



Merrimack Valley People For Peace

Serving the communities of the Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley People for Peace, Inc. works for a sustainable future for all life on our planet. Our members commit themselves to the interrelated activities of education for peace and justice, the prevention of war, an end to arms sales, the abolition of nuclear weapons, and protection of the environment.

February 2006

Merrimack Valley People for Peace joins the United Nations and peacemakers around the world in proclaiming the years 2001-2010 to be the "International Decade for the Culture of Peace."

GOOD NEWS

compiled with the help of Boryana Tacconi

An enthusiastic audience filled all seats in the hall of North Parish Church in North Andover on January 21st to celebrate the release of Pat Scanlon's 3rd CD, *Blue State Liberal*, to sing along with Pat and his stalwart friends (Willie Sordillo, Howie Tarnower, Billy Nowick, Doug Rich, Bill Perry, Alan Kaufman, Alice Galloway, Kim Adami, Laura Landy) and to sample, coffee-house style, various homemade baked goodies. Beloved for his activities as a Veteran for Peace, environmentalist, songster and family man, and MVPP member, Pat led us for a couple of hours through many issues dear to his heart, expressed in witty lyrics and catchy, hum-along tunes. The title song of the album was written two days after the 2004 presidential elections "as a way to lift the spirits of discouraged progressive liberals." And lift the spirits it did, as the audience chimed in the refrain: "*We're going to stand and shout out loud, we're liberal and we're proud!*" The concert was sponsored by Boston's Progressive Talk Radio Station (the first concert they have sponsored since being on the air!).

Along with a great musical evening, Pat generously offered a couple of fundraising possibilities. As announced in the press release, proceeds from the kitchen sales, organized by Sue Imhoff and Brenda McCarthy, went to benefit MVPP (\$225). Pat also passed the hat to support Mercy Corps's project to send emergency blankets to earthquake survivors in Pakistan. At the rate of \$1/blanket, the audience provided a total of 464 blankets for the cause!

Thank you for everything, Pat. We can't wait for your next CD!

Convicted, but not intimidated! On February 7th, six New Hampshire citizens were found guilty of criminal trespass for a sit-in at Senator Judd Gregg's Concord, NH office back in June 2005. The six defendants, including MVPP member Don Booth of Concord, were given a one-year suspended sentence of \$200 and were called "people of conscience" by the presiding judge, Judge Sullivan. They had been arrested at the Senator's office after having made about a dozen requests for a meeting and collecting hundreds of signatures in support of a meeting to discuss the Iraq War.

Judge Sullivan heard an account of the month and a half-long process by which citizens had respectfully and repeatedly tried to obtain a meeting with the Senator. As stated by defendant and director of New Hampshire Peace Action, Anne Miller: "*The real issue is one of democracy as well as war. What recourse do citizens have when their elected representatives refuse to enter into discourse about crucial issues that affect us all? What could be more important than having a robust dialogue about a war that has cost the state of New Hampshire over a billion taxpayer dollars, and 2,250 American lives?*"

The six defendants plan to resume their request for a meeting with the Senator. Next month, 8 more NH citizens will stand trial for the same offense from arrests at Senator Gregg's Concord offices in December 2005.

On January 24th, Georgetown University law students organized an impressive protest when Attorney General Alberto Gonzales came to deliver an address defending the NSA domestic spy programs. Nearly 30 students stood up one-by-one, turned their back on Gonzales and remained standing throughout the speech. Five students, wearing black hoods reminiscent of Abu Ghraib, held a banner featuring the well-known words of Ben Franklin: "*Those who would sacrifice liberties in the name of security deserve neither.*" Gonzales left immediately after the address without the usual follow-up of taking questions. During a panel discussion that followed, law professor David Cole said, "*...in light of the clearly blatantly political nature of this, I'm proud of the very civil Civil Disobedience that was shown here today to express the opposite political view.*" Third-year law student Devon Chaffee said later, "*We believe that as law students, we must stand up for the rule of law over the creation of a culture of fear.*"

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, 7:30 PM, February 28, 2006.
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>

Printed on recycled paper

Weekly Vigils

Andover: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Shawsheen Square, Junction of Routes 133 and 28; Lawrence Friends Meeting/Shawsheen Peace Witness; Allan Sifferlen, asifferlen@sbra.com.

Andover: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 7-8 pm; Saturday, 10:45 am-noon (in good weather, 10-noon); Old Town Hall, 20 Main St.; Merrimack Valley People for Peace; Lou Bernieri, lbernieri@andover.edu.

Andover: Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 am; in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93; Raytheon Peacemakers; Arthur Brien, 978-686-4418.

Gloucester: Tuesday, 7-8 pm; Fisherman's Wives Memorial.

Marblehead: Wednesday, 5-7 pm; at the Peace Pole, Memorial Park (by the YMCA); Tom Gale, 781-631-1218.

Newburyport: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Market Square; Niki Rosen, 978-463-3208.

Reading: 2nd Saturday/each month, 11 am-noon; Reading Square; Reading People for Peace; Bob Connor, bobconnor1@yahoo.com.

Rockport: Wednesday, noon-1 pm; First Congregational Church (silent for peace).

Salem, MA: Saturday, 11-noon; Riley Plaza (by the Post Office).

You can buy Rainbow Peace Flags, buttons, bumperstickers, etc. at Saturday vigils in Andover.

On February 7th, Canada announced the creation of a 16 million-acre Great Bear Rainforest Park in British Columbia to protect critical habitat on its Pacific Coast. 5 million acres of the park will be protected outright and managed as parkland, and the rest will be run under a so-called ecosystem management plan to ensure sustainable forestry. The result of an unusual accord between governments, indigenous First Nations, environmentalists, and the logging industry, it is a victory for the long-haul activism and negotiations by several North American conservation groups, especially the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

The agreement ensures the right of indigenous peoples, whose cultures date back thousands of years, to manage their traditional territories. Great Bear Rainforest Park is the home of a wide range of wildlife, including grizzlies, black bears, salmon, eagles, wolves, and the rare white "spirit" bear found only in that area. In the words of a Sierra Club representative, the accord "provides a real world example of how people and wilderness can prosper together".

On February 7th, Sweden announced that is planning to take the biggest energy step of any advanced western economy by trying to wean itself of oil completely within 15 years without building a new generation of nuclear power stations.

A committee comprised of industrialists, academics, farmers, car makers, civil servants and others will report its recommendations to Parliament in several months. The intention is to replace all fossil fuels with renewables before climate change destroys economies and growing oil scarcity leads to huge new price rises.

Meanwhile, the Swedish government is working with carmakers Saab and Volvo to develop cars and trucks that burn ethanol and other biofuels. Health and library services are being given grants to convert from oil use and homeowners are being encouraged with green taxes.

Local cuisine trumps globalized Fast Food! In the first week of this new year, a McDonald's that had been operating since 2001 in the southern Italian town of Altamura was forced to close its doors. How come? Very simply, the fresh traditional bread and filled panini - bread rolls - made by a local baker are so tasty, that people overwhelmingly prefer them to Big Macs. The baker, Luca Digesu, said that he had not set out to force McDonald's out of business in any "bellicose spirit." When he first opened his bakery only a couple of houses away from McDonald's, he actually wondered if he would have enough customers. However, attracted by his fragrant and deli-

icious creations, the queues outside the bakery grew longer every day while McDonald's gradually emptied, despite its special offers, its children's parties, and the best efforts of Ronald McDonald.

On January 19th, in a major victory for grassroots organizers, the global engineering and construction company, Bechtel, reached agreement with the government of Bolivia, dropping the corporation's legal demand for \$50 million in damages and lost profits. In April 2000, a citizen's revolt over privatizing water services in the city of Cochabamba had forced the company out of Bolivia. Bechtel and its chief co-investor, the Spanish company Abengoa, had been seeking a financial settlement in a case filed before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

For four years, citizen groups waged a broad and relentless, international campaign to pressure Bechtel to drop the case. Protesters closed down Bechtel's headquarters in San Francisco twice. Company officials were bombarded by critical e-mails. Citizen groups from 43 nations endorsed a legal petition to the World Bank demanding that the case be opened to public participation. A leader of the global effort, Jim Shultz, executive director of The Democracy Center in Cochabamba, stated: "This is the first time that a major corporation like Bechtel has had to back down from a major trade case as the result of global citizen pressure. It should signal to corporations contemplating similar legal actions that they should be prepared to defend those actions in the court of global public opinion, not just behind closed doors at the World Bank."

On February 4th, a few thousand protesters, including large contingents of college students from across the country, braved both the icy rain and the growing usurpation of executive power in Washington to demand that the Bush administration step down. Nearly half of the participants were students from numerous campuses, including U. of California/Berkeley, Columbia College in Chicago, and Occidental College in Los Angeles. Speakers included the 96-year-young "Granny D." The five-hour, rained-soaked demonstration, organized by *The World Can't Wait*, included the toppling of a 40-foot effigy of a 3-headed hydra with the triumvirate of Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld. It ended with a high-spirited march around the White House. All in all, an example of Alice Walker's reminder that there is something of the "grand" and the "heroic" in "the power of what is small."

Urgent Action

I. Not One More Death:

Place Conditions on Any More Dollars

by Don Abbott

Now that President Bush has submitted to Congress his "emergency" supplemental request of \$72.4 billion for the continued occupation of Iraq and the war in Afghanistan, it is time to pressure our elected representatives to use the purse strings to pull the President in another direction. However reluctant one may be to be painted as "non-supportive of our troops" or as "soft on security issues," more and more people, even top military officials, acknowledge that no military solution will end the war in Iraq. Rep. Murtha's assessment is correct: "We have become the enemy."

We must end our military occupation of Iraq, and the way to begin is to set conditions on further spending for this military action. Instead, we should fund human needs: "fund justice, not war." (The President's 2007 budget cuts \$183 billion from domestic programs during the next five years; many of the cuts are in services to the poor. The budget makes the largest cut to education spending in at least the last 10 years.)

In short, there is no legal or moral standing for the war. There is no justification for the massive, unqualified, and continuing allocation of American taxpayers' money for the U.S. occupation.

The Supplemental Appropriations process will involve votes by both the House and the Senate. Amendments are allowed, not to change policy, but to place conditions on spending. It is in the design and the debate about such conditions that leverage for change is possible. Elected officials can find room to enter the debate. This is no longer a cut-and-dried issue of "being either for us or against us."

Action to Take:

Members of Congress are on recess until February 27. Now is an ideal time for them to hear the views of their constituents. Phone calls and personal letters delivered to their offices, letters to the editors of regional and local papers--all communications count. The vote in the House could come as early as March 13.

Other Action to Consider:

Urge your representatives--especially Meehan and Tierney--to support legislation to stop funding the deployment of U.S. armed forces in Iraq, by endorsing H.R. 4232--"End the War in Iraq Act of 2005"--filed by Rep. Jim McGovern (MA-3):
thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d109:10:./temp/~bdQRo1:

The bill would allow Defense Department funds to be used only to provide for:

- the safe and orderly withdrawal of all troops;
- consultations with other governments, NATO, and the UN regarding international forces;
- financial assistance and equipment to either Iraqi security forces and/or international forces.

In addition, the bill would not prohibit or restrict non-defense funding to carry out reconstruction in Iraq.

Currently, there are 15 cosponsors for this bill that was introduced on November 4, 2005. Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4) is one of the very first to sign on. No other Massachusetts congressman has joined these colleagues.

II. Iran Petition

Tell Bush and Congress:

Stop the War on Iran before It Starts!

by Don Abbott

Every day grows the threat of a new war, preemptive and unilateral, by the U.S. against the people of Iran. For months now, and with increasing momentum and volume, the media has carried daily reports of an alleged nuclear threat posed by Iran. American citizens are being saturated with messages that the U.S. needs to take military action. These reports recall the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" alarms issued in the months leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. And now, the media demonize the people of Iran as part of the Muslim community, "terrorists" who hate us because of our Western values. We cannot delude ourselves into thinking that, given the debacle in Iraq, yet another U.S. attack on a sovereign nation would never happen now. Our assault plan would be overwhelmingly by air ("surgical strikes"), and the first-use option of nuclear weapons tops the table. **Members are urged to contact elected representatives, Washington officials, the media, and community leaders at all levels and to demand that they exert every effort to quell the growing drum beat. Press them all to work for the patient, nonviolent process of multilateral diplomacy.**

First, call senators and congressmen and urge them to be courageous and speak out for a diplomatic solution on Iran, and to oppose deceptive attempts by the administration to justify military action against Iran. **Tell them not to repeat their mistakes of October 2002 by again abdicating their constitutional power to declare war. Demand that they vote against any measure that could be construed as an authorization to use military force.**

Second, go to www.StopWaronIran.org, sign the following petition, and work tirelessly to engage your family members and friends and colleagues to do the same.

The Petition:

President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary Rice, Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary General Annan, Senators and Representatives,

It is with grave concern that I observe the growing threat of a new U.S. war--this time against the people of Iran.

The media is filled with reports of an alleged nuclear threat posed by Iran and the assumed need for the U.S. to take military action. These reports recall the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" stories issued in the months leading up to the war on Iraq. In the lead up to the illegal invasion of Iraq, the Bush Administration asserted that Iraq possessed massive stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and that it was capable of launching an attack - nuclear, chemical and biological - on the U.S. within 45 minutes.

President Bush said that the U.S. had to attack immediately, and could not "wait for the final proof -- the smoking gun -- that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud." We all know now that this propaganda campaign was a complete fabrication created to justify a war of aggression.

Now we see reports that are all too similar being made to justify military action against the people of Iran. Taking Iran to the UN Security Council is a prelude for unilateral action. Just as in the case of Iraq, none of the claims made by the U.S. government stand up to unbiased scrutiny. Iran has submitted to the most intrusive and humiliating inspections, above and beyond what is required by Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). None of the inspections have found any evidence that Iran is developing a nuclear weapons program.

There is only one government that has used nuclear weapons against civilian populations, and that same nation has the largest stockpile of weapons of mass destruction on the planet. Most dangerous and incredible it is at this very moment developing a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons that it intends to use, not merely to threaten. That country is, of course, the United States. Shouldn't any real discussion of the dangers of nuclear weapons include the weapons stockpiled by the Pentagon and the history of U.S. aggression and interventions?

Iran has suffered greatly at the hands of the U.S. We recall the U.S. overthrew the democratically elected government of Dr. M. Mossadegh and returned the Shah to the Peacock Throne -- 'the proudest achievement of the CIA'. For 25 years the Shah ruled Iran with an iron fist for the benefit of U.S. oil corporations before the people of Iran, in the millions, overthrew his tyranny at a terrible cost in lives. For the past 27 years U.S. sanctions have impeded Iran's right to development and brought great suffering to the people.

It is essential that all voices opposed to the devastation of a new war in the Middle East speak out now. I urge an immediate end to Washington's campaign of sanctions, hostility, and falsehood against the people of Iran. I oppose any new U.S. aggression against Iran. We need funds for human needs, not endless war for empire.

Signed,

III. In Wake of Federal Approval, Intensify Opposition to BU Biolab

Editor's commentary:

With a continuing mix of bad science and bad politics, the federal government on February 2nd gave final approval to Boston University's plan to build a Biosafety Level 4 lab on Albany Street in Roxbury in the South End of Boston. Level 4 facilities test mostly biological agents for which there is no known antidote or cure.

The B.U. facility is hailed as an economic boon to Boston and as a cornerstone in the Bush administration's campaign to defend against the worst of potential terrorist threats. However, the research would be conducted in a facility without any regulations, state or federal, to address issues of transparency, accountability, health, and safety, bringing immediate danger to Roxbury residents, mainly African American and Latino individuals, and to all of us in Eastern Massachusetts and beyond. Remember, we all lived in Chernobyl!

A coalition of area activists -- including Boston Mobilization, Alternatives for Community & Environment (ACE), Safety Net, and the Council for Responsible Genetics -- stresses that despite federal approval (authorized as anticipated), the fight to bring health and safety requirements and public oversight to this facility is far from over. Rep. Gloria Fox's legislation is being rewritten again in the Joint Committee on the Environment, and it is important to insure that it gets to the floor for a vote.

Action to Take:

We urge members to call elected officials and demand guarantees for safety, transparency, and oversight. In addition to Sen. Kennedy and Sen. Kerry, our Congressmen, State Representatives and State Senators, keep the pressure on the following:

Boston Mayor Menino: 617-635-4500

Boston Public Health Commissioner John Auerbach: 617-534-5395

Speaker of the House DiMasi: 617-722-2500

Chairs of the Environment Committee: Frank Smizik, 617-722-2210; Pam Resor, 617-722-1120

The following statement by Representative Fox on February 2nd makes the case:

Rep. Gloria L. Fox Responds to Federal Approval for BU BSL4 Bioterrorism Lab

"I am deeply disappointed at today's decision by the National Institutes of Health to approve and fund Boston University's proposed bio-defense laboratory to be placed in the South End/Lower Roxbury section of Boston.

"To anyone who has followed this NEPA process this is no surprise. It was clear early on that NIH would not closely examine the potential impacts of the lab or alternative locations. It was clear that it intended to dismiss all environmental and racial justice considerations. When NIH chose in September 2003 to fund 2/3 the cost of the BU lab, its direction was set. The public is ill served by NIH's self-serving declarations and decisions.

"It is quite unfortunate that this whole process of placing a facility that will be doing bio-defense work on select agents and pathogens with no known cure has been rammed down our throats by NIH and Boston University. Many questions raised by community members, public health officials, and environmental organizations have gone largely unanswered still to this day. While Boston University claims it has attended over one hundred community meetings, it has given the same boiler plate presentation, and refuses to answer questions about transparency, safety procedures, transport of deadly toxins, and security of the facility.

"Boston University has not earned the trust of the community to build such a facility. They deliberately lied to government officials when they reported last December that they have never experienced a laboratory mishap in their current laboratories. Only one week after that report came out did a whistleblower alert the public that three scientists became infected with tularemia while unknowingly working with virulent strains of tularemia. These scientists left the facility, came into contact with many people, and soon realized something was wrong and went to a hospital for treatment. Luckily, tularemia is treatable, and is not infectious. Nonetheless, after this cover up was reported, Boston University responded by saying that this was 'one more

example of a lack of attention in the laboratory that we think isn't up to our standards'.

"Just recently, through a Freedom of Information Act request by a local environmental agency, we learned of another problem that BU has not reported to the public. This high containment bioterrorism laboratory will be built beside the Roxbury Canal Conduit. A July 2003 analysis done by the Antiterrorism and Force Protection Team engineers found that the Conduit presented a security threat to the facility. Boston University then pledged one million dollars to address this vulnerability. NIH and BU never mentioned this significant vulnerability in their environmental or regulatory filings. It is irresponsible for this facility to be placed in such a densely packed urban community when Boston University has not been forthright with the community and local public health agencies.

"I am working day and night to see to it that this facility does not get built. If placement of this facility is not reconsidered, I am the sponsor of state legislation to regulate the facility with enforcement provisions that close the lab if work is being done that endangers the community. Currently, conditions exist only where if they again fail to follow their own standards, work can still continue. To allow work to continue that endangers the lab workers to such diseases as Ebola, The Plague, and other diseases with no cure is a recipe for disaster.

"I urge the public to call their elected officials and ask if they can guarantee the public's safety in case such a pathogen infects a lab worker. After all, it will be the government that will be relied upon to make the decision to quarantine the public, not Boston University. It is critical that the community continues to make their voices heard."

Poetry

The Peacemakers

by David Ray

All but a few gave their vote for the bombing.
All but a few became enthusiastic.
Between patriotic songs on the radio

we hear more urgings to deal
with the demons—and no one
suggests that we too are demons,

that we could be our own axis of evil.
Yet now and then I examine myself
in a mirror, searching for the smirk

of a war-loving citizen sure of his cause.

Issues

I. **Bush Crimes Commission: Preliminary Findings** **sponsored by "Not in Our Name" (www.nion.us/)**

"When the possibility of far-reaching war crimes and crimes against humanity exists, people of conscience have a solemn responsibility to inquire into the nature and scope of these acts and to determine if they do in fact rise to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity."

--*Charter of the International Commission of Inquiry*

Editor's comment: Over three days last month, "The International Commission of Inquiry on Crimes against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration of the United States" held its culminating session, following its initial two-day session in October 2005. The commission, sponsored by aims "to both frame and fuel a society-wide discussion of whether, or not, the administration of George W. Bush is guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other high crimes. It (does) this by bringing the truth to light, and by applying exacting standards, to determine if unpardonable crimes have been committed." At a recent press conference one of the jurists, Ajamu Sankofa, executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility--NY, stated,

"The historical significance of this tribunal is that American citizens, civil society, is demonstrating courage to stand up and speak its definition of the truth against a wholly orchestrated system of deliberate deceptions."

The following preliminary report of the commission's findings, released on February 2, 2006, can be found at www.bushcommission.org/findings.htm:

Background and Process

The Commission of Inquiry requested that we serve as judges to hear the testimony and review the documentary evidence submitted to support five indictments filed by it charging George W. Bush and officials in his administration with crimes against humanity. After receiving the Charter, the judges embraced its view that there is an important need for a tribunal as an instrumentality of world humanity. Consistent with the Charter the judges agreed to follow the standards established by the Commission and to inquire and assess whether the Bush Administration has committed crimes that do in fact rise to the level of crimes against humanity as popularly understood and conceived, that is "acts that, by their scale or nature, shock the conscience of humankind."

These indictments charge that George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, and members of his administration have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Bush Administration, January 2001 to January 2006. We accepted this responsibility, committing to act with integrity in reviewing the evidence presented to us and to issue a fair and just verdict. The importance of this commitment was reinforced by the gravity of the indictments and the evidence received during the hearings. An underlying theme in all five indictments and in the testimony in support of these indictments is that the Bush Administration engaged in a pattern and practice of denial and suppression of the truth. As mandated by the Inquiry's Charter, we conducted our work with "a deep sense of responsibility to the people of the world."

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Preliminary Findings

These are the judges' preliminary findings since we are continuing to receive documents requested of witnesses at the time of their testimony and are reviewing transcripts and recordings of the two days of hearings in October 2005 and three days in January 2006. Furthermore, after hearing the testimony and reviewing a number of documents put into the record, we determined that the gravity of the evidence and the interest of justice required that we once again request that the Bush Administration supply us with documents or other evidence that may support a position that it has not committed crimes against humanity and war crimes as alleged in the documents. These findings may be modified and will be expanded after a thorough review of all materials received. It is our expectation that we will be able to issue our final opinion and findings by Spring 2006.

Forty-four witnesses presented testimony in two sessions, October 21-22, 2005 and January 20-22, 2006. These witnesses included people injured by the alleged conduct of the Bush Administration, eye-witnesses including independent journalists, people who at one time served in an official position with the Bush Administration, the United Nations or the United Kingdom, and noted experts in the fields related to the charges in the indictments. In addition, the jurists received numerous reports, studies and other documentary evidence submitted by these witnesses and the prosecutors.

The following is a summary of our findings for each of the five indictments:

Wars of Aggression

The evidence is overwhelming that the Bush Administration authorized and is conducting a war of aggression against Iraq in violation of international law, including The Nuremberg Principles, Geneva Conventions of 1949, the United Nations Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In doing so, the Bush Administration has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Torture, Rendition, Illegal Detention and Murder Indictment

There was substantial evidence submitted through testimony and documents that the Bush Administration committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in conducting its "War Against Terror." It did this by developing and implementing policies and practices that violated international law and international human rights to force information from detainees and to punish those whom it believes may be "enemy combatants." It has engaged

in a systematic process of denials and specious reconfigurations of international and domestic law to justify its actions.

Global Warming

The testimony of scientists and the scientific reports and other documents submitted during the inquiry support a conclusion that the Bush Administration has committed crimes against humanity by its environmental policies and practices. These policies and practices appear to support corporate interests while denying the overwhelming evidence that greenhouse gas emissions are irreversibly damaging the world environment and causing present day injury to people throughout the world.

Global Health including HIV/AIDS and Family Planning

The jurists are still receiving and reviewing voluminous documentation concerning this indictment. The jurists, therefore, have not reached a preliminary determination on this indictment and will publish its findings in its final report.

Hurricane Katrina

The evidence of the Bush Administration's conscious and deliberate failings in preventing the foreseeable devastation, including death toll, caused by Hurricane Katrina, particularly in New Orleans, and its failure to respond efficiently and appropriately after the Hurricane was overwhelming. Its failures constitute crimes against humanity. The record is replete with evidence that the systemic historical racial and class based discrimination suffered by many of those who lost so much as a result of Hurricane Katrina was made worse as a result of the Bush Administration's conduct.

Conclusion

These preliminary findings will be supplemented and expanded in the final verdict of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted, **Adjoa A. Aiyetoro**, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; former Executive Director, National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL); **Dennis Brutus**, former prisoner, Robben Island, South Africa, poet, Professor Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh; **Abdeen Jabara**, former President, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee; **Ajamu Sankofa**, Executive Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility-NY; and **Ann Wright**, former US diplomat and retired US Army Reserve Colonel.

II. Defusing Iran with democracy

by Shirin Ebadi, human rights advocate, awarded the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize and Muhammad Sahimi, professor of chemical engineering at USC.

published in the Los Angeles Times, January 19, 2006

Editor's note: A sensible and just perspective that could bring us back from the brink of another impending disaster.

Lost in the international fury over Iran's partial restart of its nuclear energy program, and the deplorable statements by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad regarding Israel, has been the fact that respect for human rights and a democratic political system are the most effective deterrent against the threat that any aspiring nuclear power, including Iran, may pose to the world.

When the U.S. and its allies encouraged the shah in the 1970s to start Iran's nuclear energy program, they helped create the Frankenstein that has become so controversial today. If, instead, they had pressed the shah to undertake political reforms, respect human rights and release Iran's political prisoners, history could have been very different.

In the three decades since then, India, South Africa, North Korea, Israel and Pakistan have joined the nuclear club — and most people would acknowledge that the democracies among them are viewed today as the least threatening. In the 1980s, South Africa's apartheid regime made several nuclear bombs, but the democratic government of Nelson Mandela dismantled them. India has a nuclear arsenal, but few perceive the world's largest democracy as a global threat. Nor is Israel considered likely to be the first in the Middle East to use nuclear weapons in a conflict.

But North Korea's nuclear program is a threat because its regime is secretive, its leader a recluse. The nuclear arsenal of Pakistan is dangerous because the military, which runs the country and is populated by Islamic extremists, helped create the Taliban and allowed Abdul Qadeer Khan to freely operate a nuclear super-market.

Iran's nuclear program began accelerating around 1997 when the reform-minded Mohammad Khatami was elected president — just as Iran was developing an independent press, and just before a reformist parliament was elected in 2000. The reformists supported the nuclear program but wanted it to be fully transparent and in compliance with Iran's international obligations. These were reassuring signs that it would not get out of control.

But instead of backing Iran's fledgling democratic movement, which would have led to nuclear transparency, the U.S. undercut it by demonizing Iran.

While Khatami proposed people-to-people dialogue between Americans and Iranians, Washington chose to block Iranian scholars, artists and authors from visiting the U.S. Although Khatami helped the U.S. in Afghanistan, President Bush designated Iran a member of the "axis of evil."

By 2003, when it became clear that Khatami's reforms had stalled, the world started paying closer attention to Iran's nuclear program. So, what had demonizing Iran achieved?

The U.S. will not solve the nuclear problem by threatening military strikes or by dragging Iran before the U.N. Security Council. Although a vast majority of Iranians despise the country's hard-liners and wish for their downfall, they also support its nuclear program because it has become a source of pride for an old nation with a glorious history.

A military attack would only inflame nationalist sentiments. Iran is not Iraq. Given Iranians' fierce nationalism and the Shiites' tradition of martyrdom, any military move would provoke a response that would engulf the entire region, resulting in countless deaths and a ruined economy not only for the region but for the world.

Imposing U.N. sanctions on Iran would also be counterproductive, prompting Tehran to leave the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and its "additional protocol." Is the world ready to live with such prospects?

So, what can the West do? Western nations should help the U.N. appoint a special human rights monitor for Iran. It would remind the General Assembly of Iran's human rights record annually, and strongly condemn it if the record keeps deteriorating. Contrary to the general perception, Iran's clerics are sensitive to outside criticism.

The World Bank should stop providing Iran with loans and, instead, work with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to strengthen civil society. The West should support Iran's human-rights and democracy advocates, nominate jailed leaders for international awards and keep the cause in the public eye. Western nations should downgrade diplomatic relations if Iran continues violating basic human rights.

Iran is at least six to 10 years away from a nuclear bomb, by most estimates. The crisis is not even a crisis. There is ample time for political reform before Iran ever develops the bomb. Meanwhile, the West should permit Iran a limited uranium enrichment program (as allowed under the nonproliferation treaty) under strict safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency — but only when Tehran undertakes meaningful reforms, including freeing political prisoners and holding free and fair elections.

Lastly, the U.S. and Iran should enter direct negotiations. It is simply absurd for the U.S. and the most important nation in the Middle East not to communicate directly. The Bush administration should not be seduced by exile groups with no support in Iran. Developing democracy is an internal affair.

Democracy, in the end, will provide the ultimate safeguard against nuclear disaster, because a truly democratic Iran, backed by a majority of Iranians, would feel secure enough not to pursue dangerous military adventures.

"There is no solution unless you are part of the problem."

--anonymous

III. Vermont Yankee: A Clear and Present Danger for All New Englanders

by Hattie Nestel, peace and social justice activist and MVPP member, Athol, MA

Since Entergy bought the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant on July 31, 2002, the corporation has embarked on a course that increasingly threatens the health and safety of every New Englander.

Now well-known for its irresponsibility in New Orleans, Entergy immediately poured millions of dollars into Vermont Yankee in order to establish its ability to produce twenty percent more power than Vermont Yankee's original design capacity. A recent Vermont Department of Public Health report asserts that such a power increase may boost radiation releases -- called "fenceline doses" -- by twenty-six percent.

The power increase is now scheduled for February 24, 2006. This increase will violate the state's safety standard, according to James Matteau, executive director of the Windham Regional Commission in Vermont, which has jurisdiction over Vermont Yankee. State officials and Entergy already disagree about the corporation's interpretation of the state's 2004 "fenceline" readings at Vermont Yankee...double the radiation level claimed by Entergy ([Rutland Herald 2/9/06](#)).

Although President George W. Bush asserts that nuclear terrorism is the greatest threat we face today, Entergy wants to store its high level nuclear waste in cheap, above ground, dry casks on site less than 200 feet from the Connecticut River. These casks will be in plain sight from the surrounding hills or across the Connecticut River. The only reason to store this waste on site is that there is no place to send it. The Yucca Mountain option in Nevada has been besieged with so many inconsistencies and falsified scientific studies that Nevada is doing everything possible to make sure that option is closed. No town wants radioactive waste in its local landfill. Creating more waste when there is no way to dispose of it is completely irresponsible!

Vermont Yankee's spent fuel pool, located 70 feet in the air, is also vulnerable. An average-sized reactor like Vermont Yankee has more than 35 million curies of radioactive cesium in its fuel pool. By comparison, the Hiroshima bomb released 2,000 curies of cesium. The National Academy of Sciences depicted fuel pools as sitting ducks for terrorist attacks. If the water were simply drained out of such a pool, according to the NAS report, a ferocious fire could ensue and spread quantities of dangerous radioactivity into the air.

The Government Accounting Office (GAO) has also weighed in on problems besetting the nation with high level wastes. Their report accuses nuclear power companies and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of failing to safeguard wastes now held at the nation's nuclear power companies. The NRC questions whether companies are even keeping accurate track of disposed waste.

As part of their daily operations, reactors release radioactive waste into our water and air--hundreds of thousands of curies of waste ([Citizens Awareness Network](#), Winter 2004). Even with no nuclear accident, Entergy's proposed twenty percent "uprate" and additional dry cask storage will release proportionally more radioactive curies. These releases will not stop at the "fence-line."

Vermont Yankee, situated in the most southeastern tip of Vermont, is within five miles of both the Massachusetts and New Hampshire State boundaries. The beautiful rural towns that provide us with rich agricultural lands, forests, and recreational lakes and mountains, as well as the densely populated cities of Boston, Hartford, Hanover, New Hampshire, and Albany, are all within 75 miles of Vernon, Vermont. And of course, the Connecticut River, upon leaving Vernon, will carry whatever radioactive waste it absorbs on its journey through Massachusetts and Connecticut to the Long Island Sound.

The question of radiation safety came sharply into focus with the "Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) VII" review in June 2005. With this report the National Academy of Science unequivocally stated that no amount of radiation could be considered safe. Despite continuing assertions from proponents of nuclear power that it is safe, this report states without question that all radiation carries some cancer risk. BEIR VII concludes that people should avoid radiation in all forms.

"The abiding lesson that Three Mile Island taught Wall Street was that a group of NRC-licensed reactor operators, as good as any others, could turn a \$2 billion asset into a \$1 billion cleanup job in about 90 minutes," Peter Bradford, a former member of the NRC, stated. An accident or a terrorist attack at Vermont Yankee would result in a disaster of such magnitude most of New England would be uninhabitable for generations. However, for Entergy the bottom line is not safety, but profit. To ensure that they eke out the greatest possible profit, they are willing to put all of New England at risk.

Neither Entergy, the State of Vermont, the Vermont elected officials nor the NRC is taking adequate steps to protect New Englanders from this real and present danger. We must question why the Massachusetts Department of Health isn't monitoring radiation levels in Massachusetts, why there has been no Independent Safety Assessment, why this 34-year old plant would even be considered for an "uprate" when there is no safe place to put additional spent fuel and there have been numerous fires, cracks, missing fuel rods and loss of on-site power to the emergency warning system. Why isn't Vermont requiring hardened, on-site storage (HOSS) for highly radioactive waste and why has Vermont's Health Commissioner, Dr. Paul Jarris, said he is in support of raising the state's present "fenceline" limits? Why does anyone think a 10-mile evacuation plan is sufficient?

Shouldn't we be working to make sure Vermont Yankee closes down safely in 2012 when its license expires and working on replacing its power with affordable conservation and renewable, sustainable energy technology? All of us need to keep current about what is happening at Vermont Yankee and work for the only sensible solution, which is to shut Vermont Yankee down!

The Citizens Awareness Network, New England Coalition, and Traprock Peace Center are all working to monitor, educate and take necessary legal action to stop Entergy from its reckless and irresponsible course. They need our help. And our elected officials need to hear from us.

Upcoming Events

compiled with the help of Sue Imhoff

Friday, February 24, 7:00 pm: “Colombia Vive” hosts visit of Luis Evelis Andrade from Colombia. Open invitation to come and meet our guest. Excerpts of video about last fall’s “Minga for Life”--indigenous-led march by 60,000 people from Popaya’n to Calu-- may also be shown. Further information: colombiavive@mindspring.com or 978-441-9488. **Ana’s House, 60 Rice Street, Cambridge.** (The next meeting of “Colombia Vive” will be March 12th at 31 Holden Street, Lowell, MA.)

Friday, February 24, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm: Report Back from the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela, presented by the Boston delegation. Come and hear about the personal experiences many had while at the WSF, plus their visits to missions and their participation in workshops. Snacks and drinks. Further information: www.lfsc.org.wsf/reportback.jpg or cbmilkboston@hotmail.com. **New England Institute of Art, 10 Brookline Place West, Brookline, MA.**

Friday, February 24 through Sunday, February 26, 7:00 pm: THE EXONERATED, a play about the death penalty. This play is dedicated to all who are determined to keep the death penalty out of Massachusetts. It tells the stories of six wrongfully convicted survivors, culled from interviews, letters, transcripts, and case files. An opportunity to renew one’s commitment with friends, neighbors, and groups determined to eliminate the death penalty. \$15; \$10 for seniors; \$5 for students. A few reduced tickets are available. Further information: 617-523-0555 or ernestine@communitychangeinc.org. **Rogers Center for the Arts, Merrimack College (Rtes. 125/114), North Andover, MA.**

Sunday, February 26, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm Forum: Will Boston become the new hub of ebola? Speakers: Lynn Klotz, Center for Arms Control and Non Proliferation; Daniel Goode-nough, Professor of Cell Biology, Harvard Medical School; Patricia Hynes, Professor of Public Health Boston University; Sujatha Byravan, Director, Council for Responsible Genetics; and Michael Cohen, Brookline Peace Works. Background will be provided about the erroneous allocation of funds and the real risk which BSL4 labs, such as the BU Biolab, can pose. Strategies will be discussed that show some possibilities from stopping the new building from investigating the hemorrhagic fevers, the main agents studied in a level 4 lab. **Brookline High School, Martin Luther King Room, 155 Greenough Street, Brookline, MA.**

Tuesday, February 28, 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm: From Choice to Justice: Reshaping Abortion Rights Politics, with editor Dr. Marlene Gerber Fried, professor of philosophy at Hampshire College and director of the Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program, a program for reproductive rights and activism. A long-time reproductive rights activist and the founding president of the National Network of Abortion Funds, Dr. Fried also is co-author of Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice. Further information: 781-764-9338. **Cary Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA.**

Thursday, March 2, 4:00 pm: Peter Salama, M.D.--Why people die when they flee from conflict; What we have

learned about war-related famine and disease in the last 25 years. Dr. Salama, Chief of Immunization and Child Survival, UNICEF, will share an approach to assessment and delivery of basic support and essential health measures that have been shown to improve survival and promote resilience to disease in austere settings. Flight and the experience of dislocation, caused by both internal and external conflicts, exact a heavy toll. This program will examine recent instances of forced migrations in the context of war and the developing international response (legal, public health, policy and institutional) to assisting and protecting people caught in the rampages of the violence in their own countries. This is the latest of the “2005/6 Voices of Public Intellectuals Lecture Series on War and the Displacement of People.” For further information: emaguda@radcliffe.edu. **Chronkhite Center, 6 Ash St., off Brattle Street, near the Red Line (Harvard Square).**

Friday, March 3, 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm: Target Iran--The Expanding War in the Middle East. A forum sponsored by *Arlington United for Justice with Peace.* Why is the U.S. targeting Iran? What are the dangers of a wider war? What can citizens do to prevent the expansion of the U.S.-led war in the Middle East? Featured speakers: Joseph Gerson, American Friends Service Committee, and John Tirman, Director of Center for International Studies at MIT. Discussion to follow. \$5.00 suggested donation. MBTA bus 77 goes to Arlington Center. Plenty of parking on the street or free municipal lot off Pleasant St. near Massachusetts Avenue. Further information: arlingtonujp@yahoo.com or 781-316-2018. **First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street, Arlington Center, MA.**

Saturday, March 4, 8:00 pm: Coffeehouse Concert featuring Ethan Miller and Kate Boverman. With insight and beauty, high-energy acoustic guitar and rich vocal harmonies, Ethan and Kate perform passionate songs of hope, justice, and struggle--in a traditional melodic folk style that shows the influence of spoken-word poetry, rock, gospel, and even a dash of hip-hop. Co-sponsored by *MVPP* and *Merrimack Valley Chapter of Amnesty International.* Fair trade coffee and scrumptious eats. \$12 suggested donation. **Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6 Locke Street, Andover, MA.**

Monday, March 6, 7:00 pm: Taylor Branch, author of At Canaan’s Edge--America in the King Years, 1965-1968, the final book in the biological trilogy by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author. Sponsored by *Cambridge Forum* and co-sponsored by the *Harvard Book Store.* How ready was America in 1965 to hear King’s message? Are we closer to achieving his dream today, four decades after his assassination? Further information: director@cambridgeforum.org or 617-495-2727. **3 Church Street, Cambridge, MA.**

Tuesday, March 7, 6:00 pm: Pot-Luck Supper--“Walk for a New Spring.” The Buddhist monks from the New England Peace Pagoda in Leverett will again be stopping in Andover during their extended seasonal peace walk through the region. Come share pot-luck and MVPP’s continuing solidarity with them. **Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6 Locke Street, Andover, MA.**

Wednesday, March 8, 7:30 am to 9:00 am: Shifting the Paradigm--Paths to Women’s Political Leadership. Celebrate International Women’s Day with State Reps. Linda Dorcena Forry, Lida E. Harkins, and Mary S. Rogeness; Boston’s Chief of Housing, Charlotte Golar Richie; Brandeis sociology profes-

sor and women's rights activist, Dessima Williams. Suggested donation: \$5 at the door; includes continental breakfast.

R.S.V.P. by March 1st to Diane Hammer: diane.hammer@simmons.edu. Further information: Audley Green at 617-723-0302. **Linda K. Paresky Conference Center, 3rd Floor, Simmons College.**

Save the Dates: March 15-22, 2006: "Three Years Too Many. End the War. Bring All the Troops Home Now."

United for Justice with Peace has issued a nationwide call for the week marking the 3rd anniversary (March 19) of the start of a war that should never happened, a war of our country's choosing. UPJ urges opponents of the Iraq War to organize a wide array of events in their hometowns for the entire week surrounding this anniversary. It is vital to bring anti-war sentiment out into the streets of every community around our country.

Saturday, March 18, 11:00 am: Rally and March on the 3rd Anniversary of the Invasion & Occupation of Iraq. "Stop the Violence: Stop the War at Home & Abroad, Unite against Poverty Racism & War, Bring the Troops Home Now!" Sponsored by the Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee and Boston Troops Out Now Coalition. **At the intersection of Blue Hill Avenue and Dudley Street, Boston.** March will end at Boston Common.

Thursday, March 23, 7:30 pm: Frances Moore Lappé speaks at a WAND Peace Fellowship Fundraiser about her new book, Democracy's Edge. Preceded by benefit dinner from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm: Enjoy "Dinner for a Small Planet," 5-course gourmet vegetarian meal! Proceeds will go to the Small Planet Institute. Reservations required for dinner at \$15: lyra@greenet.net or 978-465-3935. Voluntary donation for speech, at the door. For further information: Lyra Engel at above. **Central Congregational Church, corner of Titcomb and Pleasant Streets, Newburyport, MA.**

Saturday, April 29: Mobilization in New York City: MARCH FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY. UJP has ordered ten buses; we hope to have a bus stop in Andover, at Dascomb Road.

"The most alarming sign of the state of our society now is that our leaders have the courage to sacrifice the lives of young people in war but have not the courage to tell us that we must be less greedy and less wasteful."

--Wendell Berry

Books of Note

Recommended Reads compiled by Don Abbott

David Ray: The Death of Sardanapalus & Other Poems of the Iraq Wars, Howling Dog Press, Brave New World Order Books, 2004. A distinctive volume of poems that bear passion, enlightenment, anguish, defiance, truth, and hope to our parched souls. Relentlessly opposed to the corrosive tyranny of government, all of these poems are necessary; some with a voice of such clarity and poignancy that they are bound to endure. One reviewer writes, "There is nothing like this book in American poetry today; every poem cries out against the barbaric cruelties of war."

Erik Reece: Lost Mountain, A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness, foreword by Wendell Berry, Riverhead Books, 2006. A gripping work about radical strip mining in Appalachia and its economic and environmental consequences that are devastating on an unprecedented, but largely unnoticed scale...except to the health and homes of the people in the surrounding hollows and creek bottoms...and to this gifted writer, whose attentive and eloquent indictment moves him into the tradition of Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey and Rachel Carson.

Anita Roddick with Brooke Shelby Biggs: Troubled Water, Saints, Sinners, Truths and Lies about the Global Water Crisis, Anita Roddick Books, 2004. Highly accessible presentation, with engaging graphics, about the crucial role of water worldwide, especially in these times when, as Robert Kennedy, Jr. says, it "no longer flows downhill; it flows toward money." Example cited: The three largest water corporations will control 70% of the water in Europe and North America by 2010. Complete with resources for action, it is an excellent companion to Tony Clarke's book, Inside the Bottle, mentioned in our "Books of Note," July 2005.

Arundhati Roy: Public Power in the Age of Empire, Open Media Pamphlet Series, Seven Stories Press, 2004. Based on a public address delivered by the author in 2004 to the 99th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. A riveting, trenchant call to reinhabit public space, to disarm the roots of meaningless language and corrupt power, and to reclaim the basic human rights and goods for the world's ordinary people: food, water, shelter and dignity. She makes patently clear that no weapons, no full-spectrum dominance, and no spurious governments "can buy peace at the cost of justice."

Mickey Z: The Seven Deadly Sins, Exposing the Lies behind War Propaganda, with an introduction by Laura Flanders, Common Courage Press, 2004. This self-educated author and social commentator uses his encyclopedic mind to deconstruct and debunk many of our country's myths. With boldness and clarity, he "interrogates conventional wisdom" and impels the reader to develop the critical capacity to do so on one's own. What adds a remarkable quality to his argument is the breadth of source material he brings to bear (all within a text of barely 150 pages or so). Overall, this could be the one of the best, short surveys of U.S. war propaganda. A must for both friends and critics of mainstream media, it demands each of us to ask, "How do we let the powers-that-be still get away with this?"

Poetry

Airport Security

by David Ray

In the airport I got wanded,
though not by a fairy princess.

I had to remove my shoes,
prove they were not twin bombs.

But the strangest scene I saw
that day was where random checks

delayed the suspicious—
the grey lady in her wheelchair

and the toddler boy tugged
from his mother's hand, pulled

through the metal detector's arch.
She tried to follow but was

restrained by two guards who grasped
her arms as she yelled, "But I told

him not to talk to strangers!"
The child wailed bloody murder.

A female guard patted the boy
all over, although he did not giggle.

I myself went on profiling terrorists.
They were so obvious.

Curbside Chatter

1.
Vigiler's Sign: "We Don't Belong in Iraq."

Woman Pedestrian, shrugging her shoulders: "Only time will tell."

Vigiler: "...and in the meantime?"

2.
Pedestrian walks into North Main, his back to the passing Shaw-sheen traffic, and confronts vigiler: "I mock you! You Leninist, Stalinist, Maoist, Ceaucescu pig!"

Vigiler: "You have the wrong name. Let me introduce myself. I'm _____. Let's talk."

Pedestrian hastily walks away, flinging further criticism over his shoulder.

3.
Vigiler's Sign: "IMPEACH."

Teenaged Pedestrian, smiling: "I'm a peach too!"

Letter to the Editor from an MVPP Member

"A few percent of our military budget would bring our schools up to proper standards."

Speech isn't enough to improve education

The Eagle-Tribune, February 16, 2006

To the editor:

Jay Ambrose calls for improving science and math education in America and praises President Bush's call to train 70,000 new teachers and persuade another 30,000 scientists and engineers to go into teaching. However, he fails to mention the substantial barriers to achieving this.

First, Bush's real priorities are revealed by his budget which calls for major cuts to education funding so that he can pay for his wars and tax cuts for the rich and corporations. Second, his administration has set a bad example by showing total disdain for any scientific results that conflict with its political agenda, including excising sections that they don't like from reports, replacing respected scientists on numerous boards with political hacks, and ignoring recommendations of FDA review panels.

Then there are the social forces pushing against science in this country. This starts with Christian fundamentalists who are pushing to remove the teaching of evolution and replace it with their biblical creation myth. Next, people will not choose teaching as a career unless teachers are respected in our society. The reality is that we dump more and more responsibility on them while at the same time heaping criticism on their performance.

Meanwhile, we idolize sports and entertainment figures who earn inflated multi-million dollar salaries.

Finally, there is the reality of funding. Hiring teachers and providing up-to-date textbooks and laboratory facilities costs money. However, most communities are struggling just to minimize the cuts they must make to their schools. It should be noted here that just a few percent of our military budget would pay to bring all of our schools up to proper standards.

A line in a speech is not enough. Improving science education in this country will take some major changes in our attitudes and priorities.

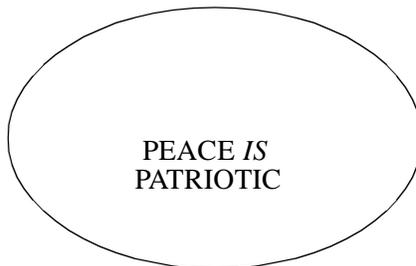
Michael Bleiweiss
Methuen

*"One hand on the beauty of this world
One hand on the suffering of all beings
Two feet in the present moment."*

--a Buddhist saying

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A link to all in US legislature:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html>

How Senators and Representatives voted:

Senate: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm
House: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

State Voting Information: Look up who you vote for at
<http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>