING A FIGHT WITH VENEZUELA ..... 16
CENSORED! TEN BIG STORIES THE NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA UNDERPLAYED .. 16
1. WEALTH INEQUALITY IN 21ST CENTURY THREATENS ECONOMY AND DEMOCRACY ..... 17
2. ASHCROFT VERSUS HUMAN RIGHTS LAW THAT HOLDS CORPORATIONS ACCOUNTABLE ..... 17
3. BUSH ADMINISTRATION MANIPULATES SCIENCE AND CENSORS SCIENTISTS ..... 17
4. HIGH URANIUM LEVELS FOUND IN TROOPS AND CIVILIANS ..... 17
5. WHOLESALE GIVEAWAY OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES ..... 18
6. SALE OF ELECTORAL POLITICS ..... 18
7. CONSERVATIVE ORGANIZATION DRIVES JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS ..... 18
8. SECRETS OF CHENEY'S ENERGY TASK FORCE COMES TO LIGHT ..... 19
9. WIDOW BRINGS RICO CASE AGAINST U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR 9/11 ..... 19
10. NEW NUKE PLANTS: TAXPAYERS SUPPORT, INDUSTRY PROFITS ..... 19
EOF ..... 19

Great Websites:

http://www.realchange.org/index.htm
/\* Dirt on Bush and other candidates \*/

Articles:

Lou Dobb's

http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0409/21/ldt.00.html

DOBBS: Coming up next in prime-time, Senator John Edwards joins me to talk about a host of issues, including our porous borders and what he calls the mess in Iraq. And Democrats have called independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader a spoiler. Nader calls some of the Democrats a spineless, clueless and hapless political party. Ralph Nader is my guest tonight.

And the politics of illegal aliens. The lack of a national immigration policy could have a defining effect on a number of key congressional races this November, as well as a devastating effect on this country. We'll have a special report for you coming up.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: In Ohio, polls show that battleground state to be a toss- up, recent surveys showing a statistical dead heat between President Bush and Senator Kerry. Both vice presidential candidates were there today campaigning. I talked earlier with Senator John Edwards about what he sees as the principal issues this, this campaign.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SEN. JOHN EDWARDS (D-NC), VICE

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE: Well, jobs are the biggest issue in Ohio. I mean, the driving issues in Ohio are 237,000 jobs lost total. It's almost 1 out of 4 of the jobs that have been lost in this country, even though Ohio only has 4 percent of the country's population.

Their health care costs are through the roof. There's a bankruptcy hearing every five minutes, which is really extraordinary. And then on top of that, almost everyone here knows of someone who is either in Iraq, has been to Iraq, or is about to go. So those are sort of the driving issues.

And the Bush administration, of course, has made this outsourcing and loss of jobs here in Ohio much worse. Not only have they done nothing about it, they've actually accelerated it. And it's just hard for me to imagine that they're actually going to vote in Ohio to rehire a president that's actually cost them 237,000 jobs. I don't believe it'll happen.

DOBBS: Of course, Senator, in your home state of North Carolina, 160,000 jobs have been lost. Specifically, what will you and Senator Kerry do to -- you mentioned outsourcing -- stop the outsourcing of jobs, and secondly, start creating jobs in this economy?

EDWARDS: Here's what we want to do. And I should say first, Lou, this is something I take very personally. I know you've talked about it a lot on your show. I take it very personally because the mill that my father worked in closed, and I saw what it did to my -- to the people in the community, people I was very close to, what it did to the men and women who had worked there for years and had nowhere to go.

Here's what we want to do. First, we want to get rid of tax cuts for American companies that are sending jobs overseas. It is insane to say when a company's deciding whether to build a factory in Ohio or in China, they get a tax cut for going to China. That needs to be stopped. The Bush administration has actually pushed for more of those tax cuts. I think that's wrong. Second, we actually want to give tax cuts to American companies that will keep jobs here in this country.

We also have to replace the jobs that have been lost, though, and there are a number of things we do to help with that. One is to help businesses, particularly small businesses, by giving them a tax cut of up to 50 percent so that they can provide health care for their employees. We want to make sure that we're investing in the creative, innovative jobs of the future, particularly in the area of energy and moving this country away from its dependence on oil in the Middle East. We have a comprehensive plan,, basically that creates incentives for businesses to stay in Ohio, in this country, that helps new businesses create jobs to replace -- real jobs to replace the jobs that are lost.

DOBBS: What are we to hear from you, from Senator Kerry as to a plan to deal with trade policies that are obviously not working? And why aren't you addressing it more in this campaign? EDWARDS: We are addressing it. We are out here talking about it, Lou. Sometimes it gets not heard because of the mess in Iraq right now and other issues that people are concerned about.

I think it's a combination of things, first all. One is to have a tax policy that actually rewards American companies for keeping jobs here in this country, and for creating jobs, good-paying jobs with real benefits. Second is to have a willingness to enforce our existing trade agreements, which this administration has not been willing to do. We're getting, George Voinovich, the Republican senator from Ohio, where I am today, has said that we're getting pummeled by enforcement actions by other countries, but we're not enforcing their obligations against them.

That's Bush and Cheney making those decisions. And you know, another example of that, by the way, the Chinese we know are manipulating their currency. It allows them to dump goods on the American market for up to 40 percent cheaper than they otherwise could. The truth is, our workers, our businesses can compete with anybody if they're just given a fair chance of doing that. That's not happening under this administration. We can improve where we are today.

DOBBS: I want to address what you style as "the mess in Iraq." But first, deal with another issue, and that is border protection, national security, homeland security. Both you, Senator Kerry, and the Bush-Cheney campaign are not focusing on immigration. "Time" magazine this week, as you know, reported three million illegal aliens will cross our borders this year. Yet neither the Democratic nor Republican ticket is addressing this issue and what would be done to assure real border protection.

EDWARDS: Here's what we believe needs to be done, Lou. And we have talked about it. Again, it's hard to get heard amongst some of the other issues...

DOBBS: Right. You'll be heard here, Senator.

EDWARDS: Thank you. And let me tell you what I think we ought to do, what John and I think we ought to do. We need -- first of all, we need a much more effective relationship with the Mexican government, with President Fox, so that we have their cooperation. Unfortunately, that relationship has gone sour during the time that George Bush has been in office. The result is we're trying to secure

the border by ourselves -- very, very hard thing to do. We need stronger relationships. We need their help and cooperation.

We also need to do more by way of technology, making sure that we have the equipment and technology available to do more effective surveillance of our border to keep terrorists out, making sure that we have adequate personnel. We need to add both technology and personnel to provide a better security on our borders.

We do think this is an important issue, you know, because the truth of the matter is, if we have porous borders, then we have the real potential for somebody who wants to do harm to the American people coming across our border. That's a serious security risk for our country, and we think we do need to focus on it. It's really an important issue.

DOBBS: Would you and Senator Kerry assure the American people here tonight and in the days ahead that you're going to assure maximum border protection and control of our borders?

EDWARDS: Yes. We're going to do everything in our power to make sure that we keep people who don't belong, who could do harm to the American people, particularly terrorists, out of our country, and we're going to take the steps necessary to do that.

DOBBS: Turning to the mess in Iraq. The -- you have been referred to by Vice President Cheney and Speaker of the House Hastert as basically soft on the war on terror. What's your reaction?

EDWARDS: My response is, it's a lie, and it's an outrageous thing to be said. I mean, the very idea that all of us don't want to do everything possible to keep this country safe -- to take one of the great tragedies in American history and try to use it as a cheap political trick is absolutely wrong. And they ought to be held accountable and responsible for the outrageous things that they're saying. And I believe the American people will hold them accountable. People aren't as foolish as they think they are. Voters in this country have good sense, and they will see this fear-mongering for exactly what it is.

I might add, since we're on the subject -- since you mentioned the subject of Iraq, you know, you think about what this administration -- I'm convinced George Bush and Dick Cheney are literally the last two people in America who believe they've made no mistakes in Iraq and everything's going well. I mean, you just watch what's happening there. They told us they had a plan for Iraq, Lou. Not true. They told us we had enough troops going in. Not true. They told us this war would pay for itself. Not true.

I mean, why in the world did George Bush and Dick Cheney have any credibility whatsoever? This gets to be a pretty simple thing. If the American voter wants four more years of the situation we have in Iraq and potentially getting much worse over time, then George Bush is their guy. If they believe we could do better than that -- and John Kerry laid out our plan yesterday in New York -- they need to put John Kerry in the White House.

DOBBS: Senator, you have been criticized of late by some of the top Democratic insiders, if I can put that way, of not being sharp enough in your responses to Republican charges. Are you going to become more direct in your responses? Are you going to counterattack and attack in the remaining days of this campaign?

EDWARDS: I'm going to make sure that this administration is held accountable when they lie. I'm going to make sure that they're held accountable for their failures, both here and in Iraq and around the world. I want to make certain that when voters go to the poll in November that they know we have a president whose cost them millions of jobs, millions of people their health care, put millions of people into poverty. A typical family's income is down, not up. On top of the mess we have Iraq, I want to make certain that everybody knows that.

And when they say things that aren't true, we're going to call those things the lies that they are. And we're also going to make sure that people know that we can do better and what our plan to do is better. So the answer to your question is, I'm going to fight with absolutely everything I've got for my country.

DOBBS: Senator John Edwards, thanks for being with us.

EDWARDS: Thank you. Glad to be with you, Lou.

DOBBS: My next guest is making headway in this presidential election. His first obstacle, however, is to get on the ballot. And now independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader has succeeded in putting his name on the ballot in at least

36 states and the District of Columbia for this presidential election. Several polls show that he is drawing support, from whom it will be later determined, I'm sure. Ralph Nader joins me now from our studios in Washington, D.C.

You today held a news conference in which you said that you are the victim, really, of a mini-Watergate. Precisely what do you mean?

RALPH NADER (I), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Well, the Democratic Party at the top level of the Democratic National Committee, John Kerry, has been involved, has been supporting and has been funding state efforts to intimidate, harass our signature gatherers, file dozens of phony lawsuits. We faced Democratically-retained lawyers in Tallahassee before we beat them at the Florida supreme court level last week. But it's going on in the close states, Pennsylvania, Ohio. Amazing saga, what happens when you put this system under stress, Lou.

And the bile and the mucous and all this stuff pops up. And basically, it's political bigotry by the Democratic Party against competition, against small parties, against independent candidates. I might say, a lot of Republican law firms are involved here, one in Philadelphia, the Livingston Group in Washington. I guess they don't like our criticism -- that is our, meaning Nader-Camejo ticket's criticism of big business.

DOBBS: Well, your criticism offending Republican, the impact that many Democrats feel that you had on the 2000 election in effectively denying Al Gore the presidency -- you can understand why there would be a contest between the Democratic Party and yourself in terms of the electoral process, can you not?

NADER: No, I can't, because 10 times more registered Democrats in Florida deserted Gore for Bush than deserted Gore for the Nader- LaDuke ticket, and that was true around the country. So you think they concentrate on that? Do you think they concentrate on actively registering nine million African-American voters. 90 percent whom vote Democrat? Or you think they'd concentrate on trying to respond to low-income workers who are not making a living wage and whose jobs are being outsourced to China, not just technical jobs.

No, this is a decadent party. It's decayed. It's surrounded by corporate consultants, corporate advisers, and loaded with corporate money. And it's got to be challenged. I hope progressive Democrats after the election will really purge that party from its corporate domination because it's just losing elections for the last 10 years to the worst of the Republicans, local, state, and national level.

DOBBS: Your criticism, the depth of your criticism of the Democratic Party, I'm sure many people are astounded by it, assuming that you would be more directed in your attacks against the Republican Party. Corporate power in this election, corporate power in our society at large, it is -- it's overwhelming. What do you think your candidacy will do to alter that?

NADER: Well, we have concentrated on George W. Bush, because he's presiding as a conservative Republican over the shipment of whole industries and jobs to a communist dictatorship in China, at 37 cents an hour labor, et cetera.

I have a proposal to really challenge the corporations here. They say they're shipping jobs to China, and other countries, low-wage countries, to keep up with the global competition. Wal-Mart is telling its suppliers, if they don't meet the China price, then they are going to have to -- they have to close down and go to China.

Well, I'm going to propose in the next few days, and I hope to advertise classified ads in China and Mexico, a "outsource your CEO" program. And I'm going to ask for bilingual people in the third world, who are experienced, successful in management, who'd be very pleased to replace the heads of IBM and General Electric and General Motors at 1/10 of the executive salary, and probably work even harder.

So this is what's in point. We've got to get a message to these top executives. If they want to meet the global competition, then they should be ready to sacrifice their plush CEO jobs along with their employees.

DOBBS: Well, it's a fascinating proposal. It'll be interesting to see if it gains traction, because on the pure theoretical terms, each of these companies that is aggressive in its outsourcing always talks about efficiency, productivity, global competitiveness, but it seems to be only the middle class working man and woman in this country for whom that's an appropriate competitive response.

NADER: Exactly. And they're avoiding the law. You point out how few are -- these corporate crooks are prosecuted, convicted and sent to jail. And we have a

12-point program on our Web site, VoteNader.org, for corporate reform. It's the obvious capitalistic reforms. Among others, you make the investors strong and own and control the company. You give them rights when the investors are defrauded. You have them control corporate compensation, which is going through the roof. Some of these top executives are making \$7,000 an hour. And Warren Buffett has said it's executive compensation out of control that has led to the incentive to cook the books, to pad the profits, to download the debts.

And we also need to punish these companies and not have them take government contracts. They're going to flee the country to the Bahamas, for tax avoidance, for example. And give workers who own pensions more rights over their pensions.

You know, these are not radical nostrums, Lou. These are law and order nostrums, and I think the corporate executives, with their excessive influence over Washington, are misreading the American public.

You can only push the American people so far, so far, so far, when they're going to rebel. And I wrote this book, "The Good Fight," to show how corporate power concentration affects ordinary people's lives -- their jobs, small taxpayer, they're consumers, et cetera, health care, drug price, in order to alert the business community that there's a revolt coming. Three-quarters of the people in this country think George W. Bush favors corporate interests over people interest. Over 70 percent of the people in a "BusinessWeek" poll say corporations have too much control over their lives.

And I say to the business community, you better read this book. This is alert opener for you. Otherwise, you're going to get one of the great historic rebellions among working Americans. Not the least of which because you've abandoned America, the country that gave you birth, rose you to profits, built you out in Washington, and had the U.S. Marines save you overseas.

DOBBS: Ralph Nader, independent candidate for president. We thank you for being with us. And come November, just a little over 50 days away, we will find out what the national mood really is. We thank you for being here.

NADER: Thank you, Lou.

DOBBS: Taking a look now at some of your thoughts.

Roxanne Risner in Anchorage, Alaska wrote to say, "Americans are sick and tired of paying for the education and health care of people who come here illegally. It's no wonder our health care system is so expensive. Who do you think is paying to treat all of these people? Hard working, American taxpayers, that who!"

Phillip Todd in Howells, Nebraska. "As long as employers are willing to hire illegal aliens without the fear of paying the price, this problem is going to continue. The government needs to seriously address the hiring of illegal aliens and impose significant fines."

Alice Wiles of Lehigh Acres, Florida. "One day I expect to hear that if you want to reach your senator or congressman, send your letters to India, China, or Mexico."

We love hearing from you. Send us your thoughts at loudobbs@CNN.com. And please send us your name and address with your email. Each of you whose email is read on the broadcast receives a free copy of my new book, "Exporting America."

Still ahead here, a question of trust. Senator Kerry says President Bush has lost credibility on the world stage. President Bush calls Senator Kerry's changing positions on Iraq hardly credible. We'll have much more on the race for the White House coming up next.

And immigration politics. Why illegal aliens in this country could have a powerful impact on this election and the nation. We'll have a special report. Please stay with us.

In this country tonight, the issue of illegal immigration is a huge issue for many voters, millions of them. But neither major presidential candidate is discussing the subject of immigration policy. But in many congressional races, quite a different story. And now, backlash from voters is in fact mounting, as they begin to turn on incumbents who failed to take action to protect our nation's borders.

Casey Wian reports from San Bernardino, California.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CASEY WIAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): John Kobylt and Ken Champou are two Los Angeles talk show radio hosts doing a lot more than just talking about illegal immigration.

JOHN KOBYLIT, RADIO HOST: The Republicans are completely bought off by big business. And the Democrats see a pool of poor voters potentially in the future if amnesty comes through.

WIAN: John and Ken have turned their highly-rated show into a forum for voter outrage with their own campaign called Political Human Sacrifice.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: David Dreier has been targeted by the John and Ken audience to be removed from office come November 2.

KEN CHAMPOU, RADIO HOST: California has a cost of about \$5 billion a year for illegal immigration. That's education, health care and all the other services that are used. People are tired of it.

WIAN: At this noisy rally outside the district office of 24-year Republican Congressman David Dreier, the pair ridiculed Dreier's voting record.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Just in the last week, he voted for Social Security benefits for illegal aliens. And then he voted in favor of banks accepting the (UNINTELLIGIBLE) cards.

The hosts are urging listeners to vote for Dreier's virtually unknown opponent Cynthia Matthews.

CYNTHIA MATTHEWS (D), CALIFORNIA CONG. CANDIDATE: This is the only way that I can get a fair, not advantage, but at least to be competitive in this race.

WIAN: John and Ken are also targeting an incumbent Democrat, Congressman Joe Baca for removal from office. Baca pressured the Department of Homeland Security to stop border patrol sweeps that resulted in the arrest of some 450 illegal aliens. The pair are supporting Baca's underdog opponent, Republican Ed Laning.

ED LANING (R), CALIFORNIA CONG. CANDIDATE: With Joe Baca and his representing or advocating for illegal immigrants, he's essentially alienated every citizen in the district.

WIAN: Laning says contributions to his campaign have doubled since talk radio took up his cause.

(on camera): Even with the boos, Laning faces a tough battle. Democrats outnumber Republicans in this district by 51-32 percent. And Baca has raised about ten times as much money.

(voice-over): But voter backlash over illegal aliens is building especially in districts like these two in California where there is fierce competition for jobs and government resources. And according to Americans for Better Immigration, the issue of illegal immigration will help decide 20 U.S. congressional races this year. Casey Wian, CNN, San Bernardino, California.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

DOBBS: Coming up next, one major American corporation demonstrates positive corporate leadership. We'll have that story for you next. Please stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: Stocks up, interest rates up. The Fed raising interest rates for a third time this year. The Dow up 40 points on the day. The Nasdaq gaining more than 13. The S&P up over 7 points. Christine Romans is here now on Home Depot's push to hire veterans, National Guard members and reservists -- Christine.

CHRISTINE ROMANS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Lou, Home Depot wants to hire at least, at least 10,000 veterans and military spouses this year.

Outstanding.

WIAN: Home Depot started hiring veterans last year and it worked so well the company's even more aggressively recruiting them now. Home Depot opens a new store in this country every 48 hours. It says its found veterans to be disciplined, responsible, hardworking, good leaders. Starting pay is \$7 to \$20 an hour, Lou. Here is an example of positive corporate leadership.

DOBBS: Outstanding. And terrific. A little different kind of leadership over at the Fed and Mr. Greenspan and his cohorts.

ROMANS: The bond market today is telling us that this economy is weak. Bond yields are falling while the Fed says the economy is strong. And today it raised interest rates again. A heated debate here. Who is right? The Fed or the market? Also today, a big rally in oil prices, Lou. Chinese demand in August up almost 40 percent for crude oil.

DOBBS: Amazing. And a story that is going to continue, unfortunately, it looks like. Christine Romans, thank you.

ROMANS: You're welcome.

DOBBS: And a great story on Home Depot.

Still ahead here, the results of our poll and a preview of what's ahead tomorrow. Please stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: The results of our poll tonight. Almost two-thirds of you saying you believe the United States and the United Nations should take action soon to end Iran's efforts to create nuclear weapons.

Thanks for being with us here tonight. Please join us tomorrow in our face-off, a hard-fought battle over the security and reliability of electronic voting. Linda Lamone of the Maryland State Board of Elections says there's no need for a paper record. Linda Schade of TruevoteMd.org says paper receipts should be mandatory.

<http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0409/21/ldt.00.html>

In "Broken Borders" tonight, we begin a series of special reports on the politics of illegal immigration. A proposed ballot measure in Arizona would block illegal aliens from voting and using state services. It's a measure that most Arizona voters overwhelmingly support, but several high-ranking Arizona state officials are fighting, and fighting hard, to defeat the measure. Casey Wian reports from Phoenix, Arizona.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CASEY WIAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The Arizona desert has become the gateway to America for millions of illegal aliens. Many residents say they've had their fill of border crossers crowding their streets, schools and jails and draining taxpayer resources. So it's no wonder that Proposition 200, dubbed Protect Arizona Now, has overwhelming support. It seeks to stop illegal aliens from receiving state and local welfare benefits. It would require proof of citizenship to register to vote and a photo ID to cast a ballot in Arizona.

KATHY MCKEE, PROTECT ARIZONA NOW: As citizens, we can't put the military on the border, despite the fact that 80 percent of the people in this country want it. We can't sanction employers because only the federal government -- and we can't deport people. That's also in the federal government. What we can do and we are doing is we are getting our state constitution enforced and our state's statutes enforced.

WIAN: Protect Arizona Now would also make it a criminal offense for state and local government workers to fail to report illegal aliens who apply for welfare benefits. An "Arizona Republic" poll found 66 percent of registered voters support Proposition 200, while only 15 percent oppose it. Republicans favor the plan by 8 to 1, Democrats 3 to 1.

Yet many of the state's business and political leaders, including the governor, both U.S. senators and the Arizona Chamber of Commerce are fighting the initiative. They claim it's poorly written, would invite lawsuits and costs too much.

JULIE PACE, ARIZONA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: First of all, it's just a bad bill. So it was easy for the Chamber and the business community to come out and say, This bill is not worth it. I think we're seeing a lot of protest vote on this bill, as opposed to the substance of this bill.

WIAN (on camera): Some Arizona business leaders are worried that Proposition 200 could cause a repeat of what happened during the mid- 1990s, when the state lost convention business because of its refusal to recognize a holiday for Martin

Luther King, Jr.

(voice-over): Opponents of the bill have accused supporters of racism and trying to make criminals out of government workers. Supporters call those claims scare tactics and say they're confident Proposition 200 will hold up on election day and in court. Casey Wian, CNN, Phoenix, Arizona.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

And coming up next, two very different views on this controversial proposal in Arizona. And Dan Rather and CBS admitting they were wrong about documents accusing President Bush of shirking his National Guard duties. We'll have much more on the fallout, the White House reaction. I'll be talking about the prospects of the presidential candidates. More of the country's leading political journalists join me next.

And Iraqi insurgents attack American troops with weapons supplied by American allies, the focus of a new book by "Washington Times" national security correspondent Bill Gertz. He's our guest tonight. All of that and a great deal more, including your thoughts, still ahead here tonight.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ANNOUNCER: LOU DOBBS TONIGHT continues. Here now, for more news, debate and opinion, Lou Dobbs.

DOBBS: Neither President Bush nor Senator Kerry wants to talk much about a national immigration policy in this country during the election. In Arizona, it's quite a different story. A controversial proposal is on the ballot in Arizona that would block illegal aliens from voting and using state services.

My guests tonight disagree sharply on Arizona's Proposition 200. Tamar Jacoby says the measure would cost Arizona taxpayers millions of dollars. It will do nothing, she says, to stop illegal aliens from crossing the border into the state. She's a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, author of "Reinventing the Melting Pot."

Linda Gray says Arizona cannot afford to pay for any more social services for illegal aliens. She's education chair for Arizona's House of Representatives, a candidate for the state Senate, and joins us tonight from Phoenix.

Welcome to you both. Let me turn to you, Representative. How important is this proposition, and how much support do you believe it now has in Arizona?

LINDA GRAY, ARIZONA STATE HOUSE: I believe it has a wide support, with 66 percent in a poll that says that they support Protect Arizona Now. This all came about because of a voter ID bill that I had that passed the House and Senate and that the governor vetoed. People were very upset with the veto, and because of that, I think that is why we have Protect Arizona Now. That has two issues. It brings together the voter ID and recognizing that you have to be a citizen to vote, and also for welfare fraud.

And I think it will cut down on the costs for taxpayers in Arizona because if those coming across the border want to have the welfare benefits, it won't be available for undocumented persons here in Arizona.

DOBBS: Tamar, Arizona has one of the largest populations of illegal aliens. It is now the principal crossing point from Mexico for illegal aliens into our country. What's wrong with what Representative Gray says?

TAMAR JACOBY, MANHATTAN INSTITUTE: The problem is it's not going to stop anyone from coming. It's not going to stop a single immigrant. It's not going to repeal the laws of international laws of supply and demand that draw immigrants. It's not going to do anything on the border. And most immigrants don't use welfare or they're not eligible for welfare, and they don't try to vote. So it's just going to create a lot of bureaucracy at the state level and not stopping anyone from doing anything.

DOBBS: What do you say, Representative?

GRAY: We have 60,000 illegals who are on Access (ph), which is our medical benefit here in Arizona. We have 160,000 children in Arizona that are English-language learners that, because of judicial activism, will cost the taxpayer another \$2,000 per student for the English-language learner. These are costs that the taxpayers have to pick up. I believe that (UNINTELLIGIBLE). And we're also

looking at voter fraud. Why is it that in Arizona, the last election, I had this card that appeared on my door that says...

DOBBS: If you could hold that up -- I'm sorry, Representative -- just to show us...

GRAY: OK.

DOBBS: Yes?

GRAY: It says, "Know your rights when you go to vote." And the No. 1 right that it says in here that you should know is that you do not have to show ID when you go to vote. Now, to me, that's an open invitation, Go ahead and get away with it with it...

DOBBS: Who produced...

GRAY: ... because nobody's going to ask.

DOBBS: I'm sorry. Just -- who produced the flyer that you're holding?

GRAY: On the back side, you have the Democratic Party slate. And Janet Napolitano was running for governor then, and she's the one who vetoed the voter ID bill.

JACOBY: Well, of course, you have to prove ID to register to vote. And the illegal immigrants who come through Arizona...

(CROSSTALK)

DOBBS: Tamar, Tamar, Tamar! She just showed you that it's not, apparently, required in Arizona.

JACOBY: It is not required to show any ID when you go in to vote.

GRAY: Well, it just can't be true. I mean, it can't be true.

DOBBS: OK. OK, let's assume that Representative Gray, who inhabits the state, is an elected official in the state...

JACOBY: You have to...

DOBBS: ... knows something about it.

JACOBY: You have to prove who you are...

DOBBS: So let me -- so let's get to the point...

JACOBY: ... to register to vote.

DOBBS: OK.

JACOBY: But the point is...

DOBBS: May I? May I?

JACOBY: ... illegal immigrants...

DOBBS: May I?

JACOBY: Illegal immigrants...

DOBBS: Tamar, Tamar...

JACOBY: ... trooping through the state don't stop to vote.

DOBBS: May I? May I? If I may? Why would it not stop illegal aliens, at least slow it down, if you...

(CROSSTALK)

DOBBS: Please, I haven't finished the question, Tamar -- If they are denied state services and have to provide identification to vote and to take on state services?

JACOBY: Because people don't walk through the desert in the Arizona at the risk of death to vote. They don't walk through the desert at the risk of death to get

welfare benefits. They come to work, and this is not going to stop anyone from coming to work. DOBBS: Let me...

JACOBY: It's not going to take away the motive...

DOBBS: Linda Gray, you get the last word.

JACOBY: ... that brings them here.

GRAY: Well, I would certainly disagree with that. When you have your high school students, who are getting pregnant to be able to get assistance here in Arizona, that is a benefit and a cost to the taxpayers. They do come, and they do get benefits here in Arizona.

DOBBS: Tamar Jacoby, I'm going to give you the last word, if you'll be succinct. How would you end the practice of illegal aliens crossing our borders, then?

JACOBY: Make more of the immigration flow legal, a guest worker program...

DOBBS: I see.

JACOBY: ... as the representatives John McCain, Jeff Flake (ph) and Jim Colby (ph) from Arizona propose.

DOBBS: OK. Tamar Jacoby, Linda Gray, representative Gray, thank you very much. Tamar, thank you very much.

GRAY: Thank you.

DOBBS: Turning now to some of your thoughts on the issue of "Exporting America" and the middle-class squeeze, Jennifer D'Sa of San Jose, California -- "I started working at age 16, several decades ago, worked my way through college and saved to become a home owner. I've worked to raise two sons, now in college, which I'm paying for. I love this country so much, but I have never seen a time when our people were so pained with the state of the job market. I am still looking, after many, many months."

And John Mahlow of Okemos, Michigan -- "I am a high school student that values your war on outsourcing as more than heroic. These professors who claim that this is just a phase in the global economy have never lived with one parent unemployed and the other barely hanging in, due to the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs."

We love hearing from you. Send us your thoughts at loudobbs@cnn.com, and please send us your name and address. Each of you whose e-mail is read each evening on this broadcast receives a free copy of my new book, "Exporting America."

DOBBS: My next guest says allies of this country including Russia and France, have in fact armed radical Islamist terrorists in Iraq and he says our allies have turned a blind eye to arm sales to rogue regimes and state sponsors of terrorism in Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Syria. Bill Gertz is the author of the new book entitled "Treachery: How America's Friends and Foes Are Secretly Arming Our Enemies." He's also the defense and national security reporter for the "Washington Times" and joins us tonight from Washington, D.C.

Bill, good to have you here.

These are explosive charges that in particular, Russia and France and China have provided such substantial armaments to those who are fighting us, insurgents and radical Islamists terrorists in Iraq. Were you surprised by what you unearthed?

BILL GERTZ, AUTHOR, "TREACHERY": Yes, this is kind of the inside story of what we had seen bits and pieces of in the past. But the Pentagon did an assessment after the major combat operations and found that huge amounts of foreign weapons had come in to Iraq oftentimes after the 1991 arms embargo. And they found that the Russians, Chinese and French were the main suppliers. The bottom line, weapons were used against our forces in combat, and are continuing to be used against troops and Iraqis by the insurgents today.

DOBBS: In tonnage terms you put in rather stark relief the scale of the armaments that are available to those who would harm the United States and the Iraqi people approaching a million tons in armament. That's extraordinary.

GERTZ: Yes, the country is literally awash in weapons. They keep finding new ammunition in weapons, depots all over the country. In the beginning, they didn't even have enough soldiers to protect them. What they did is they took bulldozers

and bulldozed the front entrances. Still, some of the insurgents are looting those facilities and using the armaments.

DOBBS: Based on what you report in the book, how does one even view France as an ally?

GERTZ: Well, I think the case of France, you have to look back at their history. Jacques Chirac basically created Saddam Hussein. He was in hock to the French for 4 billion in arms and I think that negatively influenced France in helping Saddam stay in power. We learned from Tariq Aziz after the war that Saddam didn't believe the U.S. would invade because he was told by French and Russian government officials that they were going to block any action in the United Nations.

DOBBS: And some rather conflicted signals as well from representatives of the United States government in all fairness, Bill. The idea also that the United States supported Saddam Hussein for a great number of years as well.

GERTZ: Well, I looked into that. I have a chapter in the book on the United States. And it's basically a myth that we armed them. What the United States did do was supply agricultural credits to the tune of about \$500 million which freed up other money for Saddam to buy all of these weapons. But so far as weapons go, there weren't -- practically no U.S. weapons. Some that were taken from Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.

DOBBS: The support that was provided for Iraq, nonetheless, in the Iraqi-Iranian war created that opportunity for mixed signals. I think you would acknowledge that, and in fact have. But the issue now of Iran seeking to weaponize its nuclear (UNINTELLIGIBLE) material the role of our allies in blocking that effort, the president will be in this city tomorrow to address that among other things with the United Nations. Your thoughts?

GERTZ: This is a huge, huge problem. I think it's on par with the nuclear crisis in North Korea. The Iranians have missiles that can range throughout the Middle East and southern Europe and they're working to get a nuclear warhead. That's kind of the Holy Grail in proliferation terms. Earlier this year in Libya, they uncovered Chinese language documents that were given to Pakistan showing how to make a small nuclear warhead. Officials are now trying to figure out if those same documents that went through this nuclear supplier network were passed on to Iran and North Korea.

DOBBS: Bill Gertz, thanks for being with us. Bill Gertz is the author of the new book, "Treachery: How America's Friends and Foes Are Secretly Arming Our Enemies." Bill, good to have you with us.

GERTZ: Thanks very much.

DOBBS: Still ahead here, one governor creates opportunity in his state saying no to outsourcing Indiana jobs. Indiana's Governor Joseph Kernan is my guest next. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: In "Exporting America" tonight the state of Indiana taking a bold stand, trying to protect its local business to build jobs, to create jobs, rather than kill them. Indiana's Governor Joseph Kernan has canceled a contract with an Indiana outsourcing firm and he created instead what he calls Opportunity Indiana. It's a program aimed at giving Indiana companies and employees more state government business. Joining me now from Indianapolis is Governor Joseph Kernan. Good to have you here.

Governor, you canceled a contract with an Indiana outsourcing firm, canceling about \$15 million in state business which as I recall was for a state unemployment agency as incredibly as that was. Have you ended the state's outsourcing efforts altogether?

GOV. JOSEPH KERNAN (D), INDIANA: No. What we have done is through Opportunity Indiana created the chance for Indiana companies to be successful in getting bids to do work with the state following the cancellation of that contract which I did on the basis that the way the bids were actually designed had excluded any Indiana firms from being successful. We went out, we now have about 4,000 companies that have signed up to do work with the state. On this particular contract, we've had two pre-bid conferences with Indiana companies to talk about how we might structure the bid packages in order to maximize opportunity. And what we've done is taken that one contract for \$15 million and broken it into five separate pieces, the first of which will be going out for bid for in October.

DOBBS: That's great. Governor, why don't you bring the hammer down, and you and the state legislature say, that's it. That you're sick and tired of outsourcing. It's destructive of American jobs. You want to hire Indiana citizens, Americans for those jobs, with Indiana taxpayer money?

KERNAN: Well, I agree with all of that, Lou. And that's why we've taken the steps that we have. We have as well put in some preferences for Indiana businesses in order to help them be successful. What we don't want to do is to limit ourselves -- to build walls around Indiana, permit us to be able to do work with other states. And it is the goal, to do everything that we possibly can here in Indiana, and that's the purpose of the steps that we've taken that have been very aggressive and so far have been very successful.

DOBBS: All right. Your state, your economy, how would you characterize it right now?

KERNAN: Better than our neighbors. A little bit better than the country. But we are still not seeing the kind of growth that we had anticipated we would coming out of the recession.

DOBBS: The idea that you've got to Buy Indiana campaign going. I don't think anyone in any state is offended by that. There is a Buy California, Buy New York program as well. As you try to be as, I guess as diplomatic as possible, as sensitive as possible, to both economic and political realities, is the fact of the matter that more Indiana companies, American companies are succeeding in doing business with your state government than before?

KERNAN: No. In fact, as a part of Opportunity Indiana, Buy Indiana, we have just awarded a contract to a company from Kokomo, Indiana, for our office supplies for the next two years that was being provided by a company that was based in Idaho. Our goal is to make sure that every Indiana company that wants to do business with us, that has a good or a service that they can sell has the maximum chance to be successful in doing business with the state. As well as to encourage Indiana companies to buy from each other.

DOBBS: Excellent. Governor Joe Kernan, thanks for being here.

KERNAN: Thanks, Lou. Good to be with you.

Tonight's thought is on America.

"Americanism means the virtues of courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity and hardihood -- the virtues that made America. The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life." Those the words of President Theodore Roosevelt. It's amazing how often we quote that fellow on this broadcast.

Still ahead, the first criminal trial is under way in the landmark case of corporate greed, and I'm sure we could use a Teddy Roosevelt quote with that one as well. He said a lot of things right. We'll have a full report for you next. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: The Dow, the Nasdaq, the S&P all down on the day. The Dow off 80 points. And as the first Enron trial gets under way, Wall Street's top regulator is blasting corporate ethics, or lack of them, and pay. Joining me now, Christine Romans -- Christine.

CHRISTINE ROMANS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Lou, senior executives need better ethics. SEC chief Bill Donaldson told "The Financial Times" today, "good values are set at top and all too often that concept doesn't exist at American companies."

Case in point, excessive CEO pay. Donaldson says corporate America still has a long way to go. Those comments come on the first day of the first Enron criminal trial. It's a case against two Enron executives and four former Merrill Lynch bankers. It focuses on the sham transaction to sell power generating barges in Nigeria, but Wall Street is holding its breath for what this trial tells us about just how far Wall Street bankers will go and how far they went to help Enron burnish its books.

At the same time, Citigroup shares fell today on concerns that if Citigroup has to be ethical, its growth will slow.

DOBBS: Wait, wait, wait. Say that again?

ROMANS: If Citigroup has to be ethical, its growth will slow. Believe it or not. Japanese authorities ordered Citi to shut down its private bank in Japan on money laundering concerns, and a Merrill Lynch analyst said now is not the time to buy those shares, because "balancing growth and ethics will be a long, hard process for Citigroup."

DOBBS: That is an extraordinary statement. And again, SEC chief, Bill Donaldson, he's getting it right. And doing his job as well as anyone could ask. Christine Romans, also doing your job as well as anyone could ask. Thank you.

ROMANS: Thanks.

DOBBS: Still ahead, the results of our poll and a preview of what is ahead tomorrow. Please stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: The results of our poll tonight: 62 percent of you say the retracted CBS story damages Dan Rather and CBS the most.

Thanks for being with us. Please join us here tomorrow. Democratic vice presidential candidate, Senator John Edwards, joins me, as does independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader. They'll both be here. We hope you will too.

<http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0409/17/ldt.00.html>

In "Exporting America" tonight, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has a golden opportunity to take a stand against the exporting of American jobs. The California legislature has passed several anti-outsourcing bills that are now on the governor's desk, but there's a good chance Governor Schwarzenegger will veto them. Peter Viles reports from Los Angeles.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

PETER VILES, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Will he or won't he? That's the question in Sacramento, where Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has a choice to make: Does he sign legislation limiting overseas outsourcing, or does he side with the business lobby and veto it.

ALLAN ZAREMBERG, CALIFORNIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: I believe the governor has a strong agenda to improve California's economy. These bills are inconsistent with improving California's economy. They create trade barriers. And I hope that the governor takes that into strong consideration. and I hope that the governor vetoes these bills.

VILES: Bills now on the governor's desk would require that all work on state contracts be done in the United States. Would require overseas's call centers employees to disclose their locations if a California customer wants to know where they are. And prohibit outsourcing to work-related to private information for homeland security.

FABIAN NUNEZ, (D) SPEAKER CALIF. ASSEMBLY: Some of his advisers have clearly stated, I think publicly as well as privately, that they don't think the governor intends on signing this legislation. I'm hopeful that the governor's compassion side, his compassionate side, will win the day and that he'll do the right thing.

VILES: Despite Schwarzenegger's reputation for straight talk, he hasn't taken a position on any of the bills, although he did memorably criticize those who worry about the economy.

GOV. ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, (R) CALIFORNIA: And to those critics who are so pessimistic about our economy, I say don't be economic girlie man. VILES: It's a great line, but Schwarzenegger has never made clear his thoughts on how government should respond to overseas outsourcing.

(on camera): Now, Schwarzenegger has positioned himself as a populist. He's urged state residents to buy California products, but now he has to decide whether his administration will buy American. Peter Viles, CNN, Los Angeles.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

PILGRIM: And we reported extensively on American companies that relocate their headquarters to offshore tax havens. Several of those companies have received lucrative government contracts, and now some lawmakers are fighting back. But so far, they're having very little success. Lisa Sylvester reports from Washington.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

LISA SYLVESTER, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The consulting and technology firm Accenture was award a \$10 billion Homeland Security Department contract this summer, the largest contract ever for that agency. Not bad for a company whose corporate offices are in this building in Bermuda. But new legislation approved by the Senate would bar companies who set up shell headquarters in tax havens from bidding on future department of Homeland Security contracts. A similar bill passed the house in June.

REP. ROSA DELAURO, (D) CONNECTICUT: We lose about \$5 billion in revenue, a serious amount of money, it's staggering the amount of money. And to think, then, that we would reward those companies, that we reward them with federal contracts, is equally as staggering.

SYLVESTER: This week, a House amendment by Congresswoman Rosa Delaura tried to prohibit these companies, dubbed Benedict Arnold's, from receiving government contracts from two other federal department, Treasury and Transportation. That amendment was defeated along party lines. Opponents argue shutting out companies from the bidding process drives up costs for taxpayers.

CHRISTOPHER PREBLE, CATO INSTITUTE: Because you are paying more, because you are reducing the number of eligible bidders, and you're perhaps getting less service or a less effective product, whatever the case may be, because you are somewhat arbitrarily ruling certain competitors out of the process.

SYLVESTER: Both sides are carefully watching what happens with the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill. It still has to go to a congressional conference committee. Where even though the language is identical in the House and the Senate bills, it could still be stripped.

SEN. CARL LEVIN, (D) MICHIGAN: We've seen these kind of games played before in conference, where conferees drop provisions which they should not drop when they're both in the House and the Senate bills. SYLVESTER: And even if it is in the final version of the bill, President Bush will have the last say.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SYLVESTER: The Homeland Security Department appropriations bill will likely move through conference committee quickly, and could be on the president's desk by the end of this month. Both the White House and the Republican congressional leadership have opposed banning corporate expatriates from receiving government contracts -- Kitty.

PILGRIM: All this week, we've shown you the excerpts of the first-ever documentary film on the exporting of American jobs. Tonight, the devastating effect of cheap foreign labor and low-priced imported goods on American businesses and consumers.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: If Wal-Mart was a country, it would be one of China's top ten trading partners. I asked (UNINTELLIGIBLE) if they saw a connection between their roles as producers and as consumers.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We go to dollar stores, we go to Dollar General. We go to Family Dollar. Most of those places are things that are shipped in here. We're defeating our purpose. Overseas took our jobs.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: So we're supporting them.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: But right now -- but we can't afford to go like (UNINTELLIGIBLE) or Winn-Dixie to buy household products when we can get it for a dollar apiece.

CHARLES FISHMAN, AUTHOR, UPCOMING BOOK ON WAL-MART: Part of the way they deliver everyday low prices is by camouflaging the costs, particularly of manufactured goods, and camouflaging what's required to get those low prices.

STEPHEN BROTHERS, V.P., APEX DIGITAL: Wal-Mart is always pushing to drive the cost down even lower, and that is something that probably will never change. But they bring -- they pass those cost savings onto the consumer.

FISHMAN: Wal-Mart has a principle, a philosophy that is part of the way they operate. That an ordinary consumer good, a toothbrush, a flashlight, an umbrella,

a cordless drill, if it doesn't fundamentally change year over year, the price needs to go down 5 percent.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Every year?

FISHMAN: Every year. UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Price pressure from the major retailers is one of the reasons why so many great American products are no longer made in the USA.

From Mr. Coffee to Etch-a-Sketch, from Levi's to Masterlock, classic American brands have been closing their domestic plants in search of cheap labor.

Charles Fishman recently interviewed the CEO of Masterlock for a magazine article.

FISHMAN: Randall Lariemore said, look, the people in Bentonville are smart. And I was getting the same kind of pressure from Home Depot and from Lowe's and all kinds of other superstores, and it's a reasonable question. Why should a consumer pay \$12 or even \$9 for the Masterlock when they can get a similar lock for \$6?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: One of Wal-Mart's most successful new suppliers is Apex Digital, a Californian company that was created to bring low-price Chinese DVD players to the American market.

BROTHERS: We were determined from the beginning to be a good supplier to Wal-Mart. We are a very low overhead company. Our overheads are tiny compared to larger Japanese companies. So we can just afford to operate on a much lower cost base. We can make money selling a million of something. We haven't figured out how to make money selling 10,000 of something.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Apex Digital's California staff handles sales and marketing, logistics and accounting. Virtually every other corporate function is outsourced to Asian vendors, including manufacturing, product design and engineering.

BROTHERS: We have in our California offices only five engineers and we have about 12 engineers in China.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Free traders always point to American innovation as a job creation engine. But Apex Digital suggests that an innovative American start-up can be wildly successful with a very small core group of American employees.

BROTHERS: We're a company that does a little under \$1 billion a year with 93 people currently.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

PILGRIM: Let's take a look now at some of your thoughts.

And George Bain of Port Ewen, New York writes: "Our government of the people, by the people, for the people seems to have switched to in spite of the people in many cases, and we need to get it back from big business."

And Robert Pounders of Astoria, Oregon, writes: "We must secure our borders. If we don't stop playing politics with border security, we will have another catastrophe coming." Do send us your thoughts, include your name and address, and for each e-mail we will send you -- that we read, we'll send you a free copy of Lou's new book, "Exporting America."

**Elections In East Germany; Left; Right And In Between**  
by Victor Grossman, Berlin

Comment: I include this article because it illustrates that the elite's intention to reduce wages, benefits and living standards is not just happening in the United States. If the brightest minds do not begin to grapple with these seemingly irresolvable problems we are all going to be toast -- quite possibly nuclear toast.  
PH

Election returns in two East German states brought heavy losses to both major parties, large gains for the left and the right, and major examples of media manipulation. Their most worrisome result was the strengthening of two neo-Nazi parties, which agreed to run in one state each. This mutual deal meant they did not compete against each other, thus succeeding in

increasing their strength in the Brandenburg legislature (6,1 %) and breaking into the legislature of Saxony for the first time with 9.2 percent.

In Brandenburg, the big state surrounding Berlin, the governing parties, Social Democrats (SPD) and Christian Democrats (CDU), each lost about 7 percent compared with the last election. Despite this, the SPD remained in first-place (with 31.9 percent) and loudly proclaimed a major victory. The Christian Democrats, led by a Prussian-type ex-general (good for many a role in a historical film), had no excuse for any celebration. They were pushed out of second place by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the reformed ruling party of the one-time German Democratic Republic, which got 28 percent. The CDU got 19,4 percent. For months the polls showed the PDS in the lead, but a major effort in the last few weeks by the incumbent minister president, a good talker, helped him to win out. But the Social Democrats lack a majority and must choose either to renew their current coalition with the unpopular CDU (and its general) or, for the first time, accept as partners the PDS, led by a young woman candidate who also put up a vigorous campaign fight.

Both major parties also lost heavily in Saxony (its main cities are Dresden and Leipzig). Like the SPD in Brandenburg the CDU maintained its leading position. But instead of its usual absolute majority it lost about 15 percent of its voters, ending up with 41.1 percent. It too must now find a coalition partner to reach a majority and form a government. This may be with the Social Democrats, who got 9.8 percent of the vote, their worst result in history. Here, too, the PDS won second place, with 23.6 percent, a small increase. It had expected to do even better but some weeks before the election the press was suddenly fed a report that the leading PDS candidate, a literature professor from Vienna who moved to East Germany (the GDR) decades ago, had once been an informer for the "Stasi" or secret service. Professor Porsch denied this and obtained an injunction against reprinting the questionable charges, but at least some of the mud stuck, he was thrown out of his university job and the result partly distracted from basic issues. Whether the charges were based on truth, half-truths or lies, damage was done, making the gains of the PDS, though less than expected, even more remarkable.

The main factors in both elections were the so-called reform laws, due to take full effect in 2005. They have already meant big jumps in costs for medical care and medicines, less money for pensions or care for the aged. The coming "reforms" - named "Hartz laws" after the Volkswagen company head who first proposed them - will force all who are jobless for over a year, who now receive enough to lead a nearly normal if skimpy life, down to welfare levels: a modest amount for rent and heating plus just over 130 euros, hardly more than a starvation amount. To receive this they must declare their entire financial situation: all they possess, what their children have in the bank, how big their apartment and their garden are and what life insurance they have. This must all be reduced to the required minimum to get the welfare money. They must accept any job offered them, which could mean employing a civil engineer in a home for handicapped elders or a musician to raking leaves. These jobs can pay so little that they may cut the wages of those in the trade and thus weaken the unions. A refusal would mean sacrificing the welfare payments. In East Germany, with double the jobless rate of West Germany - between 15 and 25 percent - these "reforms" could bring total ruin to an already devastated economy, not only to those hit directly but to retail shops, service industries and the like.

The anger at these plans caused weekly demonstrations in most East German and many West German cities. It explains why so many voters rejected both Social Democrats, whose Chancellor Schroeder proposed the laws and Christian Democrats who, on the national level supposedly in opposition, also voted for them. It also makes clear why there were gains for the PDS, the only party in the Bundestag to vote against these laws..

But it also explains the gains for neo-Nazi parties which tried to hook onto the campaign against the Hartz laws, together with propaganda against foreigners "who steal our jobs" and, less openly, against Jews. The neo-nazis got most of their votes from young males, who have been hit hardest by joblessness, lack of any perspective for the future, cuts in subsidized youth centers and school tracking, instituted after unification, which separates "good pupils" from "dumbbells" and sends them to different schools at the age of ten or twelve.

The growth of the neo-nazi parties, especially in Saxony, where they nearly overtook the Social Democrats, has caused all kinds of public gasps, warnings and analyses. And lying propaganda!

All through the election campaign leading politicians and media blamed "extremists on the left and right" for misinforming people about the reform measures and using their fears to win votes. The word they used most often to blast such infamy was "populism"! Now, after the election, they continue to blame "left and right wing extremists" and populism for their own election losses and the strength of the neo-nazis.

But it was the established parties, not the left, which voted for these laws. The PDS opposed them from the very beginning, not just in the election campaign (though the media rarely mentioned this). And the fears of the East Germans are by no means without substance. As for the countless demonstrations against the laws in all East Germany - and parts of West Germany, too, since many there will also be hit hard - they were supported by the PDS but led by a combination of organizations (like Attac), leftist political parties, union locals and church groups. The only ones excluded from the weekly marches were the neo-nazis: their attempts to attach themselves were always prevented by loud choruses shouting "Nazis raus!" and sometimes by more forceful measures.

Even more important is another aspect. For years it has been the left - including the PDS - which exposed and opposed the neo-nazis whenever they showed their heads, with votes in legislative bodies, with counterdemonstrations and with every other means, legal and occasionally less legal (there have been many physical clashes). Other parties, including the SPD and especially the CDU, either closed their eyes to the danger, treating violent nazis with extreme leniency in the courtrooms, protecting their marches and meetings against those opposing them and making it possible for them to establish so-called anti-foreigner "liberated zones" in many East German towns and villages - usually those with the fewest jobs, hopes or opportunities.

These neo-Nazi parties and their supporters, known and unknown, do indeed constitute a growing menace. If the economy worsens - more than likely with the reforms of the four main parties (Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, the business-related Free Democrats and sadly, the Greens, who are in the national government coalition) - the situation could become more and more similar to that which prevailing during the depression years of the 1930's - which led to Hitler.

**Time For A Checkup**

Merrill Goozner September 21, 2004

[http://www.tompaine.com/articles/time\\_for\\_a\\_checkup.php](http://www.tompaine.com/articles/time_for_a_checkup.php)

How is it that the richest nation in the world can barely meet the health benchmarks set by former Soviet Union countries? It's all about averages, says Merrill Goozner of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. There's a huge race- and class-based health care disparity in the United States. And it's a problem that's going to take more than promises of universal health care to solve.

Merrill Goozner is director of the Integrity in Science project at the Center for Science in the Public Interest and a contributing editor to The American Prospect. He has been a journalist and researcher for more than 20 years.

The United States spends more on health care than any country on earth—nearly 15 percent of its overall economy. That's nearly a half again as much as other countries and on a per capita basis, no one else is even close. Yet if one looks at the performance of our health care system, we're clearly not getting what we pay for.

USA Today last week published a list of the top 50 countries in terms of life expectancy. The United States ranked third from the bottom. That's right. We're number 48. This year, Americans can expect an average life span of 77.4 years, nearly four years behind the Japanese.

Of course, our longevity has been rising every year by a small amount. But many countries that spend nowhere near our levels on doctors, hospital stays, drugs and sophisticated tests are clearly getting a lot more for their money.

Take the oppressed citizens of the British isles, for instance. We're constantly told they are suffering under the yoke of an incompetent national health care system. Yet they live nearly a year longer on average than Americans.

How about those beer-swilling, sausage-stuffing Germans? They live 14 months longer on average.

Just over the border in Canada, the press constantly claims that our northern cousins are suffering endless waits for basic procedures that we take for granted. Surely they must be dying off at a faster clip. Uh-uh. They have two-and-a-half more years than the average American. Perhaps they spend it waiting on lines for their health care.

Among large industrialized countries, the life expectancy leaders—all with an average life expectancy over 80 years—were Japan, Switzerland and Sweden. What do they have in common? They have national health care plans. But more importantly, they have a high degree of income and social equality across their societies—which, more than any other single factor, correlates with superior health outcomes.

A quick look at the Centers for Disease Control website at health disparities in the United States gives a few clues about why our health care system performs so poorly despite outlandish costs. While the overall U.S. life expectancy rate is 77 years, the rate for blacks is about 72 years with black males at a Third World-level of 68 years.

Infant mortality—a prime indicator of how well health care services are distributed in a society—is another area where the United States lags sadly behind its industrialized rivals. The CDC rankings of selected countries showed the United States at 28th out of 37 countries.

Who fell below us in safe and healthy childbirths and infant care through the first year of life? Virtually all the laggards (other than the United States) are countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. How can it be that we not much better off than Romania in this vital statistic? It's not middle-class moms in suburban hospitals losing babies. It's poor mothers without prenatal care. It's teenagers who hide their pregnancies, deliver low birth weight babies and have few support systems to help them care for their newborns.

The health effects of race and class are America's hidden health care story. Low-wage work leads to lousy diets because the foods that are plentiful and cheap happen to be the worst for you. Fear of unemployment and economic decline defines America's large lower middle class today and this produces tremendous psychic stress—an unreported epidemic. We spend billions on drugs to lower blood pressure, reduce cholesterol and treat diabetes, but almost nothing on social programs to offset the income-related lifestyles that lead to these conditions.

In this election season, by all means let's have a debate about how to provide health insurance to the 43 million Americans without it. But let's also talk about who in this society suffers from ill health, why they suffer and what can be done about the social and economic disparities that lead to ill health. It will take more than universal insurance coverage to tackle those issues.

**How Tax Cuts Feed the Beast**

By DANIEL SHAVIRO Published: September 21, 2004

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/21/opinion/21shaviro.html>

In the campaign trail, President Bush is busy telling voters that he wants to keep making government "smaller and more efficient" and that his opponent, John Kerry, wants a return to the days of big government. Forget the profligate spending of the past four years, he seems to suggest; instead, think of the many tax cuts that have been pushed through and how in time, as the saying goes, they will "starve the beast."

But in fact the Bush tax cuts will do nothing of the kind. Counterintuitive though it may seem, they will inevitably end up increasing the size of government.

When we talk about "big government," we shouldn't be talking simply about how many agencies are in Washington or how many employees they have. Rather, we should consider government's effects on society as a whole. If the government were to hire a lot of employees to redistribute wealth, everyone would agree that government had grown. But if the government instead used regulation for the same purpose, it might have fewer bureaucrats but it would not be smaller - it would simply have outsourced its "big government" activity by making private workers subject to new government authority.

In the same way, tax cuts can be used in lieu of spending to redistribute wealth and shape the economy. And, intentionally or not, that is exactly what the Mr. Bush is doing.

Two important points about the country's fiscal system help to make this clear. The first is that Washington has historically engaged in immense wealth redistribution from younger to older generations, mainly through Social Security and Medicare. Those programs' benefits were essentially provided free to the first groups of eligible retirees (in the 1930's for Social Security and the 1960's for Medicare), and then expanded over the years without the government's demanding matching contributions from recipients. The younger generations keep having to pick up the tab for the older generations' expanding benefits.

The second major point is that, as even the president's 2005 budget admits, our current tax and spending policies are unsustainable. We face a long-term fiscal gap that is almost unimaginable: the total difference between the cost of all promised benefits and the revenues to pay for them is about \$70 trillion.

The root causes of this gap are that Americans are living longer and that health care costs are growing far faster than inflation, making Social Security and Medicare more expensive. But the Bush administration has added immensely to the gap: the Medicare prescription drug benefit enacted last year amounts to a \$16.6 trillion increase over the very long term, according to the Medicare trustees. That is a straight tax increase on future generations.

Against this background, how should we think about the huge Bush tax cuts? They greatly increase the already huge redistribution of wealth from younger to older generations, because the younger generations will have to pay off the bonds that are being floated to finance the current federal spending, as well as the Social Security and Medicare expenses of older generations. On top of this, the Bush tax cuts are likely over time to increase, not reduce, government's effect on the economy.

The growing federal debt is virtually certain to lead to offsetting tax increases down the road. Does anyone really believe that in 10 years, when Social Security and Medicare benefits are imminently threatened, Congress will not try to increase revenues to keep the benefits flowing a bit longer?

The increased fiscal gap also makes future government policy far less predictable. Having a looming debt of that size will stir every interest group in Washington to try to influence future policy. It won't be possible to take any government commitment for granted for more than a few years. With even Social Security and Medicare likely to be on the chopping block eventually, no group or lobby will be able to rely on political inertia to protect what it now has. That is an enviable state for members of Congress set on gaining campaign funds, but a worrisome situation for the rest of us.

The Bush tax cuts add up to greater wealth redistribution, a greater likelihood of future tax increases, and greater uncertainty about what Washington will do to keep its programs going. Sounds like big government to me.

Daniel Shaviro is a professor of law at New York University and the author of "Who Should Pay for Medicare?"

#### **The Last Deception**

By PAUL KRUGMAN Published: September 21, 2004  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/21/opinion/21krugman.html>

It's Ayad Allawi week. President Bush, starting with his address at the U.N. today, will try to present Mr. Allawi - a former Baathist who the BBC reports was chosen as prime minister because he was "equally mistrusted by everyone" - as the leader of a sovereign nation on the path to democracy. If the media play along, Mr. Bush may be able to keep the Iraq disaster under wraps for a few more weeks.

It may well work. In June, when the United States formally transferred sovereignty to Mr. Allawi's government, the media acted as if this empty gesture marked the end of the war. Even though American casualties continued to rise, stories about Iraq dropped off the evening news and the front pages. This gave the public the impression that things were improving and helped Mr. Bush recover in the polls.

Now Mr. Bush hopes that by pretending that Mr. Allawi is a real leader of a real government, he can conceal the fact that he has led America into a major strategic defeat.

That's a stark statement, but it's a view shared by almost all independent military and intelligence experts. Put it this way: it's hard to identify any major urban areas outside Kurdistan where the U.S. and its allies exercise effective control. Insurgents operate freely, even in the heart of Baghdad, while coalition forces, however many battles they win, rule only whatever ground they happen to stand on. And efforts to put an Iraqi face on the occupation are self-defeating: as the example of Mr. Allawi shows, any leader who is too closely associated with America becomes tainted in the eyes of the Iraqi public.

Mr. Bush's insistence that he is nonetheless "pleased with the progress" in Iraq - when his own National Intelligence Estimate echoes the grim views of independent experts - would be funny if the reality weren't so grim. Unfortunately, this is no joke: to the delight of Al Qaeda, America's overstretched armed forces are gradually getting chewed up in a losing struggle.

So what's the answer?

The Bush administration fostered the Iraq insurgency by botching the essential tasks of enlisting allies, rebuilding infrastructure, training and equipping local security forces, and preparing for elections. It's understandable, then, that John Kerry - whose speech yesterday was deadly accurate in its description of Mr. Bush's mistakes - proposes going back and doing the job right.

But I hope that Mr. Kerry won't allow himself to be trapped into trying to fulfill neocon fantasies. If there ever was a chance to turn Iraq into a pro-American beacon of democracy, that chance perished a long time ago.

Can the insurgency be crushed? It's widely believed that in November, a few days after the election, the Bush administration will launch an all-out offensive against insurgent-controlled areas. Such an offensive will, for all practical purposes, be an attempt to conquer Iraq all over again. But unlike Saddam's hapless commanders, the insurgents won't oblige us by taking up positions in the countryside, where they can be blasted by U.S. air power. And grinding urban warfare that leads to heavy American casualties and the death of large numbers of innocent civilians will simply enlarge the ranks of our enemies.

But if the chance to install a pro-American government has been lost, what's the alternative? Scaling back our aims. This means accepting the fact that an Iraqi leader, to have legitimacy, must be able to deliver an end to America's military presence. Unless we want this war to go on forever, we will have to abandon the 14 "enduring bases" the Bush administration has been building.

It also means accepting the likelihood that Iraq will not have a strong central government - and that local leaders will end up with a lot of autonomy. This doesn't have to mean creating havens for hostile forces: remember that for a year after Saddam's fall, moderate Shiite clerics effectively governed large areas of Iraq and kept them relatively peaceful. It was the continuing irritant of the U.S. occupation that empowered radicals like Moktada al-Sadr.

The point is that by winding down America's military presence, while promising aid to those who don't harbor anti-American terrorists and retaliation against those who do, the U.S. can probably leave behind an Iraq that isn't an American ally, but isn't a threat either. And that, at this point, is probably the best we can hope for.

#### **Lots of Chemicals, Little Reaction**

By RICK HIND and DAVID HALPERIN Published: September 22, 2004  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/22/opinion/22halperin.html>

Washington — While President Bush continues to make terrorism and domestic security the centerpiece of his campaign, he has made little mention of one of the most urgent threats to our safety: the risk that terrorists could cause thousands, even millions, of deaths by sabotaging one of the 15,000 industrial chemical plants across the United States.

The dangers from chemical plant mishaps are clear. According to data compiled by Greenpeace International, the 1984 accident at an Union Carbide insecticide plant in Bhopal, India, has caused 20,000 deaths and injuries to 200,000 people. A terrorist group could cause even greater harm by entering a plant in the United States and setting off an explosion that produces a deadly gas cloud.

The administration knows the dangers. Soon after the 9/11 attacks, Senator Jon Corzine, Democrat of New Jersey, highlighted the issue with legislation requiring chemical plants to enhance security and use safer chemicals and technologies when feasible. (Such safer substitutes are widely available.)

A study by the Army surgeon general, conducted soon after 9/11, found that up to 2.4 million people could be killed or wounded by a terrorist attack on a single chemical plant. In February 2003, the government's National Infrastructure Protection Center warned that chemical plants in the United States could be Qaeda targets. Investigations by The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review and the CBS program "60 Minutes" have highlighted lax or nonexistent security at chemical plants, with gates unlocked or wide open and chemical tanks unguarded.

The Environmental Protection Agency under Christie Whitman did its part to evaluate the threat, identifying 123 chemical facilities where an accident or attack could threaten more than a million people, and 7,605 plants that threatened more than 1,000 people. The agency determined that it could use the Clean Air Act to compel chemical plants to increase security.

Following the Corzine approach, the agency also planned to promote the use of less hazardous chemicals. But the Bush administration overruled the initiative, and in December the president announced that chemical security was now the province of the new Department of Homeland Security, under Secretary Tom Ridge.

As The Wall Street Journal disclosed last month, Homeland Security tried to reduce the threat of catastrophic attack with the stroke of a pen. The department announced that the number of plants that threatened more than 1,000 people was actually only 4,391, and the number that endangered more than a million people was not 123 but two.

Mr. Ridge has set in motion plans to install security cameras at chemical plants in seven states - but not in some high-threat states like Florida, Ohio and Minnesota. Although the department visits plants and offers advice, unlike the E.P.A., it doesn't have the power to enforce security measures and relies instead on voluntary efforts by the industry. Without enforceable requirements, chemical firms will remain reluctant to put sufficient safeguards in place, for fear that their competitors will scrimp on security and thus be able to undercut them on price.

Industry groups have lobbied intensely against the Corzine legislation. While reluctant to invest in plant safety, some of these companies and their executives have found the resources to help pay for the Republican campaign.

For the Bush administration, it seems, homeland security is critical except when it conflicts with the wishes of supporters who own chemical plants.

Rick Hind is legislative director of Greenpeace's toxics campaign. David Halperin, a lawyer, has served on the staffs of the National Security Council and the Senate Intelligence Committee.

#### **Pepper-Spray Case Goes to Jury in California**

By CAROLYN MARSHALL Published: September 22, 2004  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/22/national/22pepper.html>

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 21 - Maya Portugal says the majestic redwood trees of Northern California changed her forever. Her love for the sweeping forest canopies and lush old-growth groves has taken her from child explorer to teenage protester to adult plaintiff in a seven-year legal battle between the law enforcement officials of rural Humboldt County and environmentalists opposed to logging the redwoods.

"I grew up in the woods," she said. "Driving through Humboldt now you can see all the clear-cuts. I wanted to do something so my kids wouldn't have to see what I saw."

That is how Ms. Portugal, 22, explained to jurors in federal court here what moved her, at the age of 16, to join protests against logging of the trees. She is one of eight anti-logging activists, known to their colleagues as the Pepper Spray 8, who are the plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the City of Eureka and Humboldt County authorities.

The lawsuit, sent to the jury in United States District Court for Northern California on Tuesday, asserts that a county policy that allows the authorities to smear pepper spray ointment on the eyes of protesters constitutes an unnecessary and excessive use of force, tantamount to torture.

The lawsuit stems from three incidents in 1997 when pepper spray was daubed in the eyes of Ms. Portugal and at least seven others after they refused to heed police orders to disperse. Closing arguments in the trial were presented Tuesday. Judge Susan Illston instructed the eight jurors that a unanimous verdict was necessary to find for the protesters, who seek unspecified damages.

"It burned really bad," Ms. Portugal testified last week. "I felt scared. I felt like I was being violated. I felt like the cops were out of control."

The Humboldt authorities testified Monday that pepper spray was considered the safest way to make the arrests. The question of whether the police used unreasonable force in violation of the Fourth Amendment is at the heart of the trial.

The three incidents attracted attention far beyond Humboldt in part because television news programs broadcast the protests, including images of sheriff's deputies daubing the eyes of passive protesters with cotton swabs soaked with pepper spray.

Since then the incidents have been the subject of numerous lawsuits resulting in a jury deadlock, a mistrial, a series of appellate court procedures, the removal of a judge and a United States Supreme Court ruling remanding the case to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, instructing it to consider whether the sheriffs were immune from suit. The Ninth Circuit said the sheriffs had no immunity and ordered the new trial, now under way.

Lawyers for the protesters include J. Tony Serra, who has characterized the case as "a political trial." Mr. Serra and the others argue that the police acted maliciously, using unreasonable force to intentionally inflict pain, frighten the protesters and silence the anti-logging movement. "When people are nonviolent they do not deserve to be treated like wild beasts," he said in closing.

In testimony last week, protesters told the jury that the chemical caused searing eye pain, gagging, dizziness, hyperventilation and headaches that in some cases lasted days. To this day, protesters said, they fear the police and suffer aftereffects, including impaired vision and recurring growths on their eyelids.

But lawyers for the defendants - Humboldt County, the City of Eureka and local law enforcement officials - argued that the use of pepper spray came in response to "organized lawlessness" by protesters, including the group Earth First, which helped arrange sit-ins and rallies.

The demonstrators were directing their efforts at the Pacific Lumber Company and the Texas investor Charles E. Hurwitz, chief executive of Pacific Lumber's parent company, Maxxam, and their negotiations with the state and federal governments that resulted in the so-called Headwaters deal. It was created to preserve 10,000 acres of redwoods but upset many environmentalists who felt it did not go far enough.

Nancy Delaney, a Eureka lawyer representing the defendants, said, "We believe the use of force was reasonable and the safest way for officers to discharge their lawful duty."

**Why We Cannot Win**  
by Al Lorentz

Before I begin, let me state that I am a soldier currently deployed in Iraq, I am not an armchair quarterback. Nor am I some politically idealistic and naïve young soldier. I am an old and seasoned Non-Commissioned Officer with nearly 20 years under my belt. Additionally, I am not just a soldier with a muds-eye view of the war, I am in Civil Affairs and as such, it is my job to be aware of all the events occurring in this country and specifically in my region.

I have come to the conclusion that we cannot win here for a number of reasons. Ideology and idealism will never trump history and reality.

When we were preparing to deploy, I told my young soldiers to beware of the "political solution." Just when you think you have the situation on the ground in hand, someone will come along with a political directive that throws you off the tracks.

I believe that we could have won this un-Constitutional invasion of Iraq and possibly pulled off the even more un-Constitutional occupation and subjugation of this sovereign nation. It might have even been possible to foist democracy on these people who seem to have no desire, understanding or respect for such an institution. True the possibility of pulling all this off was a long shot and would have required several hundred billion dollars and even more casualties than we've seen to date but again it would have been possible, not realistic or necessary but possible.

Here are the specific reasons why we cannot win in Iraq.

First, we refuse to deal in reality. We are in a guerilla war, but because of politics, we are not allowed to declare it a guerilla war and must label the increasingly effective guerilla forces arrayed against us as "terrorists, criminals and dead-enders."

This implies that there is a zero sum game at work, i.e. we can simply kill X number of the enemy and then the fight is over, mission accomplished, everybody wins. Unfortunately, this is not the case. We have few tools at our disposal and those are proving to be wholly ineffective at fighting the guerillas.

The idea behind fighting a guerilla army is not to destroy its every man (an impossibility since he hides himself by day amongst the populace). Rather the idea in guerilla warfare is to erode or destroy his base of support.

So long as there is support for the guerilla, for every one you kill two more rise up to take his place. More importantly, when your tools for killing him are precision guided munitions, raids and other acts that create casualties among the innocent populace, you raise the support for the guerillas and undermine the support for yourself. (A 500-pound precision bomb has a casualty-producing radius of 400 meters minimum; do the math.)

Second, our assessment of what motivates the average Iraqi was skewed, again by politically motivated "experts." We came here with some fantasy idea that the natives were all ignorant, mud-hut dwelling camel riders who would line the streets and pelt us with rose petals, lay palm fronds in the street and be eternally grateful. While at one time there may have actually been support and respect from the locals, months of occupation by our regular military forces have turned the formerly friendly into the recently hostile.

Attempts to correct the thinking in this regard are in vain; it is not politically correct to point out the fact that the locals are not only disliking us more and more, they are growing increasingly upset and often overtly hostile. Instead of addressing the reasons why the locals are becoming angry and discontented, we allow politicians in Washington DC to give us pat and convenient reasons that are devoid of any semblance of reality.

We are told that the locals are not upset because we have a hostile, aggressive and angry Army occupying their nation. We are told that they are not upset at the police state we have created, or at the manner of picking their representatives for them. Rather we are told, they are upset because of a handful of terrorists, criminals and dead enders in their midst have made them upset, that and of course the ever convenient straw man of "left wing media bias."

Third, the guerillas are filling their losses faster than we can create them. This is almost always the case in guerilla warfare, especially when your tactics for battling the guerillas are aimed at killing guerillas instead of eroding their support. For every guerilla we kill with a "smart bomb" we kill many more innocent civilians and create rage and anger in the Iraqi community. This rage and anger translates into more recruits for the terrorists and less support for us.

We have fallen victim to the body count mentality all over again. We have shown a willingness to inflict civilian casualties as a necessity of war without realizing that these same casualties create waves of hatred against us. These angry Iraqi citizens translate not only into more recruits for the guerilla army but also into more support of the guerilla army.

Fourth, their lines of supply and communication are much shorter than ours and much less vulnerable. We must import everything we need into this place; this costs money and is dangerous. Whether we fly the supplies in or bring them by truck, they are vulnerable to attack, most especially those brought by truck. This not only increases the likelihood of the supplies being interrupted. Every bean, every bullet and every bandage becomes infinitely more expensive.

Conversely, the guerillas live on top of their supplies and are showing every indication of developing a very sophisticated network for obtaining them. Further, they have the advantage of the close support of family and friends and traditional religious networks.

Fifth, we consistently underestimate the enemy and his capabilities. Many military commanders have prepared to fight exactly the wrong war here.

Our tactics have not adjusted to the battlefield and we are falling behind.

Meanwhile the enemy updates his tactics and has shown a remarkable resiliency and adaptability.

Because the current administration is more concerned with its image than it is with reality, it prefers symbolism to substance: soldiers are dying here and being maimed and crippled for life. It is tragic, indeed criminal that our elected public servants would so willingly sacrifice our nation's prestige and honor as well as the blood and treasure to pursue an agenda that is ahistoric and un-Constitutional.

It is all the more ironic that this un-Constitutional mission is being performed by citizen soldiers such as myself who swore an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, the same oath that the commander in chief himself has sworn.

September 20, 2004

Al Lorentz [send him mail] is former state chairman of the Constitution Party of Texas and is a reservist currently serving with the US Army in Iraq.

#### **Don't mess with the Bushes**

David Talbot talks to Kitty Kelley, whose scathing portrait of the Bush family has fired up the Republican camp  
<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article6904.htm>

09/14/04 "The Guardian" -- After weeks of bracing by the Bush White House, the category 5 storm has hit: Hurricane Kitty. Bestselling author Kitty Kelley's withering portrait of the Bush dynasty, *The Family*, is landing in bookstores on Tuesday - more than 720,000 copies of it. And the White House is already on high alert. "This book is fiction and deserves to be treated as such," snarled Republican spokeswoman Christine Iverson, as the RNC fired off an anti-Kelley talking-points memo to friendly media assets.

The media blowback against Kelley, author of controversial biographies of Nancy Reagan and Frank Sinatra, has already begun. On the Monday morning Today Show, host Matt Lauer showed how tough an interviewer he can be when not questioning presidents and other potentates, pressing Kelley on who she's going to vote for in November ("Who're you voting for?" Kelley shot back) and the timing of the book's publication, weeks before the November election ("Why not? It's relevant," countered the author, who's been working on the book for four years).

The hottest dispute sparked by the book involves the allegation that George W Bush, who claimed to be clean and sober at the time, snorted cocaine with one of his brothers at the Camp David presidential retreat when his father was president. One of Kelley's sources - and the only one on the record - was Sharon Bush, the deeply aggrieved ex-wife of W's younger brother Neil. She is now in strong denial mode, even though her own publicist, who was present at a lunch where she told Kelley the story, confirms the accuracy of Kelley's account. Nonetheless, Lauer produced the Bush divorcee after his interview with Kelley to repeat her denials.

While the Camp David coke party is getting the headlines, Kelley's book is filled with many other tawdry stories about the Bush dynasty. Here is a family that looks "like The Donna Reed Show, and then you see it's The Sopranos", Kelley tells Salon.

As Kelley tells it, the dynasty had respectable origins - in the form of family patriarch Prescott Bush, the distinguished, moderate Republican senator from Connecticut - but rapidly slid into cynical opportunism, skulduggery, and a mean-spirited sense of entitlement. The first President Bush is presented as a weak yes man, driven not by political vision but a savage preppy spirit of competition instilled in him by his whirlwind of a mother. But it is his wife, Barbara (whom the ex-wife of White House counsel C Boyden Gray calls "bull-dyke tough"), and their eldest son, George, who are the true pieces of work in Kelley's book, a mother and son team brimming with such spite and ambition they would give the ruthless duo in *The Manchurian Candidate* the shivers.

In one of the creepier passages of the book, a family gathering from hell at Kennebunkport, Maine, Barbara is shown mercilessly baiting her dry-drunk son, then governor of Texas, as a teetotaling 'Chosen One', while he keeps pleading to skip the cocktails and put on the feed bag, and his elderly father "drools over [TV newswoman] Paula Zahn's legs".

One of the major themes in Kelley's book is the family's weakness for liquor and drugs. Alcoholism, she writes, runs deeply in the family and among its victims, according to one Bush family friend, was Prescott, a "major-league alcoholic", who was in the habit of checking himself into his men's club and country club to go on benders. And Kelley writes that George W Bush is not the only one in the first family who enjoyed illegal substances. While a student at Southern Methodist University in the 1960s, first lady Laura Bush was known "as a go-to girl for dime bags of marijuana".

But, as one of W's Yale frat brothers tells Kelley, it's not the substance abuse in Bush's past that's disturbing, it's the "lack of substance ... Georgie, as we called him, had absolutely no intellectual curiosity about anything. He wasn't interested in ideas or in books or causes. He didn't travel; he didn't read the newspapers; he didn't watch the news; he didn't even go to the movies. How anyone got out of Yale without developing some interest in the world besides booze and sports stuns me." New Yorker writer Brendan Gill recalls roaming the Kennebunkport compound one night while staying there looking for a book to read - the only title he could find was *The Fart Book*.

According to Kelley, the Bushes aggressively maintain their all-American family image by scrubbing government files of embarrassing facts, stonewalling journalists, and terrorising critics. "Some people felt that George's past did not seep out and embarrass him and his family," she writes of the White House's current Bush, "because he was protected by a coterie of former CIA men with an allegiance to his father." An Austin, Texas political consultant named Peck Young told Kelley that when a woman claiming to have been a call girl from Midland showed up in Austin with "intimate knowledge" of W during his oil wildcatting days, she was approached by what she described as "intelligence types" and left town abruptly. According to Young, the men "made her realise that it was better to turn tricks in Midland than to stop breathing".

George HW Bush and wife Barbara dismissed Bill Clinton as a pathetic hillbilly when he challenged the incumbent in 1992. But, Kelley writes, Clinton was one of the few Bush opponents who knew how to back them down. As colourful stories from Clinton's sexual past in Arkansas began to surface during the campaign, a Clinton aide began digging into the senior Bush's own robust adultery. This included, writes Kelley, two long affairs.

The Clinton aide told Kelley: "I took my list of Bush women to his campaign operatives. I said I knew we were vulnerable on women, but I wanted to make damn sure they knew they were vulnerable too." After the eruption over Clinton's mistress Gennifer Flowers died down, sexual infidelity did in fact become a moot issue in the campaign.

While Kelley is being savagely attacked as a tabloid sleaze queen, her book is more heavily researched and documented than Bush advocates allege. On occasion, she relies on sources that are less than reliable - inserting the story Hustler publisher Larry Flynt tried to put in media play about a girlfriend's abortion that W allegedly paid for before it was legal. Kelley says she decided to put the story in her book after interviewing the two investigators Flynt had hired to track down the story. But despite her flaws, Kelley has vigorously pursued leads about the powerful American dynasty - from Bush senior's shady CIA past to W's missing National Guard records - that the rest of the media should have.

Salon spoke with Kelley on Monday afternoon at the midtown New York offices of Doubleday, her book publisher.

[Salon:] The Bush forces are coming after you very strongly. And now the media is too.

[Kitty Kelley:] Yes, they are, this is what they do, this is how they operate. It's interesting, from talking with the media today, the European media is much less intimidated than the American press. The Americans are all saying, "well, why should we listen to you. Look at the books you've written." Well, excuse me, those books have stood up, I stand behind everything in those books, they've stood the test of time. And this book will too. So I see how this media spin is working, and I'm not surprised. You'd think the media would look at my book and follow up on it - all right, she says here they instituted drug testing in the National Guard at such and such time, let's call up and find out if that's true. But don't beat me up just because I've come to you with almost a thousand sources. You know, I've gone through four sets of lawyers, because I'm dealing with a sitting president.

[S:] You've gone through this before, of course, when Frank Sinatra tried to block publication of your unauthorised biography of him. How would you compare the heat you felt from Sinatra and his crowd and what you're going through now?

[KK:] It's worse now, because there's more at stake. With Sinatra, you just worried about getting the bejabbers beat out of you. But with the Bushes, they work on all sorts of levels to destroy the messenger so the message can't come through. But the message is the message. The stuff I've done is solid. Did I get everything? No. And you know something, we better hurry and try to get all the information we can get - because this president is trying to lock it all up through executive order, which means you won't be able to get presidential history, because the files and everything will be locked up.

[S:] You write that the Bushes are particularly good at cleansing anything in government files that will besmirch the family reputation. How does that work?

[KK:] Well, you see it on all sorts of levels, from the trivial on up. For instance, I got a copy of the Bush family tree from the Bush presidential library. And at first we just thought a couple things were left off, but it was a number of things. Mentally retarded children from one branch of the family erased. Too many divorces in one family - that doesn't fit with the family-values image, so some ex-wives simply disappear. You could say that's just an oversight or mistake here and there. But when you see a pattern as I've seen over the past years of files redacted, too many mysterious fires that destroy records, state department files simply missing, gone, National Guard files.

[S:] You also allege that the Bushes have tried to block people from talking with you and put pressure on your publisher.

[KK:] Yes, imagine the former president of the United States calling your publisher. I wrote George Herbert Walker Bush requesting an interview. He always responds to letters; he's famous for it. He even responded to Bob Woodward for a book. But he didn't respond to mine - he had an assistant phone the publisher of Doubleday, Steve Rubin. Imagine that pressure. All of a sudden, your publisher is told that not only does the former president of the United States not want this book to be written, he's not going to talk, he's not going to verify anything. Most publishers would have caved at that point. And I think Bush thought it would work.

[S:] Let's talk about Sharon Bush - she is your only on-the-record source for the Camp David cocaine story. But she's now gone public denying she ever told it to you. Why would she do that?

[KK:] I don't know; my guess is she's scared. She talked about everything with me that day, mostly about the breakup of her marriage, and how the Bushes don't have family values. And she said to me that the affair that Neil had that broke up her marriage was aided and abetted by his parents, Barbara and George.

She was crying and crying and she said, "they let him have an affair. And I called up Barbara and threw myself on her mercy and said please, please tell him to come back home." And I said: "How can his mother tell him to come back to his wife?" And she said, "you don't understand - they'll do anything she tells them." But she said her mother-in-law wouldn't do that, she was cold as ice. And she cried, "you'd think Barbara would have been more sympathetic to me, considering all the infidelities she's had to put up with."

Now over that lunch Sharon and Lou told me that she was in the midst of an alimony battle, she was angry that she was only being paid \$1,000 (£557) a month alimony. And they told me they thought that if they leaked the fact she was having lunch with Kitty Kelley to the press, the Bushes hate you so much, that will scare them. And it might be leverage for her in her divorce. And Lou said: "Well, this lunch might find its way into the New York Observer." And in fact it came out in the Observer the next week.

[S:] So Sharon Bush was using you to put some heat on the family to get a better divorce deal?

[KK:] Yes. And I understand that. And she did get a better deal. Her alimony went up to \$2,500 (£1,400). So that told me something else about the Bushes and how they operate. So she got a better alimony deal out of it. But then she goes on The Today Show Monday morning to say you're wrong. That takes nerve, to go on network TV to challenge a bestselling author.

[S:] Why would she have done that?

[KK:] Her kids. Her kids are in touch with her grandparents and they go, "mom, how could you, how could you?" I think it was pressure from her kids, coming down hard from her grandparents. Absolutely. She has three kids - one who's still a minor, Ashley, one, Pierce, who just started Georgetown University and wants to be a politician, and then she's got the model, Lauren. And I think kids are the first casualty, and they didn't ask for this and just want it all to go away. They probably love their family and are just appalled at what their mother did. And Sharon was probably at a very vulnerable time, and is not quite as vulnerable now. But she got on nationwide television and denied what she said, and I have a witness.

[S:] Why didn't you tape it?

[KK:] It was in a restaurant, I never tape in them. It's loud and clattery. Also I knew it would probably be a sensitive interview. I don't tape every interview, but I have a lot on tape.

[S:] In another explosive part of your book, you tell the story of a Midland prostitute peddling embarrassing stories about George W Bush who's suddenly run out of Austin by some threatening "intelligence types". You name one source for that story. Do you have others?

[KK:] One on record, and two unnamed sources.

[S:] Why didn't you name them?

[KK:] I don't remember why in that case.

[S:] With a charge like that, it seems like you'd want more than one named source. I'd also want to know if the source you named, this political consultant in Austin named Peck Young, had an axe to grind, if he was a Bush hater. What made you give that story credit?

[KK:] Because he was impeccable, that source, I feel very comfortable with him.

[S:] And you believe the Bushes are capable of doing something like that - of threatening a woman who is shooting her mouth off like that? You think the family really operates that way?

[KK:] I know the family operates that way. I wish you could see the stuff that's on the cutting room floor, that got left out of the book. There are other people who will tell you stories like that, but they won't go on the record. And you can't blame them. And I don't know how to convince them, that it's history, that it's important. Because I can't in good conscience tell them that. But I do feel comfortable with that story. I'm surprised by the number of people who did go on the record.

[S:] Another inflammatory passage in the book is about the girlfriend whose abortion George W Bush allegedly paid for as a young man. There again it seems like you go with one source, and it's somebody many people don't find credible - Larry Flynt.

[KK:] Not just him - I relied on his two detectives.

[S:] So you went and interviewed them as well?

[KK:] Yes.

[S:] Again, I'm trying to figure out your methodology and why your enemies come after you and say: "She relies on shaky sources or she'll lump a variety of sources together, no matter how they vary in credibility."

[KK:] Yes, I've read that one too.

[S:] So how do you respond to that - say on this one in particular, this abortion story?

[KK:] Well, I took the public record a little further and went to the investigators and asked for their stuff, and got their stuff. I have the woman's name, address and phone number ...

[S:] Did you make an effort to reach her?

[KK:] Of course.

[S:] And she wouldn't talk?

[KK:] No.

[S:] But you found the two investigators credible after talking to them?

[KK:] Yeah, I did.

[S:] So your method is to leave it to the reader to make up their minds?

[KK:] Right. And to tell you how far I went.

[S:] That falls short of the standards of the New York Times, say, or the Washington Post. Why do you feel it's legitimate to fall short of that standard?

[KK:] I don't think that falls short of the standards of the New York Times or the Washington Post in every single instance. I think that especially the Washington Post has pushed things in the past, far beyond where I would go.

[S:] What's an example of that?

[KK:] Janet Cooke.

[S:] Well, that was exposed as a work of fiction!

[KK:] Jayson Blair ...

[S:] But the Times and the Post were both humiliated by those scandals.

[KK:] And I would be too if you find something in my books that didn't stand the test of time. I honestly would.

[S:] So you wouldn't have put a story like that in unless you'd done enough work on your own to satisfy yourself that there was something there, that it would hold up?

[KK:] Right.

[S:] What do you think W will do if he loses in November? Will he happily go back to baseball?

[KK:] No. You know something that I have found out from this family after four years - he doesn't plan to lose. They know how to win - no matter what.

[S:] What does that mean?

[KK:] That means these people can put the Sopranos to shame.

[S:] Does that mean vote stealing?

[KK:] That's a bit overt. But nothing will stand in the way of these people winning. Nothing. You start out looking at the Bush family like it's The Donna Reed Show and then you see it's The Sopranos.

· David Talbot is Salon's founder and editor in chief

**Latin America Has Had Enough of Bush**

Diego Cevallos\*

<http://ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=25492>

"No More Bush": it has become a slogan echoed with increasing frequency, on signs and banners carried by protesters and painted on walls throughout Latin America.

MEXICO CITY, Sep 16 (IPS) - "No More Bush": it has become a slogan echoed with increasing frequency, on signs and banners carried by protesters and painted on walls throughout Latin America.

Today, with the U.S. presidential election drawing near, this sentiment has come to be shared by the majority of the region's politicians, intellectuals, and even heads of state.

Since Bush took office in 2001, the proportion of people with negative opinions towards the United States in Latin America and the Caribbean has doubled, according to surveys carried out by Latinobarometro, a Chile-based firm.

An international poll conducted by GlobeScan of Toronto, Canada and the University of Maryland in the United States revealed that 42.5 percent of those surveyed in nine Latin American countries would like to see Democratic Party candidate John Kerry win the Nov. 2 election, while only 19 percent support the re-election of Bush, a Republican.

This anti-Bush stance was clearly expressed back in March, when tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets throughout Latin America, voicing their opposition to the U.S. president and his invasion of Iraq exactly one year earlier.

According to some observers, a win by Kerry would not do much to change Washington's current policies towards the region, and there are even those who believe things could worsen.

However, in the view of Venezuelan historian Samuel Moncada, "Anything is better than Bush." Moncada, who is close to the left-leaning government of President Hugo Chávez, told IPS, "We believe Bush is a fanatic, a fundamentalist. He thinks he talks to God. He is dangerous, and we have felt the sting firsthand."

Relations between Caracas and Washington have been acrimonious since Bush took power. Chávez has accused the U.S. president of plotting to overthrow him, and has gone so far as to publicly call him an "idiot".

While the Venezuelan president has openly expressed his hopes that Kerry will defeat the "Republican extreme right", the other governments of the region have adopted a more diplomatic tone.

Nevertheless, in Argentina, for example, the government's preference for Kerry was clearly demonstrated by the presence of Senator Cristina Fernández -- President Néstor Kirchner's wife -- at the Democratic Party Convention that made Kerry's nomination official.

In any event, according to Argentine Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa, his country is "not a priority for the United States" at this point in time.

In Cuba, where the government of Fidel Castro views Bush as a global dictator, the speaker of the National Assembly (parliament), Ricardo Alarcón, said that his country is not expecting any changes in U.S. policy no matter who wins the election in November.

Kerry "talks about maintaining the embargo and the pressure (on Cuba); it's the same stance, although with slightly less aggressive rhetoric, perhaps," Alarcón said.

Bush and Kerry both share the view that the four-decade embargo against Cuba should remain in place until Castro falls.

As for the impact that the election could have on Latin America, Alarcón said he doesn't know, "because it's an issue that isn't being discussed at all in the United States."

Washington is too caught up in the "war on terrorism" launched by Bush "to be worrying about countries that have ultimately never interested them," he noted.

Esteban Morales, from the University of Havana's Centre for U.S. Studies, said that if Cuba has managed to survive the Bush administration, "which has done everything possible to step up the aggression towards Cuba, then in the future, no matter what happens, this policy is destined to fall into a definitive crisis."

Lawmaker María José da Conceição, deputy chair of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies' Foreign Affairs and National Defence Commission, told IPS that she prefers Kerry because the Democratic Party is "more open on human rights and the environment," and this will benefit democracy everywhere, including Latin America.

Moreover, if Bush is re-elected, it will only serve to further reinforce his "warmongering" and "arrogant" attitudes, she said.

"The vast majority of Brazilian parliamentarians, including many conservatives, prefer Kerry, and are anti-Bush," noted Da Conceição, a member of the leftist ruling Workers Party.

In any event, "the foreign policy of the Democrats is not very different from that of the Republicans, and when it comes to foreign trade, they're even more protectionist," she added.

Mexican diplomat Adolfo Aguilar, formerly his country's representative to the United Nations Security Council, believes it is difficult and even inadvisable to take sides, because neither of the major U.S. parties has a long-term and consistent vision for Latin America.

In the very limited statements they have made on Latin America-related strategy, both Bush and Kerry have spoken in rather broad terms.

Bush promises to continue promoting free trade in and with the region, under a model rejected in countries like Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela, whose governments believe that Washington fails to take into account the differences in development found in the countries of the hemisphere.

Kerry has accused Bush of following a "one-note policy toward Latin America of one-size-fits-all trade agreements." He himself has promised to evaluate the free trade agreements being negotiated, in order to ensure that they "provide economic benefits, create jobs and include strong protections for labour and the environment."

He has also said that he will take the free trade agreement between the United States and Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua back to the negotiating table. The agreement was signed in May, but has yet to receive legislative approval from the participating countries.

He will do the same, he added, with negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a project involving 34 countries and promoted by Washington, which hopes to see it put into effect by 2005.

As president, Kerry said, he would "help forge a new and broader community of the Americas, where neighbours look after neighbours."

"Instead of being a good neighbour," he said, "the president (Bush) has ignored a wide range of ills - including political and financial crises," such as those faced by Argentina, Bolivia, Haiti and Venezuela in recent years.

For his part, Kerry promises to create a "Council for Democracy" which will help the Organisation of American States "resolve crises before order is threatened and blood is spilled." He has further pledged to provide funding for programmes aimed at strengthening democracy in Latin America.

Matías Machado, a Mexican foreign trade specialist, told IPS that the positions on foreign trade held by Kerry and his team appear highly protectionist, although "we will have to wait and see how they really work in practice if he becomes president."

Chilean analyst Eduardo Moraga said a Kerry triumph would affect all of the countries that trade with the United States, because all of the agreements signed by Bush would be painstakingly reviewed.

It is unlikely, however, that this would affect the agreement already in force between the United States and Chile.

José Morandé, of the University of Chile's International Studies Institute, noted that this particular agreement was one of the few gestures made by the United States towards Latin America during the Bush administration, and Kerry "is not going to get himself in trouble" with the region by questioning it.

John Edwards, Kerry's running mate, has been a fervent opponent of free trade deals with Latin America, alleging that they are not sustainable and that they take jobs away from the United States.

In Congress, Edwards waged a campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) adopted by Canada, Mexico and the United States in 1994. He also voted against preferential trade agreements with the countries of Central America, the Caribbean and the Andean region, and opposed the free trade accord with Chile.

\*(Additional reporting by Gustavo González in Chile, Patricia Grogg in Cuba, Humberto Márquez in Venezuela, Mario Osava in Brazil, and Marcela Valente in Argentina.) (END)

### Picking a Fight With Venezuela

By MICHAEL SHIFTER Published: September 20, 2004  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/20/opinion/20shifter.html>

**Comment:** More BS from the New York Times. It is absolutely hilarious that the Bush administration would focus on "child trafficking" as pretence for sanctions when what is really going on is a Neo-Liberalist attempt to control Venezuela's oil: they are the 7<sup>th</sup> largest oil producer in the world. What they don't like about Chavez is the fact that he wants to use some of the oil profits to help the underclass. PH

The Bush administration's decision to stop supporting \$250 million in loan requests that Venezuela has before international financial institutions has gone virtually unnoticed. Yet, by invoking such sanctions now, Washington risks making another mistake in dealing with Venezuela's mercurial strongman, President Hugo Chávez.

In announcing its decision earlier this month, the White House cited Venezuela's role in the international trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. The administration deserves credit for making this issue a high priority.

There are, however, serious questions about the motives behind the decision. The trafficking rationale seems particularly odd. It is hard to see what the sanctions could actually accomplish, and how they might work to promote the interests of the United States, inter-American relations and democratic stability in Latin America.

This is not a smart way to deal with Mr. Chávez, especially since his popular appeal was ratified in a referendum last month. Though the election has been disputed and is still regarded as fraudulent by many opposition forces, Mr. Chávez has emerged with enhanced legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. Given the shrill exchanges between the Bush and Chávez administrations, however, over the past few years, it was still predictable that Washington accepted the results only grudgingly.

The moment seemed propitious for the two countries to pursue a more pragmatic relationship. That Venezuela is the fourth-largest oil supplier to the United States

- at a time of great uncertainty in the Middle East - should in itself impel a search for a modus vivendi.

Instead, the decision will discourage a better relationship. While the sanctions may have satisfied some hard-liners in the Bush administration, they are also likely to give further ammunition to hard-liners in Caracas who have long insisted that it is futile to seek to engage a hostile Washington. Rather than contributing to the Chávez administration's moderation, the decision could foster radicalization.

The sanctions will amount to little more than a pinprick in any case, and the loans could still be approved by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, with backing from other nations. The \$250 million involved is small change for Mr. Chávez, who is enjoying a tremendous windfall from record oil prices. This hardly constitutes real pressure. The impact - either in reducing trafficking or making Mr. Chávez more democratic - will be minimal at best. The measure will also probably prompt other Latin American governments to vote in favor of the loans to Venezuela - if for no other reason than to get back at the United States. They will regard the sanctions as politically motivated, and be perplexed by Washington's reasoning and timing. They will be reminded of the longstanding, counterproductive United States policy towards Cuba (recall Washington's recent charges of biological weapons in that country).

The human trafficking rationale for the sanctions risks trivializing, and politicizing, one of Latin America's most critical problems. Independent human rights experts say that Venezuela's record, though of great concern, is no more egregious than many other countries that have somehow managed to escape similar treatment. In the State Department's 2003 report on human trafficking, Venezuela did not even appear among the five worst offenders in the Western Hemisphere. True, in the same report released in June, Venezuela had moved to the most problematic category (Tier 3). But the Bush administration has not provided compelling and persuasive evidence that warrants singling out one country.

At some point, sanctions that actually respond to and fit the violation may be an appropriate lever to induce democratic change. But for now, it is far more important for the United States, along with other Latin American countries, to engage Venezuela for the long term in hopes of keeping Mr. Chávez's autocratic tendencies in check and encouraging democratic progress. Washington's initial, tacit approval of a coup two and a half years ago against Mr. Chávez undermined its ability to influence democracy in Venezuela. The latest decision will not help restore Washington's credibility.

Michael Shifter is a vice president at the Inter-American Dialogue, a center for policy analysis.

### Censored! Ten big stories the national news media underplayed

<http://www.metrotimes.com/editorial/story.asp?id=6681>

In late July, more than 600 people showed up in Monterey, Calif. to speak at a Federal Communications Commission hearing on ownership concentration in the news media. The participants were a diverse group, young and old, activists and workers, but they had a single consistent message: The mainstream news media have been doing a deplorable job of covering the day's most important stories.

That's no surprise: Consolidation of the media in the hands of a few corporate Goliaths has resulted in fewer people creating more of the content we see, hear and read. One impact has been a narrower range of perspectives. Another is the virtual disappearance of hard-hitting, original investigative reporting.

"Corporate media has abdicated their responsibility to the First Amendment to keep the American electorate informed about important issues in society and instead serves up a pabulum of junk-food news," says Peter Phillips, head of Sonoma State University's Project Censored.

Every year researchers at Project Censored pick through volumes of print and hours of broadcast news to see which of the past year's most important stories aren't receiving the kind of attention they deserve. Phillips and his team acknowledge that many of these stories weren't censored in the traditional sense of the word: No government agency blocked their publication. And some even appeared — briefly and without follow-up — in mainstream journals.

But every one of this year's picks merited prominent placement on the evening news and the dailies' front pages. Instead they went virtually ignored.

This list speaks directly to the point FCC critics have raised: Stories that address fundamental issues of wealth concentration and big-business dominance of the political agenda are almost entirely missing from the national debate. From the

dramatic increase in wealth inequality in the United States to the wholesale giveaway of the nation's natural resources to the Bush administration's attack on corporate and political accountability, events and trends that ought to be dominating the presidential campaign and the national dialogue are missing from the front pages.

Here are Project Censored's 10 biggest examples of major stories that have been relegated to the backwaters of the media world.

### 1. Wealth inequality in 21st century threatens economy and democracy

As the mainstream news media recite the official line about the nation's supposed economic recovery, a key point has been missing: Wealth inequality in the United States has almost doubled over the past 30 years.

In fact, the Federal Reserve Board's most recent "Survey of Consumer Finances" supplement on high-income families shows that in 1998, the richest 1 percent of households owned 38 percent of the nation's wealth. The top 5 percent owned almost 60 percent of the wealth.

"We are much more unequal than any other advanced industrial country," New York University economics professor Edward Wolff told Third World Traveler.

But that's just part of the problem. "Most Americans believe we take from people at the top to benefit those below," Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times investigative reporter David Cay Johnston said in a BuzzFlash.com interview. But our tax system is actually set up such that "people who make \$30,000 to \$500,000 ... give relief to those who make millions, or tens and hundreds of millions, of dollars a year."

The United States isn't alone: Today, almost one-sixth of the world's population – 940 million people – "already live in squalid, unhealthy areas, mostly without water, sanitation, public services, or legal security," John Vidal wrote in the U.K. newspaper The Guardian. A recent United Nations report predicted that, absent drastic change to reverse "a form of colonialism that is probably more stringent than the original," one in every three people worldwide will live in slums within 30 years. That's a bigger threat to democracy and global stability than al Qaeda and international terrorism.

Sources: "The Wealth Divide" (interview with Edward Wolff), Multinational Monitor, May 2003. "A BuzzFlash Interview, Parts I and II" (with David Cay Johnston), BuzzFlash staff, BuzzFlash.com, March 26 and 29, 2004. "Every Third Person Will Be a Slum Dweller within 30 Years, UN Agency Warns," John Vidal, Guardian (U.K.), Oct. 4, 2003. "Grotesque Inequality," Robert Weissman, Multinational Monitor, July-August 2003.

### 2. Ashcroft versus human rights law that holds corporations accountable

For decades the United States has trained right-wing insurgents and torturers, toppled democratically elected governments and propped up brutal dictatorships abroad — all in the interest of corporate profits. But rarely are the agents of repression ever held accountable for the tens of thousands of deaths and the brutal cycles of poverty, subjugation, environmental destruction and violence they leave in their wake. Indeed, many foreign tyrants go on to enjoy plush retirement right here in the United States.

But recently lawyers have found a way to seek at least a modicum of justice for victims. The Alien Tort Claims Act, a 215-year-old law originally passed to prosecute pirates for crimes committed on the high seas, allows noncitizens to sue any individual or corporation present on U.S. soil.

Human rights lawyers have pursued 100 cases under the ATCA since 1980. Defendants have included former high-ranking government and military officials from El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, Paraguay, the Philippines (including ex-president Ferdinand Marcos), Indonesia, Bosnia, Ethiopia and elsewhere. And although the law can only be used to pursue monetary damages rather than prison time, it has often resulted in victims being awarded millions of dollars — and in the perpetrators sometimes fleeing the country rather than paying up.

Ten years ago victims began using the act to go after corporate profiteers too: It was thanks to the ATCA, for example, that Holocaust survivors were able to seek redress from the Swiss banks and companies that profited from the slave labor of concentration camp internees during World War II.

But Attorney General John Ashcroft's Justice Department has set its sights on the act, claiming in a brief last year that the law threatens "important foreign policy interests" associated with the war on terrorism. Yet hardly a word has been

written in the mainstream media about the Bush administration's attack on the main legal recourse left in the United States for victims to seek redress for human rights violations carried out abroad.

Source: "Ashcroft Goes after 200-Year-Old Human Rights Law," Jim Lobe, OneWorld.net and Asheville Global Report, May 19, 2003.

### 3. Bush administration manipulates science and censors scientists

Tampering with data that threatens corporate profits is much more widespread under Bush than we've been led to believe. And the Environmental Protection Agency has emerged as one of the administration's primary targets.

One of the first White House moves — on the day Bush was inaugurated — was to fire engineer Tony Oppgaard, the leader of a federal team investigating a 300-million-gallon slurry spill at a coal-mining site in Kentucky. "Black lava-like toxic sludge containing 60 poisonous chemicals choked and sterilized up to 100 miles of rivers and creeks," environmental lawyer Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wrote in The Nation. The EPA dubbed it "the greatest environmental catastrophe in the history of the Eastern United States."

Bush then appointed industry insiders to top EPA posts in charge of mine safety and health.

In another case, a week after the EPA released a study to congressional staff about the toxic effects on groundwater of hydraulic fracturing — a process of injecting benzene into the ground to extract oil and gas, used by Halliburton, Vice President Dick Cheney's former company — the agency revised its findings in response to "industry feedback" to indicate that the practice posed no threat after all.

In the days and months following the World Trade Center attack, the EPA released more than a dozen statements claiming the air quality in the surrounding "control zone" was safe — despite evidence that asbestos dust was present in quantities well above the 1 percent safety benchmark. The agency opened up the area to the public a mere week after the attack, allowing Wall Street to reopen and cleanup activities to begin. As a result, 88 percent of rescue workers suffered ear, nose, and throat ailments, and 78 percent suffered lung maladies, according to a Mt. Sinai School of Medicine study. Half suffered persistent respiratory problems up to a year later.

In November the EPA arranged for Syngenta, the Swiss manufacturer of Atrazine, to take over federal research of its product, the most widely used weed killer in the United States. This occurred despite evidence that high concentrations of Atrazine in groundwater may be responsible for 50 percent-below-normal semen counts in men in U.S. farming communities, is associated with high incidences of prostate cancer, and has resulted in grotesque deformities in frogs when present "at one-thirtieth the government's 'safe' three parts per billion level," Kennedy wrote.

The administration has also suppressed scientific findings on global warming in a dozen major government studies over the past two years, according to Kennedy.

The problem isn't limited to the EPA. In fact, government interference in scientific research has gotten so bad that 60 of the country's top scientists — including 20 Nobel laureates — issued a statement in February citing the ways the Bush administration has distorted scientific data "for partisan political ends" and calling for regulatory action.

There have been dozens of scientists willing to blow the whistle — normally a reporter's dream come true. But news coverage hasn't come close to reflecting the gravity of the problem.

Sources: "The Junk Science of George W. Bush," Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Nation, March 8, 2004. "Censoring Scientific Information," Censorship News: The National Coalition Against Censorship Newsletter, fall 2003. "Ranking Scientists Warn Bush Science Policy Lacks Integrity," Environmental News Service correspondents, OneWorld.net, Feb. 20, 2004. "Politics and Science in the Bush Administration," Committee on Government Reform — minority staff, office of Rep. Henry A. Waxman, August 2003 (updated Nov. 13, 2003).

### 4. High uranium levels found in troops and civilians

Last year Project Censored included the United States and Great Britain's continued use of depleted-uranium weapons — despite ample evidence of their acute health effects — among its top 10 underreported stories. Almost 10,000

U.S. troops died within 10 years of serving in the first Gulf War, researchers had found. And more than a third of those still alive had filed Gulf War Syndrome-related claims.

In study after study, research pointed to the use of depleted uranium in U.S. and British weaponry as the culprit. But authorities concentrated their efforts into downplaying its problem, discrediting scientists and ailing military personnel, and erecting a smoke screen around the root causes of the “syndrome.”

More recently, the Uranium Medical Research Center, an independent group of U.S. and Canadian scientists that has conducted studies of Afghan civilians, found overwhelming evidence that the United States is also using nondepleted uranium in its weapons, which is far more radioactive than depleted uranium. “If the use of NDU indicates experimental application of new nuclear weapons, as the UMRC suggests, then it should alert the public that proliferation of small nuclear weaponry, proposed for some future use, has in fact already begun,” wrote Stephanie Hiller in *Awakened Woman* magazine.

Sources: “UMRC’s Preliminary Findings from Afghanistan and Operation Enduring Freedom” and “Afghan Field Trip #2 Report: Precision Destruction, Indiscriminate Effects,” Tedd Weyman, UMRC Research Team, Uranium Medical Research Center, January 2003. “Scientists Uncover Radioactive Trail in Afghanistan,” Stephanie Hiller, *Awakened Woman*, January 2004. “There Are No Words ... Radiation in Iraq Equals 250,000 Nagasaki Bombs,” Bob Nichols, *Dissident Voice*, March 2004. “Poisoned?,” Juan Gonzalez, *New York Daily News*, April 2004. “International Criminal Tribunal for Afghanistan at Tokyo: The People vs. George Bush,” Niloufer Bhagwat J., *Information Clearinghouse*, March 2004.

## 5. Wholesale giveaway of our natural resources

Adam Werbach, executive director of the Common Assets Defense Fund, and former Sierra Club president, reviewed the Bush administration’s environmental policy record and came to a disturbing conclusion: The record is not only bad — it’s “akin to an affirmative action program for corporate polluters,” he wrote in *In These Times*.

Vice President Cheney’s secretive energy task force produced what can be boiled down to two main recommendations, “lower the environmental bar and pay corporations to jump over it,” Werbach wrote.

For example, Congress has promised \$3 billion in tax cuts to mining corporations to help them access natural gas embedded in underground coal deposits in Georgia’s Powder River Basin. The Bureau of Land Management has calculated that miners will waste a full 700 million gallons of publicly owned water a year in the process — thereby sucking the region’s underground aquifers dry and decimating local farms and wildlife.

The Bush administration’s Healthy Forests Initiative essentially entails granting logging companies access to old-growth trees — and then subsidizing them for brush clearing. And even the giant sequoias former President Bill Clinton sought to protect, by creating a 327,000-acre national monument in the southern Sierra Nevada just four years ago, are at risk for being logged at a rate of 10 million board-feet of lumber a year — a higher rate than allowed on surrounding national forest lands — in the name of “forest management.”

All in all, the administration has launched the greatest giveaway of public natural resources in more than a century. Yet few in the mainstream media have bothered to analyze these plans and uncover the administration’s rhetorical manipulations.

Sources: “Liquidation of the Commons,” Adam Werbach, *In These Times*, Nov. 23, 2003. “Giant Sequoias Could Get the Ax,” Matt Weiser, *High Country News*, June 9, 2003.

## 6. Sale of electoral politics

The Help America Vote Act required that states submit their blueprints for switching over to electronic voting systems by Jan. 1, 2004, and implement those plans in time for the 2006 elections. Some regions are already using the machines. But those who’ve bothered to look into the new systems are sending up serious warning flares. Critics say that if Americans don’t want a repeat of the 2000 Florida election fiasco — on a much grander scale — the administration’s plans must be halted in their tracks.

A switch to electronic voting might seem innocent enough at first — until you look at who’s implementing it, and how. Indeed, the transfer represents the privatization of the voting process in the hands of a select few fervent GOP

supporters who’ve insisted on keeping their operating systems and codes a trade secret — meaning they enjoy absolute control over the entire voting process, including ballot counting and oversight. There’s no paper trail.

One prime example is Diebold, one of the nation’s top electronic voting machine manufacturers, whose equipment was responsible for the Florida debacle. Diebold already operates more than 40,000 machines in 37 states across the country. Many of these are in Georgia, which in November 2002 became the first state to conduct an election entirely with touch-screen machines. Oddly enough, incumbent Democratic governor Roy Barnes lost to Republican candidate Sonny Perdue, 46 percent to 51 percent — “a swing from as much as 16 percentage points from the last opinion polls,” Andrew Gumbel wrote in the U.K. newspaper, *The Independent*. In the same election, incumbent Democratic Sen. Max Cleland lost to his Republican challenger, Saxby Chambliss, thanks to “a last-minute swing of 9 to 12 points.” And in and around Atlanta, 77 memory cards went missing or were otherwise temporarily unaccounted for before the votes they’d registered could be counted.

Similar upsets occurred “in Colorado, Minnesota, Illinois, and New Hampshire — all in races that had been flagged as key partisan battles, and all won by the Republican Party,” Gumbel continued.

“It makes it really hard to show their product has been tampered with if it’s a felony to inspect it,” Rebecca Mercuri, a voting systems specialist and research fellow at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, told *The Independent*.

The other top two electronic voting machine manufacturers, Sequoia and Election Systems & Software, are equally suspect. Several of their executives have troubling track records of corruption and conflicts of interest. All three companies are prominent Republican Party donors.

Sources: “Voting Machines Gone Wild,” Mark Lewellen-Biddle, *In These Times*, December 2003. “All the President’s Votes?,” Andrew Gumbel, *Independent* (U.K.), Oct. 13, 2003. “Will Bush Backers Manipulate Votes to Deliver G.W. Another Election?,” Amy Goodman and the staff of *Democracy Now!*, Sept. 4, 2003.

## 7. Conservative organization drives judicial appointments

Ever since the Reagan administration, the neoconservatives have pursued an aggressive campaign to stack the federal courts with right-wing judges. Their main instrument has been the Federalist Society of Law and Public Policy, an organization founded in 1982 by a small group of radically conservative law students at the University of Chicago.

The effort has been a resounding success. With the help of Republicans in Congress, 85 extra federal judgeships were created under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush; 9 were created under Clinton. Now 7 out of 12 circuit courts are antiabortion. Seven of the nine Supreme Court justices are Republican appointees — and it’s been 11 years since a post has opened up, meaning another right-winger or two could be appointed sometime soon. During Bush Sr.’s tenure, one White House insider boasted that no one who wasn’t a Federalist ever received a judicial appointment from the president.

One of George W.’s earliest moves in office was to consolidate the Federalist Society’s power even further: He “simply eliminated the long-standing role in the evaluation of prospective judges by the resolutely centrist American Bar Association, whose ratings had long kept extremists and incompetents off the bench,” Martin Garbus wrote in the *American Prospect*. “Today the Federalists have more influence in judicial selection than the ABA ever had.”

The Federalist Society now counts Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and prominent members of the conservative American Enterprise Institute among its leadership. Ashcroft, Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Solicitor General Theodore Olson, and White House Counsel Alberto Gonzalez — charged with approving judicial nominations before passing them on to Congress — are all members.

As one might expect, the Federalists have consistently acted in favor of business deregulation, creationist teachings, property rights over the rights of individuals, and much of the rest of the right-wing agenda. But one of the principal victims has been the democratic process itself: Remember, it was the Supreme Court that stopped a hand count of 175,000 uncounted (largely Democratic) ballots in Florida, which could have cost Bush the presidency. Conservative jurists have interfered with redistricting efforts to reverse the deliberate segregation of

African-American and Latino voters and have erected barriers to the participation of third-party candidates in the electoral process.

Unless liberals miraculously bring about a radical turnaround in how federal judges — who enjoy lifetime terms — are appointed, one of George W.'s most enduring legacies may very well be a hard-right judiciary that lasts for decades to come.

Sources: "A Hostile Takeover: How the Federalist Society Is Capturing the Federal Courts," Martin Garbus, *American Prospect*, March 1, 2003. "Courts vs. Citizens," Jamin Raskin, *American Prospect*, March 1, 2003.

## 8. Secrets of Cheney's energy task force comes to light

As the Bush administration continues to protect the iron wall of secrecy it has erected around Cheney's energy task force, at least two documents confirm long-standing suspicions that the administration's foreign policy is being driven by the dictates of the energy industry.

When Bush took office in January 2001, he said tackling the country's energy crisis would be a top priority. The United States faced nationwide oil and natural gas shortages, and a series of electrical blackouts were rolling across California. The president established the National Energy Policy Development Group and appointed former Halliburton CEO Cheney as its head.

One of the big issues on the table was oil, which accounted for 40 percent of the nation's energy supply and provided fuel for the vast majority of the country's transportation — as well as its expansive war machine. And for the first time in history, the United States had become reliant on foreign imports for more than 50 percent of its oil supply.

But rather than lay the groundwork for converting the economy to alternative, renewable sources, the task force's report, later released by Bush as the "National Energy Policy" report in May 2001, promoted energy security as "a priority of our trade and foreign policy." In other words, Cheney's group wanted to find additional sources of oil overseas and ensure U.S. access to that oil — whatever it took.

Documents recently obtained from the task force — as the result of a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed by public interest group Judicial Watch — indicate Cheney and his colleagues had their sights on the black gold under the Iraqi desert well before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

In July 2003, the Commerce Department finally turned over records that included "a map of Iraqi oilfields, pipelines, refineries, and terminals, as well as two charts detailing Iraqi oil and gas projects, and 'Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oilfield Contracts,'" according to Judicial Watch's subsequent press release. There were also similar maps and charts for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The documents were dated March 2001.

"The major news media are beginning to pay much closer attention to the links between political turmoil abroad and the economies of oil at home," Michael Klare wrote in *Censored 2005: The Top 25 Censored Stories*. "Still, the media remains reluctant to explain the close link between the energy policies of the Bush Administration and US military strategy."

Sources: "Cheney Energy Task Force Documents Feature Map of Iraqi Oilfields," Judicial Watch staff, *Judicial Watch*, July 17, 2003. "Bush-Cheney Energy Strategy: Procuring the Rest of the World's Oil," Michael Klare, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, January 2004.

## 9. Widow brings RICO case against U.S. government for 9/11

As the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission, completed its first year, Ellen Mariani and her attorney held a press conference on the steps of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to announce her own startling conclusions. Mariani, wife of Louis Neil Mariani, who died when terrorists flew United Airlines Flight 175 into the World Trade Center's south tower, had come to believe top American officials — including Bush, Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and others — had foreknowledge of the attacks, purposefully failed to prevent them, and had since taken pains to cover up the truth.

The administration, she argues in a federal lawsuit, allowed 9/11 to happen so Bush and company could launch their seemingly endless global "war on terror" for their own personal and financial gain. The suit uses the Racketeer Influenced

and Corrupt Organization Act — a law created to go after the Mafia — to charge the nation's leaders with conspiracy, obstruction of justice and wrongful death.

Her lawyer, Philip J. Berg, a former deputy attorney general of Pennsylvania, filed a 62-page complaint that included 40 pages of evidence. "Compelling evidence ... will be presented in this case through discovery, subpoena power by this Court, and testimony at trial," he wrote in a press release sent to 3,000 print and broadcast journalists announcing the lawsuit and a press conference on the court steps that day.

At the very least, the case has the potential to uncover and publicize critical documents and testimony about the Bush administration's handling of the al Qaeda threat and its aftermath. But only Fox News showed up to the press conference, and it never ran anything on the topic.

Sources: "911 Victim's Wife Files RICO Case Against GW Bush," Philip Berg, *Scoop* (scoop.co.nz), Nov. 26, 2003. "Widow's Bush Treason Suit Vanishes," W. David Kubiak, *Scoop*, Dec. 3, 2003.

## 10. New nuke plants: taxpayers support, industry profits

If you thought nuclear energy was dead, think again: The Bush administration's energy bill — yet another product of Cheney's industry-stacked energy task force — provides taxpayer cash for companies that build new nukes.

A secretly crafted provision of the bill, released late on a Saturday night in November, offers energy companies as much as \$7.5 billion in tax credits to build six nuclear reactors. This is in addition to almost \$4 billion set aside for other nuclear energy programs.

"Nuclear power already has had 50 years of subsidy totaling over \$140 billion," Nuclear Information and Resource Service's Cindy Folkers reported.

The administration also removed terrorism protection provisions included in the House version of the bill and reversed a previous ban on the export of enriched uranium, which may be used to construct nuclear bombs.

The press has been "woefully silent on the bill's nuclear provisions" Folkers and Michael Mariotte wrote in their update for Project Censored's new book, *Censored 2005: The Top 25 Censored Stories*. And while both Democrats and Republicans managed to defeat the version of the bill NIRS warned about last fall, supporters — particularly Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) — are still trying to push those provisions through, in some cases as riders on other bills. Estimates on the amount of tax credits being considered have since risen to "as much as \$15 billion or even \$19 billion."

Sources: "Nuclear Energy Would Get \$7.5 Billion in Tax Subsidies, US Taxpayers Would Fund Nuclear Monitor Relapse If Energy Bill Passes," Cindy Folkers and Michael Mariotte, *Nuclear Information and Resource Service*, Nov. 17, 2003. "US Senate Passes Pro-Nuclear Energy Bill," Cindy Folkers and Michael Mariotte, *WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor*, Aug. 22, 2003.

Project Censored's judges

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