

# new indicator

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## Tensions mount in Haiti

Haitian Prime Minister Yvon Neptune called for international troops to restore order as the death toll of the anti-government protests and uprising topped 70. Armed rebels have taken control of large parts of northern Haiti, which is the main food-growing region, leaving much of Haiti without access to food.

The protests, both peaceful marches in Port-au-Prince and the armed insurgents in the North, are aimed at removing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from power. A former Roman Catholic priest associated with the liberation theology movement, Aristide is accused of human rights violations and election fraud. He was first elected in 1990, overthrown in a bloody coup, and restored to power by a US-led military intervention in 1994. He was succeeded by his close friend Rene Preval in 1995, and was elected to a second term in 2000, in a disputed election.

In addition to the grievances about Aristide, there is also discontent about poverty, inequality, and the declining economy. Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas, with many adults making less than \$1 a day and 80% of the country living in abject poverty.



Youths push a car away from a burning police station in Haiti

The largest sector of the economy is the informal sector, driven by Haiti's ideal location for drug trafficking. This has led to debilitating corruption at all levels of the government.

The violence has escalated over the past several weeks, with rebels raiding police stations, killing the police and taking their weapons, cutting off

supply routes, and taking over towns. Haiti, which has no army and a barely 3,000 member-strong national police force, is hoping for international help, and the U.S. is refusing to get involved. France, the former colonial power, is the only country which is consider-

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## U.S. funding of the Venezuelan opposition

*Don't they have anything better to do with our tax dollars?*

Documents recently released under the Freedom of Information Act show substantial U.S. funding for Venezuelan opposition groups trying to remove the democratically elected president from power.

It is no secret that the U.S. wants to see Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez gone. The Bush administration immediately recognized the government of businessman Pedro Carmona during the brief 11-12 April, 2003 coup attempt against Chávez, and supported the coup plotters throughout the process. Although it is unclear exactly what the U.S.'s role in the coup was, they did definitely finance and foment opposition groups, exactly as they had in Guatemala against Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, against Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, and against Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua throughout the 1980's.

The C.I.A. and U.S. State Department (in all their manifestations, including the National Endowment for Democracy, US Agency for International Development, etc.) traditionally work through labor organizations, opposition political parties, the press, religious groups, and other institutions of civil society to fund opposition movements to leftist regimes throughout the developing world.

After the coup attempt, the U.S. State Department gave a special grant of \$1,000,000 to the NED (National Endowment for Democracy) for Venezuela-related projects. Every single recipient of an NED grant in Venezuela is a member of the opposition which is trying to depose the democratically elected president.

\$53,400 of the grant money went to SUMATE (also known as SÚ-MATE) for "electoral education." Specifically, the grant provides that the group will "train citizens throughout Venezuela in the electoral process and will promote participation in a recall referendum," and will "promote popular support for the referendum." SUMATE claims to have collected 27 million signatures in one day in February, 2003, despite the fact that massive signature fraud rendered that entire signature drive invalid. They are the group behind the current petition drive for a recall election, also fraught with signature fraud. Tens of thousands of signatures of dead people, foreigners, and people who signed twice have been already been thrown out, and the signature verification process continues.

The grant allocates money for

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in case you forgot:

**571 US DEAD<sup>1</sup>**

**100 COALITION DEAD<sup>2</sup>**

**2,703 US WOUNDED<sup>2</sup>**

**8249 to 10093**

**IRAQI CIVILIANS DEAD<sup>3</sup>**

**4895 to 6370**

**IRAQI MILITARY DEAD<sup>4</sup>**

**ZERO WMD!**

### footnotes:

1. <http://www.dod.mil/releases/archive.html>  
by way of cryptome.org

2. <http://lunaville.org/warcasualties/Summary.aspx>

3. <http://www.iraqbodycount.net/bodycount.htm>  
compiled from multiple mainstream media sources  
these are "confirmed" i.e. reported deaths

4. <http://famulus.msnbc.com/FamulusIntl/reuters11-15-062449.asp>  
"think tank" estimates, no accurate figures exist

## War, Inc.

by Mike Ferner

"So what is our mistake? We are also human beings. Treat us like human beings," says Gulalae, a 37 year-old Afghan mother living in the dust, hunger and fear of the Shamshatoo refugee camp in Pakistan. She calls Osama bin Laden an "outsider" and says that because of him, "Afghanistan is made into a hell for others." [1]

Grim does not begin to describe the conditions Gulalae and her family endure. In one three-month period, in just

one district of Shamshatoo, bacteria-related dehydration killed a child nearly every day. The misery in this refugee city is like a grain of sand on the beach of suffering that is Afghanistan. But Americans know little of it.

If you watch mainstream press accounts of "America's New War" you'd never know that as of Christmas, 2001, civilian deaths from U.S. bombing in Afghanistan surpassed 3,700—more than were killed in the attacks of September 11. The toll from unexploded clusterbombs, landmines, destroyed water and sewer systems and depleted uranium shells will no doubt reach into

the hundreds of thousands. Add the additional innocents marked for retaliation as the international cycle of violence continues, and our war to end terrorism seems calculated to do just the opposite.

So why are we fighting? Of all the ways we could have responded to the attacks in New York and Washington, why war?

Numerous psychological, cultural and historical arguments can be mustered to answer that question, but the following does as well as any and better than most: "War is a racket. It always has been... A racket is best described as something that is not what

it seems to the majority of people. Only a small 'inside' group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many."

Words of a radical peacenik? Only if a Marine Corps Major General qualifies as such. In his twilight years General Smedley Butler unburdened his soul as did other career militarists, such as Admiral Hyman Rickover, who admitted that fathering the nuclear Navy was a mistake and Robert McNamara, who almost found the words to apologize for overseeing the Viet Nam war. Unlike Rickover and Mc-

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## Venezuela:

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SUMATE to produce elections material in cooperation with the National Elections Council. The conflicts of interest are glaringly blatant: several members of SUMATE, the group calling for the recall, are on the NEC, the governmental body charged with verifying the signatures and running/overseeing the election, and the NEC shouldn't be accepting or using money provided by foreign governments, especially not foreign governments who have a vested interest in one particular outcome.

In addition to the conflicts of interest, SUMATE, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, are strikingly anti-democratic. One of the

most striking examples of this is that, among the "elections materials" paid for by the NED, are little blue cards that are stamped with "I signed" when the cardholder signs the petition. These cards are distributed by employers all over Venezuela to their employees with the message "bring it back stamped, or don't come back at all." Democracy?

The grants also included \$116,525 to the Center for International Private Enterprise to promote privatization, lobby for business-oriented reforms, fight social programs, undermine the Constitution, erode workers' rights, and make tax reforms to benefit multinational corporations. Another grantee, Acción Campesina, received \$35,000 to impede the process of land reform. The Asociación Civil Asamblea de Educación has

received over \$100,000 from the U.S. government, despite having never showed any positive education-related results, opposing the Venezuelan literacy program which has taught over 2 million people to read and write in under a year and the construction of 3,000 new schools, and promoting the participation of the education sector in the December 2002-February 2003 lockout, leaving millions of students without their constitutional right to education. Their grant is to organize opposition to Venezuelan educational policies; the NED is basically funding them to continue their disruptive attacks on schools and universities.

The list goes on an on. The NED is funding groups to bring cases before the Inter-American Human Rights

Court, which then get dismissed for being frivolous. They are funding opposition political parties, and the International Republican Institute, founded by Ronald Reagan, received funding to implement the "Nicaragua Model" of elections intervention in Venezuela.

Someone should tell Washington that the Cold War is over. They may not like Chávez, his populist policies may make it less profitable for U.S. businesses to exploit Venezuelan oil or labor, and they may consider the existence of a government that works for its people dangerous, but that doesn't justify them interfering in the affairs of a sovereign state.

Want to read the FOIAs? <http://venezuelafoia.info>

## new indicator

articles and letters are welcomed, please type them and send them to: [ni@libertad.ucsd.edu](mailto:ni@libertad.ucsd.edu) or to: new indicator collective B-023C Student Center La Jolla, CA 92093

## new indicator

# Pentagon Denies Access to Guantanamo Trials

## Human Rights Groups Shut Out of Military Commissions

February 24, 2004

The Pentagon has refused to allow three leading human rights groups to attend and observe military commission trials of detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

In a letter sent last week to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Amnesty International, Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) and Human Rights Watch protested their exclusion from the proceedings and urged the U.S. government to rethink its position.

Despite the Bush administration's promise that the commissions would be open to the public, the Pentagon has refused to grant any of these organizations permission to attend the proceedings. Over the last month, the Department of Defense has responded to written requests from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, with a brief statement that it intended only to provide seating for select members of the

press and for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

"The Defense Department wants to control who can talk to the journalists covering the trials," said Wendy Patten, U.S. advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. "The Pentagon has imposed a gag rule on defense lawyers, who can only speak to the press with the military's permission. Now it wants to shut out experienced trial observers who could provide the public with independent analysis."

The three human rights groups have been deeply involved in monitoring sensitive trials, including trials for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and assessing them against international standards. By attending the commissions, they could provide the public with independent and informed analysis of the trials. With the Pentagon's decision to deny access to human rights groups, however, journalists covering the trials will be able to talk only to military officials about the

proceedings.

Under the current commission rules, neither civilian nor military defense lawyers can speak to the press unless they have received prior permission from the military officials in charge of the proceedings. Even if permission is granted, it may be limited to certain topics. In addition, defense lawyers are prohibited from saying anything about closed portions of the trials, even if their statements would not reveal classified or sensitive information. The ICRC, an independent humanitarian organization that monitors compliance with the Geneva Conventions, is unlikely to offer public comment on the trials because it operates through confidential communications with governments.

"The U.S., in the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights, annually criticizes other governments for failing to accommodate trial monitors," said Alex Ariaga, director of government relations at Amnesty International USA. "Allowing me-

dia coverage while pleading insufficient space for human rights groups smacks of fear of informed criticism, and will only fuel the perception that tribunals will be show trials."

In its written response, the Department of Defense refused to allow Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to attend the military commissions on the basis of "limited courtroom seating and other logistical issues."

The size of the courtroom, or any overflow room with video access, is a limiting factor in any trial. However, the human rights groups pointed out that such factors should not be used as a pretext to exclude a whole category of observers with internationally recognized expertise in trial monitoring. Even acknowledging the unique difficulties caused by holding the commissions at the U.S. naval base in Cuba—a problem of the Bush administration's own making—the government should not be allowed to select observers in an effort to control coverage of these internationally significant trials.

Courtroom seating for independent human rights groups could be handled through a pool process, just as the Pentagon is currently putting in place for the media.

"These space constraints are being used as a pretext to keep out groups who have been critical of the commissions," said Elisa Massimino, Washington Director of Human Rights First. "The Pentagon used its promise that the trials would be open to the public to reassure people that the trials would be fair. But now it appears 'open' doesn't really mean open. It means 'open only to hand-picked press and not to anyone who's been critical.'"

The three organizations wrote separately to the Pentagon beginning in May 2003 to request access to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in order to observe the military commission proceedings. Each group followed up with its request in writing or by phone. Amnesty International received a response in January, and Human Rights Watch in February. Human Rights First has still not received any reply.

## New South Africa: Ten Years Later

By Mandisi Majavu

Ten years after the first democratic elections in South Africa, it is becoming crystal clear at whose expense the miraculous transition of power was achieved. White people who constitute about 13.6 percent of the 43 million South Africans still control about 84 percent of the arable land (1), while about 40 percent of the population lives in poverty (2).

In Cape Town (my hometown) – a very racist, unequal and segregated town, the city generates about R94 billion (\$1 trading at R7) annually, but, almost a third of the 3 million people live in poverty and almost another third lives just above the poverty line (3). And, the majority of those subjected to poverty are black/coloured people. Out of the 3 million Capetonians, only 867 052 people are "formally" employed (4). Those thought to be engaged in "informal" employment or unemployed are black/coloured people – 68.8 percent women and 80.2 percent men, according to Statistic South Africa.

Instead of "jobs for all and better living for all" as the African National Congress (ANC) had promised before 1994, about 100 000 jobs have been lost nationwide since 1990 because of privatisation, according to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

The right to sufficient water, as the South African constitution states (5), seems to have underwent a metamor-

phosis into a right to free water as long as that particular household does not exceed a monthly limit of 6 000 litres.

Also, the right to health care service, as the South African constitution clearly states, goes out of the window whenever it does not suit the government and business. Owing to the government and pharmaceutical companies' reluctance to provide free anti-retroviral drugs to the poor, about 41 percent of all deaths between 1997 to 2001 were attributed to tuberculosis, flu and pneumonia, diseases that are commonly associated with AIDS – as well as AIDS itself, according to Statistics South Africa.

What is also becoming clear is that South Africa does not only want to see peace in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi, but more importantly, the South African government wants to achieve peace in these countries so that South African businesses can peacefully do business.

After mediating, a year ago, between the rebels and the DRC government, in an effort to end a war that is reported to have claimed more than 3-million people, president Thabo Mbeki paid a state visit, on 14 January 2004, to the DRC with more than 30 businesspeople in his entourage, including diamond-mining company De Beers, the cellphone network operator Vodacom (6).

Mvelaphanda Holdings, a leading black economic empowerment company, which

was also in the entourage, is reported to have signed deals worth millions of rands in the DRC. The company's chairperson, Tokyo Sexwale, signed two memorandums of understanding giving his company and two consortium access to gold and copper deposits, according to ThisDay, a South African national newspaper.

The silent takeover of the continent (Africa) by South African businesses is way too advanced, make no mistakes. According to the State Of The Nation: South Africa 2003 – 2004 (7), available documents show South African businesses running the national railroad in Cameroon, the national electricity company in Tanzania, and managing the airports located in or near seven African capitals. They have controlling shares in Telecom Lesotho and are the leading providers of cellphone services in Nigeria, Uganda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Rwanda and Cameroon.

South African companies are also managing power plants in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mali; building roads and bridges in Malawi and Mozambique, and a gas pipeline between offshore Mozambique and South Africa. They control banks, breweries, supermarkets and hotels throughout the continent and provide TV programming to over half of all Africa's states.

Given all of this, one would be compelled to think that South Africans must be living a first-world lifestyle, but to the contrary, 40 percent of its population lives in poverty

unemployment – by 2001, the strict and broad unemployment rates had risen to 30 percent and 41 percent respectively (8). And, unemployment continues to rise by about two to three percent each year (8).

As South Africans celebrate their ten year old democracy and at the same time go to the polls this year, people are showing their disillusionment with the democracy and the direction the country is taking by not registering to vote. According to the Independent Electoral Commission, of an estimated 27 million eligible voters in the country, just over 20 million have registered to vote.

Sticking to the script, mainstream intellectuals have assumed their roles lecturing everybody about the importance of participating in a democracy by voting; however, what they never comment on, so it seems, is the content and nature of the democracy in question.

After all, the whole point in voting is not just to vote because democratically we are supposed to, but to put in power a political party that is going to advance the agenda of the people. And, if all the parties running for presidency are not interested in the interests of the people, surely, people have every right to use other tactics (apart from voting) to advance their interests. It is, among other things, that freedom to decide how one wants to participate and that freedom to choose which tactic (s) to use to get the attention of the powers that be that the notion of democracy

is based.

Social movements like the Landless People's Movement who have called for the boycotting of the elections saying "No Land! No Vote!" articulate the feelings of the impoverished and marginalised. I'm talking about the 40 percent that lives in poverty, and are landless. The ones who do the dirty, lowest paying jobs, while the privileged few who own everything enjoy the benefits of the free market and freedom to exploit.

That 40 percent might be silent and controllable for now because, perhaps, they feel defeated and hopeless – but it won't be long before they remember their old and effective ways of struggling; it won't be long before they join their angers together (9) and refuse and resist this madness.

### References:

1. State Of The Nation: South Africa 2003 – 2004, this is an annually published book. Information used taken from an article in the book: The land question in contemporary South Africa, page 330.
2. see my article: Double think in South Africa: <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=2&ItemID=4551>
3. A Publication of the Economic Development and Tourism Directorate, City of Cape Town: 2002/3
4. see my article: Wretched blacks of Cape Town, <http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2003-10/12majavu.cfm>
5. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, act 108 of 1996.
6. ThisDay, Thursday January 15 2004
7. State Of The Nation: South Africa 2003 – 2004, is an annually published book. Information used taken from an article in the book: The south Africans have arrived: Post-apartheid corporate expansion into Africa, page 376.
8. State Of The Nation: South Africa 2003 – 2004, Information used taken from an article in the book: The state of employment and unemployment in south Africa, page 158.
9. The idea of "joining angers" together is borrowed from a poem: "Memories Break", by Ben Okri.

## Haiti:

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ing becoming militarily involved. The U.S. is limiting its involvement in the crisis in Haiti, which is a small island country with no petroleum or other natural resources which the U.S. wants, to telling its citizens to leave and sending a 3-person military mission to protect the embassy.

CARICOM, the Community of Caribbean Nations, is attempting to negotiate an agreement, but as the violence increases, the prospects of agreement are becoming slimmer and slimmer.

A large part of the opposition is united in a coalition of trade unions, political parties and business associations known as the "group of 184". After the allegedly fraudulent 2000 elections, they boycotted the Congress and have refused to participate in any government initiatives. They are demanding Aristide's resignation and a transitional government composed of a nine-member council and led by a representative from the Supreme Court. They also refuse to participate in any elections until Aristide steps down. The group of 184 makes a point of distancing

themselves from the armed insurgents in the North.

Many of the leaders and participants in the uprising in the North were involved in the FRAPH, a right-wing paramilitary group that was behind much of the violence 1991 coup, and the rapes, killings, and torture that took place in the 1991-94 post-coup dictatorship. Joel Chaimberlain and Emmanuel Constant, in particular, are generally believed to be responsible for the majority of the 5,000 murders in the early 1990's. One of the main leaders, Andy Apaid, Jr., is a New York born U.S. citizen, and one of the main voices calling for violence.

The 1991 coup was a reaction to Haiti's transition to democracy, and Aristide's status as the first elected leader since the end of the "Duvalier dynasty." Haiti was ruled with an iron fist, first by Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier from 1956-1971, then by his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier from 1971-1986, in one of the most brutal dictatorships in the Americas. Pro-Duvalier Brigadier-General Raoul Cedras seized power in the 1991 coup, with the help of many of the leaders currently active in northern Haiti, triggering sanctions by the Organization of American

States and a military intervention by the U.S.

Aristide is steadfast in his insistence that he will not resign. He claims that his government is "defending democracy" from "armed drug traffickers." He has already survived three assassination attempts in addition to the 1991 coup and two coup attempts in 2001, and announced Friday in a speech praising the police who have died in the uprising that he, too, is ready to die for his country, if that's what it takes.

Having gained its independence from France in 1804, Haiti was the first Black-led republic. The current wave of protests is timed to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the independence, and the opposition is hoping to gain international support. With the exception of France (who is considering intervening on the other side), however, the international community has largely turned its back on Haiti.

### Haiti Update

So the problem with writing about something that is unfolding as I write, is that as soon as I click "save", the article is already outdated. Instead of completely rewrit-

ing the Haiti article the night before we go to press, I'm just going to write an update about what has happened in the past two days.

Several international organizations, from CARICOM to the U.N. got together and came up with a power-sharing agreement, and Aristide offered to accept it. The political opposition refuses to sign on to the agreement, and the armed rebels were not part of the negotiations.

At this point, Aristide is still intent on remaining in power, or at least partial power, and the political opposition won't budge on their insistence that he has to go. The armed rebels, who have nothing to do with the political opposition, are advancing on Port-au-Prince. They have already taken the second city, Cap-Haitien, burning and looting police stations as they went.

Port-au-Prince is preparing for the attack. The U.S. is sending 50 marines to protect the embassy, and armed gangs loyal to Aristide are roaming the streets looking for rebels. France, Germany, and the U.S. have all advised non-essential nationals to leave and Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said that "What we are seeing is a massacre developing."

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# A Wall as a Weapon

by Noam Chomsky  
February 23, 2004

It is a virtual reflex for governments to plead security concerns when they undertake any controversial action, often as a pretext for something else. Careful scrutiny is always in order. Israel's so-called security fence, which is the subject of hearings starting today at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, is a case in point.

Few would question Israel's right to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks like the one yesterday, even to build a security wall if that were an appropriate means. It is also clear where such a wall would be built if security were the guiding concern: inside Israel, within the internationally recognized border, the Green Line established after the

1948-49 war. The wall could then be as forbidding as the authorities chose: patrolled by the army on both sides, heavily mined, impenetrable. Such a wall would maximize security, and there would be no international protest or violation of international law.

This observation is well understood. While Britain supports America's opposition to The Hague hearings, its foreign minister, Jack Straw, has written that the wall is "unlawful." Another ministry official, who inspected the "security fence," said it should be on the Green Line or "indeed on the Israeli side of the line." A British parliamentary investigative commission also called for the wall to be built on Israeli land, condemning the barrier as part of a "deliberate" Israeli "strategy of bringing the population to heel."

What this wall is really doing is taking Palestinian lands. It is also - as the Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling has described Israel's war of "politicized" against the Palestinians - helping turn Palestinian communities into dungeons, next to which the Bantustans of South Africa look like symbols of freedom, sovereignty and self-determination.

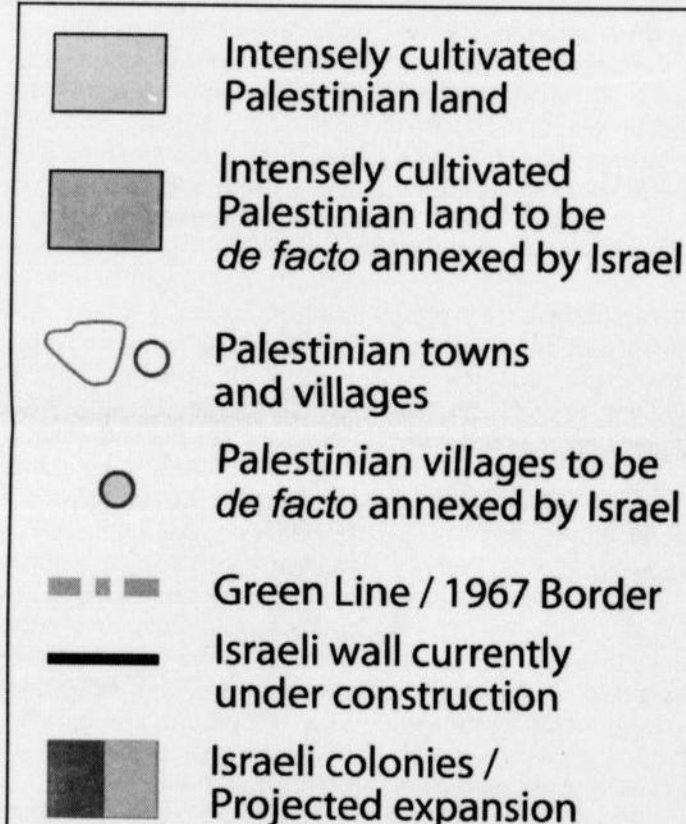
Even before construc-

tion of the barrier was under way, the United Nations estimated that Israeli barriers, infrastructure projects and settlements had created 50 disconnected Palestinian pockets in the West Bank. As the design of the wall was coming into view, the World Bank estimated that it might isolate 250,000 to 300,000 Palestinians, more than 10 percent of the population, and that it might effectively annex up to

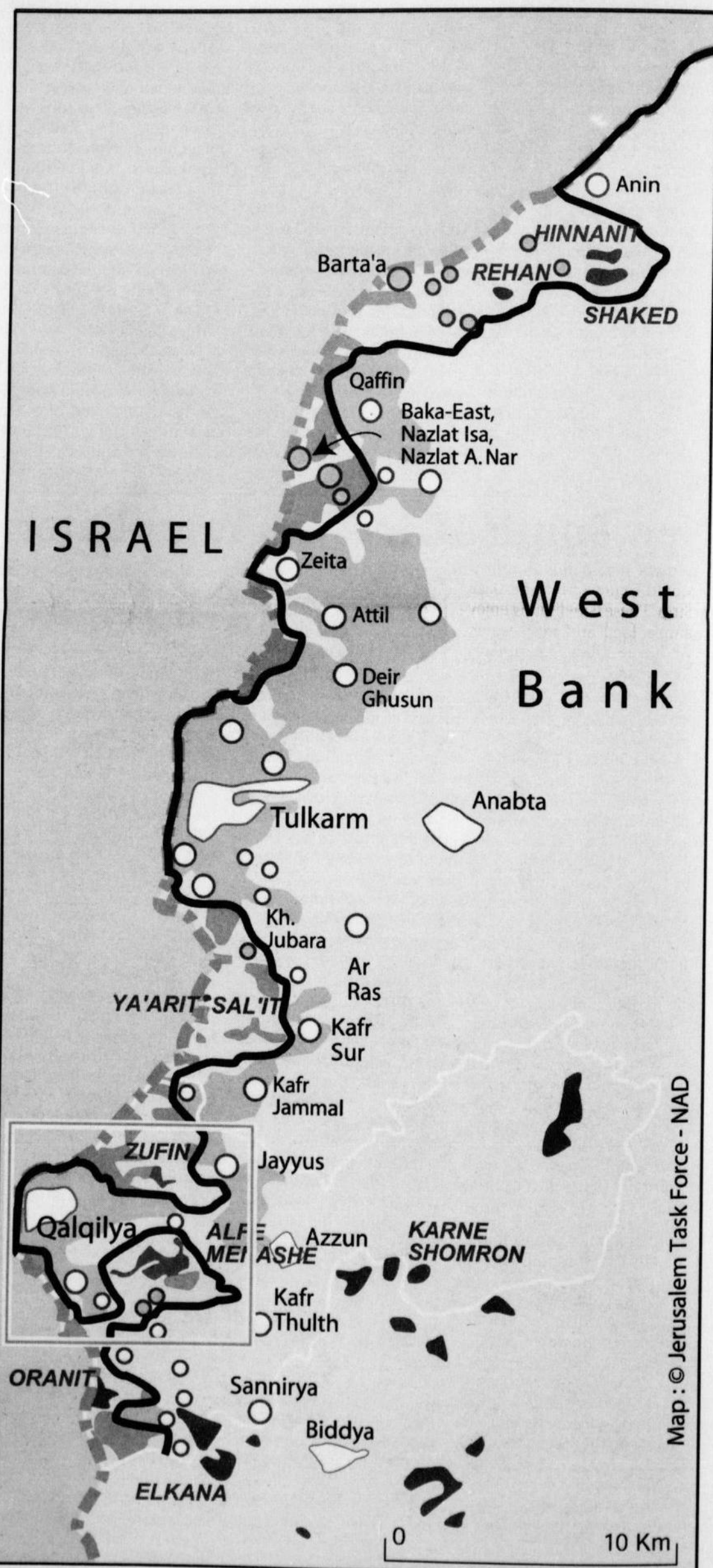
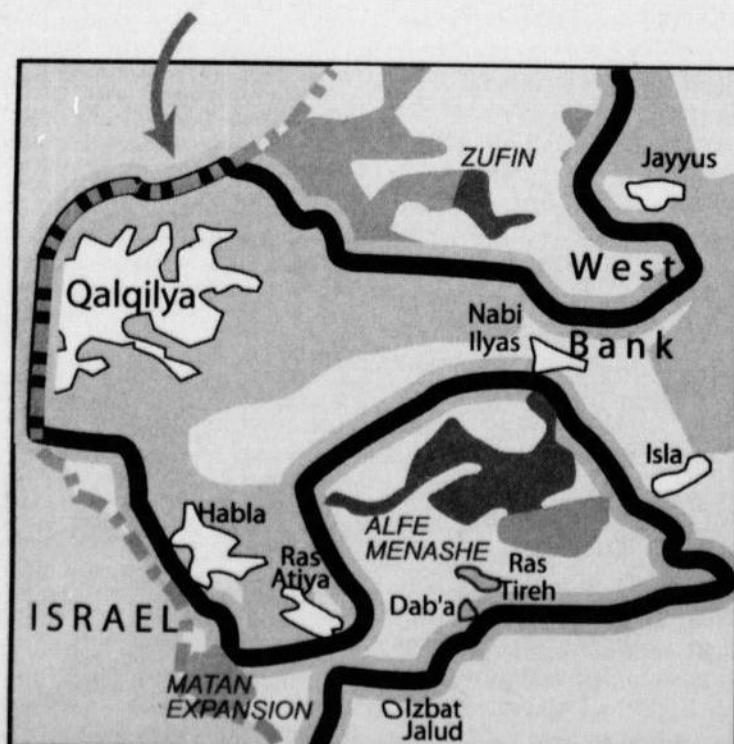
10 percent of West Bank land. And when the government of Ariel Sharon finally published its proposed map, it became clear that the wall would cut the West Bank into 16 isolated enclaves, confined to just 42 percent of the West Bank land that Mr. Sharon had previously said could be ceded to a Palestinian state.

The wall has already

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The Palestinian city of Qalqilya will be isolated by the wall and illegal Israeli colonies. Approximately 750 acres of Palestinian land will be de facto annexed by Israel.



## A Wall:

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claimed some of the most fertile lands of the West Bank. And, crucially, it extends Israel's control of critical water resources, which Israel and its settlers can appropriate as they choose, while the indigenous population often lacks water for drinking.

Palestinians in the seam between the wall and the Green Line will be permitted to apply for the right to live in their own homes; Israelis automatically have the right to use these lands. "Hiding behind security rationales and the seemingly neutral bureaucratic language of military orders is the gateway for expulsion," the Israeli journalist Amira Hass wrote in the daily Haaretz. "Drop by drop, unseen, not so many that it would be noticed internationally and shock public opinion." The same is true of the regular killings, terror and daily brutality and humiliation of the past 35 years of harsh occupation, while land and resources have been taken for settlers enticed by ample subsidies.

It also seems likely that Israel will transfer to the occupied West Bank the 7,500 settlers it said this month it would remove from the Gaza Strip. These Israelis now enjoy ample land and fresh water, while one million Palestinians barely survive, their meager water supplies virtually unusable. Gaza is a cage, and as the city of Rafah in the south is systematically demolished, residents may be blocked from any contact with Egypt and blockaded from the sea.

It is misleading to call these Israeli policies. They are American-Israeli policies - made possible by unremitting United States military, economic and diplomatic support of Israel. This has been true since 1971 when, with American support, Israel rejected a full

peace offer from Egypt, preferring expansion to security. In 1976, the United States vetoed a Security Council resolution calling for a two-state settlement in accord with an overwhelming international consensus. The two-state proposal has the support of a majority of Americans today, and could be enacted immediately if Washington wanted to do so.

At most, the Hague hearings will end in an advisory ruling that the wall is illegal. It will change nothing. Any real chance for a political settlement - and for decent lives for the people of the region - depends on the United States.

Noam Chomsky is a renowned professor of linguistics at MIT, and has authored over 30 books dissecting issues like U.S. interventionism in the developing world, and the propaganda role of corporate media.

## Middle East Timeline

By Stephen R. Shalom

The list below presents some specific incidents of U.S. policy in the Middle East. The list minimizes the grievances against the United States in the region because it excludes more generalized long-standing policies, such as U.S. backing for authoritarian regimes (arming Saudi Arabia, training the secret police in Iran under the Shah, providing arms and aid to Turkey as it ruthlessly attacked Kurdish villages, etc.). The list also excludes many actions of Israel in which the United States is indirectly implicated because of its military, diplomatic, and economic backing for Israel.

**1947-48:** U.S. backs Palestine partition plan. Israel established. U.S. declines to press Israel to allow expelled Palestinians to return.

**1949:** CIA backs military coup deposing elected government of Syria.<sup>1</sup>

**1953:** CIA helps overthrow the democratically-elected Mossadeq government in Iran (which had nationalized the British oil company) leading to a quarter-century of repressive and dictatorial rule by the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

**1956:** U.S. cuts off promised funding for Aswan Dam in Egypt after Egypt receives Eastern bloc arms.

**1956:** Israel, Britain, and France invade Egypt. U.S. does not support invasion, but the involvement of its NATO allies severely diminishes Washington's reputation in the region.

**1958:** U.S. troops land in Lebanon to preserve "stability".

**early 1960s:** U.S. unsuccessfully attempts assassination of Iraqi leader, Abdul Karim Qasim.<sup>2</sup>

**1963:** U.S. supports coup by Iraqi Ba'ath party (soon to be headed by Saddam Hussein) and reportedly gives them names of communists to murder, which they do with vigor.<sup>3</sup>

**1967-:** U.S. blocks any effort in the Security Council to enforce SC Resolution 242, calling for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 war.

**1970:** Civil war between Jordan and PLO. Israel and U.S. discuss intervening on side of Jordan if Syria backs PLO.

**1972:** U.S. blocks Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat's efforts to reach a peace agreement with Israel.

**1973:** Airlifted U.S. military aid enables Israel to turn the tide in war with Syria and Egypt.

**1973-75:** U.S. supports Kurdish rebels in Iraq. When Iraq reaches an agreement with Iraq in 1975 and seals the border,

of civilians, including Qaddafi's adopted daughter.<sup>4</sup>

**1982:** U.S. gives "green light" to Israeli invasion of Lebanon,<sup>5</sup> killing some 17 thousand civilians.<sup>6</sup> U.S. chooses not to invoke its laws prohibiting Israeli use of U.S. weapons except in self-defense. U.S. vetoes several Security Council resolutions condemning the invasion.

**1983:** U.S. troops sent to Lebanon as part of a multinational peacekeeping force; intervene on one side of a civil war, including bombardment by USS New Jersey. Withdraw after suicide bombing of marine barracks.

**1984:** U.S.-backed rebels in Afghanistan fire on civilian airliner.<sup>7</sup>

**1987-92:** U.S. arms used by Israel to repress first Palestinian Intifada. U.S. vetoes five Security Council resolutions condemning Israeli repression.

**1988:** Saddam Hussein kills many thousands of his own Kurdish population and uses chemical weapons against them. The U.S. increases its economic ties to Iraq.

**1988:** U.S. vetoes 3 Security Council resolutions condemning continuing Israeli occupation of and repression in Lebanon.

**1990-91:** U.S. rejects any diplomatic settlement of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (for example, rebuffing any attempt to link the two regional occupations, of Kuwait and of Palestine). U.S. leads international coalition in war against Iraq. Civilian infrastructure targeted.<sup>8</sup> To promote "stability" U.S. refuses to aid post-war uprisings by Shi'ites in the south and Kurds in the north, denying the rebels access to captured Iraqi weapons and refusing to prohibit Iraqi helicopter flights.<sup>9</sup>

**1991-:** Devastating economic sanctions are imposed on Iraq. U.S. and Britain block all attempts to lift them. Hundreds of thousands die. Though Security Council had stated that sanctions were to be lifted once Saddam Hussein's programs to develop weapons of mass destruction were ended, Washington makes it known that the sanctions would remain as long as Saddam remains in power. Sanctions in fact strengthen Saddam's position. Asked about the horrendous human consequences of the sanctions, Madeleine Albright (U.S. ambassador to the UN and later Secretary of State) declares that "the price is worth it."<sup>10</sup>

**1991-:** U.S. forces permanently based in Saudi Arabia.

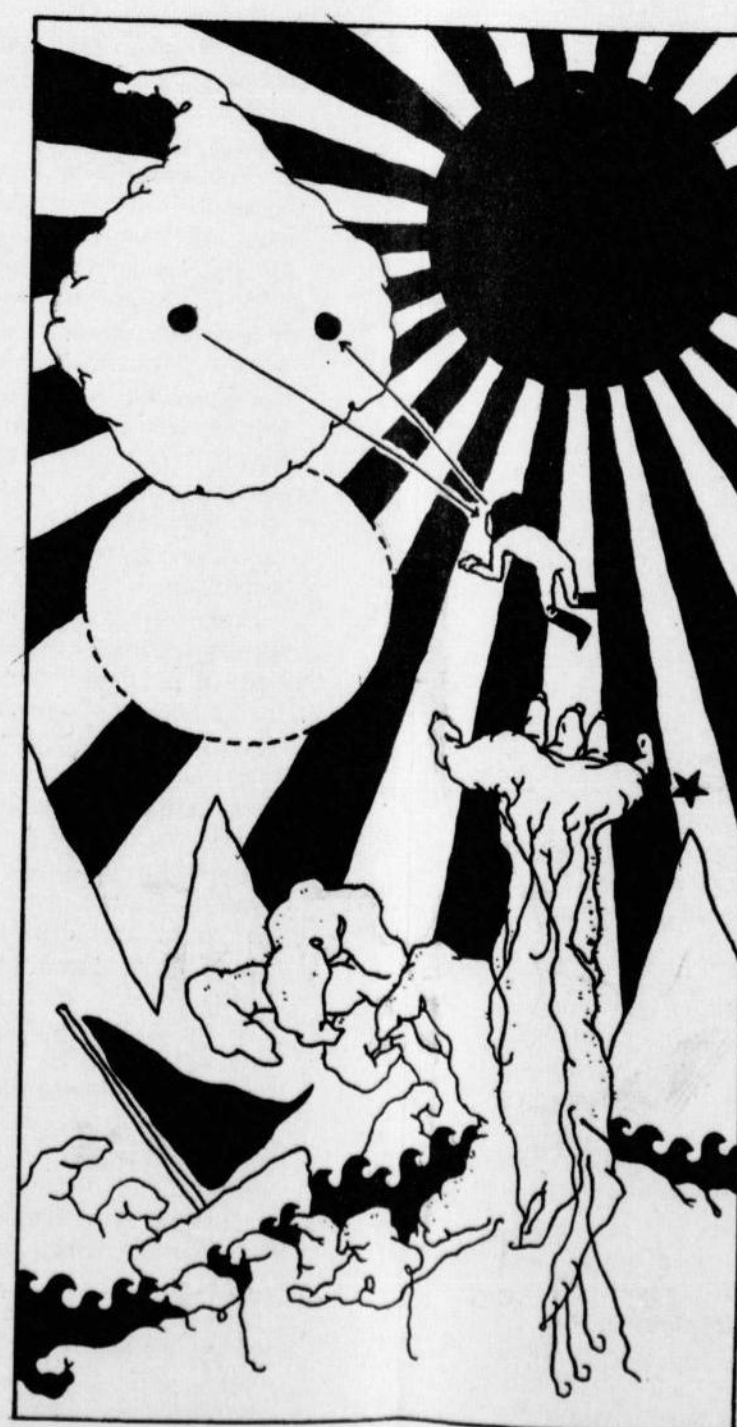
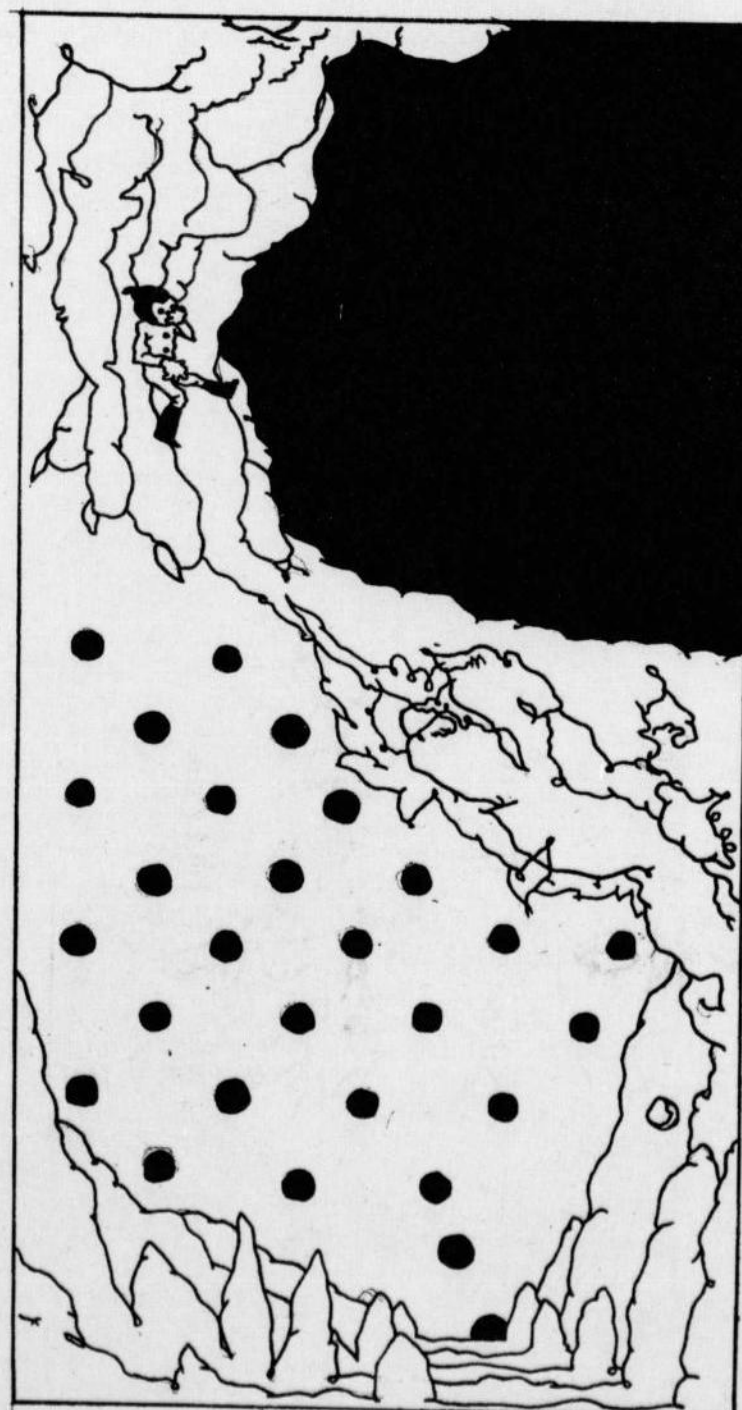
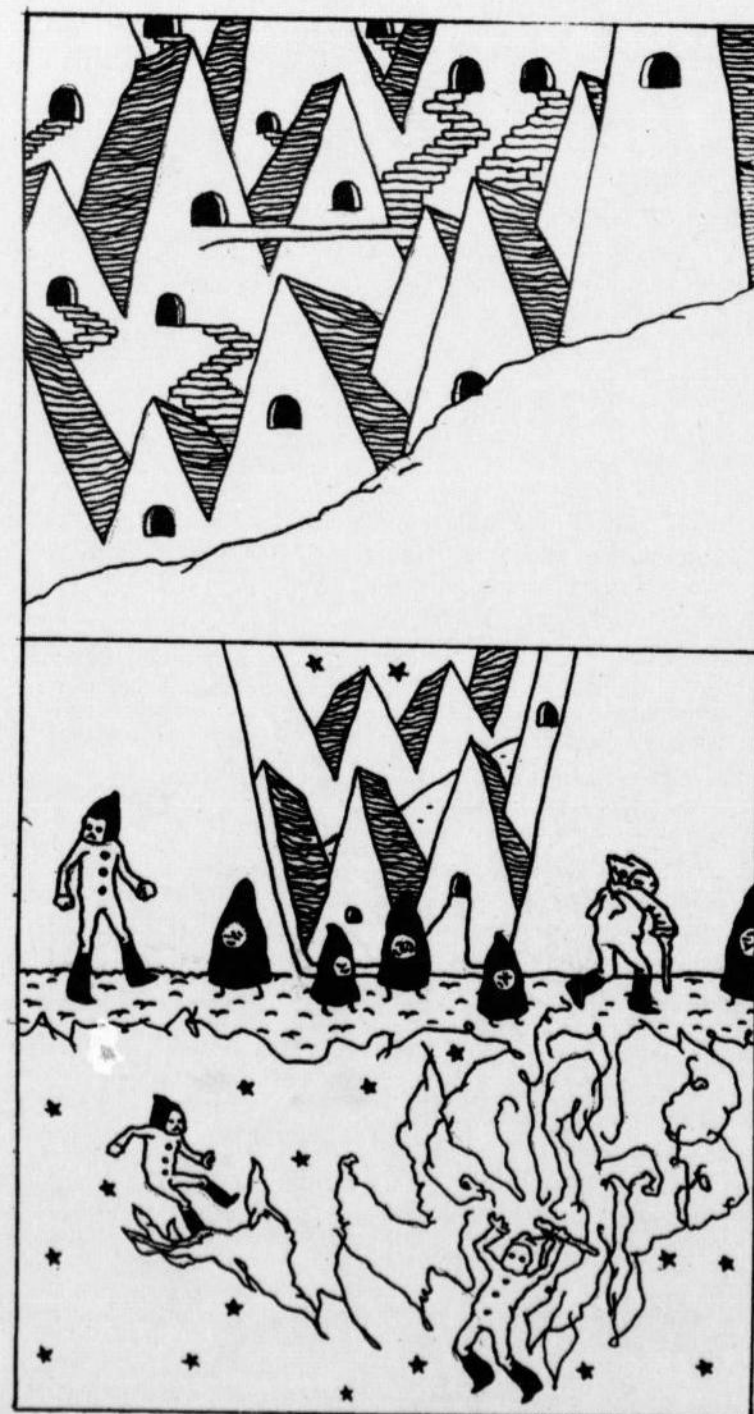
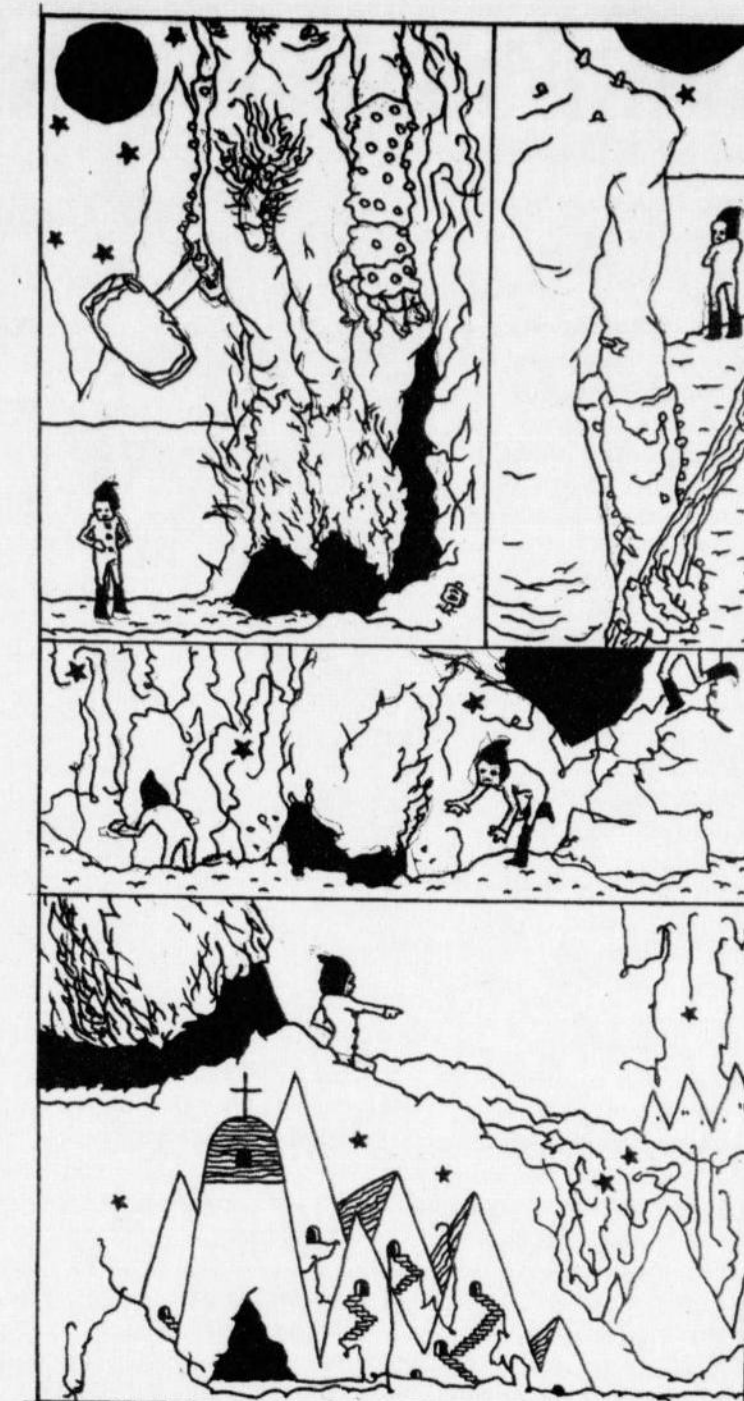
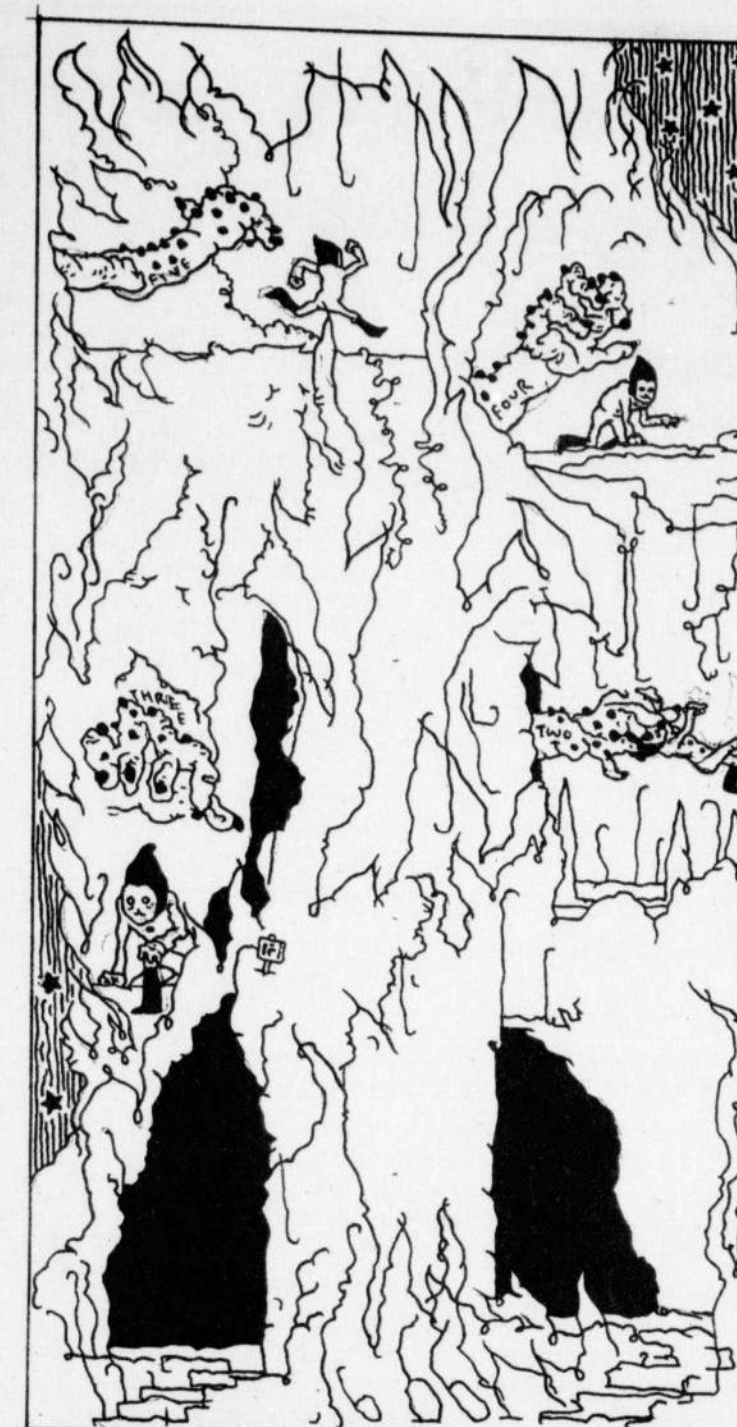
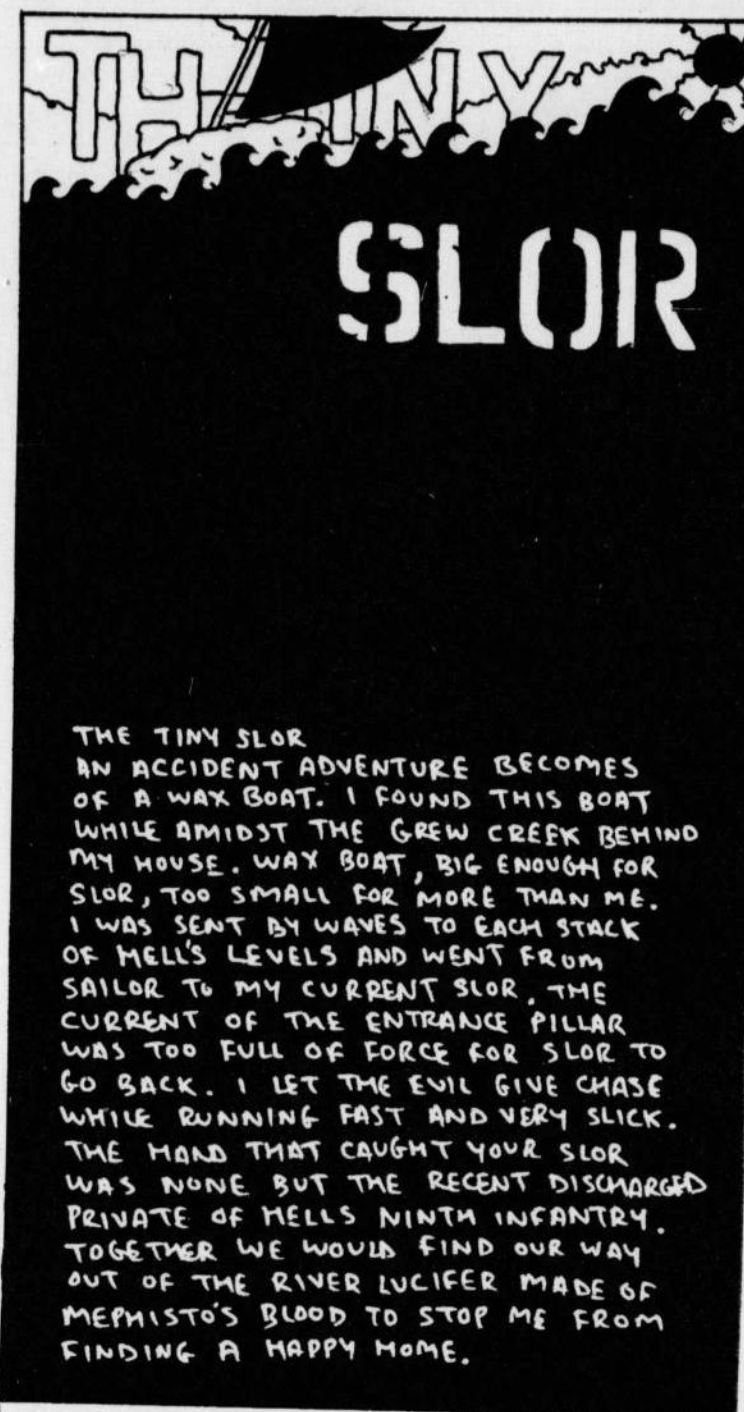
**1993-:** U.S. launches missile attack on Iraq, claiming self-defense against an alleged assassination attempt on former president Bush two months earlier.<sup>11</sup>

**1998:** U.S. and U.K. bomb Iraq over the issue of weapons inspections, even though Security Council is just then meeting to discuss the matter.

**1998:** U.S. destroys factory producing half of Sudan's pharmaceutical supply, claiming retaliation for attacks on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and that factory was involved in chemical warfare. Evidence for the chemical warfare charge widely disputed.<sup>12</sup>

**2000-:** Israel uses U.S. arms in attempt to crush Palestinian uprising, killing hundreds of civilians.

- Footnotes
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  2. Thomas Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA, New York: Knopf, 1979, p. 130.
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  4. U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Intelligence, 19 Jan. 1976 (Pike Report) in Village Voice, 16 Feb. 1976. The Pike Report attributes the quote only to a "senior official"; William Safire (Safire's Washington, New York: Times Books, 1980, p. 333) identifies the official as Kissinger.
  5. UN Doc. # S/11898, session # 1862. For a full list of U.S. vetoes in the Security Council on Middle East issues, along with full text of the draft resolutions, see the compilation by David Paul at <http://www.salam.org/policy/veto.html>.
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  13. Cockburn and Cockburn, Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein, chap. 1.
  14. Cockburn and Cockburn, Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein, chap. 5. Albright quote is from CBS News, 60 Minutes, 12 May 1996.
  15. On the dubious nature of the evidence, see Seymour Hersh, New Yorker, Nov. 1, 1993.
  16. See Seymour Hersh, New Yorker, Oct. 12, 1998.



FOR TARA AND TOBY  
I LOVE YOU

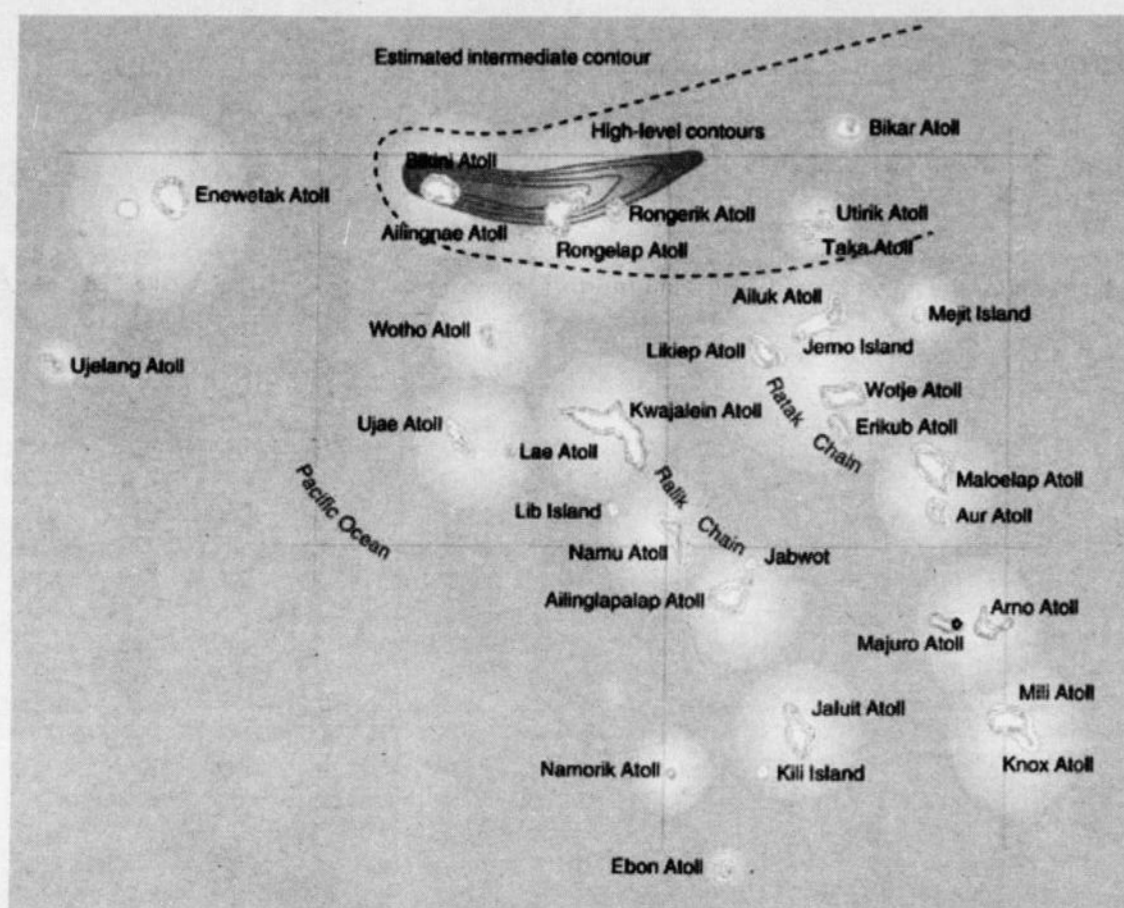
MIKEY IS AT [FORTRESS FOREST@YAHOO.COM](mailto:fortressforest@yahoo.com)

PS: SAILOR ISN'T FINISHED  
THIS IS A PREVIEW

# Bikini: 50 Years of Nuclear Exposure

by Nakagawa Hasami, Honda Masakazu, Hirako Yoshinori and Sadamatsu Shinjiro

On July 1, 1946, less than a year after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States resumed nuclear testing in the Pacific. In March, 1954 the US forced the 166 inhabitants of Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, part of the United Nations Trust Territory that was among the spoils of victory in world War II, to leave their home island. On July 1, 1954 it conducted the first full-scale test of a Hydrogen Bomb at Bikini. The blast is estimated at 15 megatons, that is the equivalent of 15 million tons of TNT, one thousand times as powerful as the bomb exploded at Hiroshima. The Japanese fishing boat Lucky Dragon No. 5, sailing well beyond the zone demarcated by US authorities for the test, was covered with white ashes, later recognized as radioactive coral dust. The next day all 23 crew members suffered from headache, nausea, diarrhea and other symptoms from exposure to radioactivity. The symptoms were more acute among inhabitants of Longelap Atoll, 180 kilometers East of Bikini and other atolls. On September 23,



The Republic of Marshall Islands consists of 34 atolls scattered over 1.3 million square kilometers and clustered in two main groups: the Ratak and the Ralik chains. The atolls consist of numerous coral reefs. Kwajalein is the largest atoll, and Majuro is the capital island. The dashed line and shaded areas near Bikini and Rongelap atolls show the fallout pattern from the Bravo Event.

the Lucky Dragon's chief radio operator died of jaundice, diagnosed as having been complicated by radioactivity. In Japan, the incident sparked a national petition campaign to

ban nuclear weapons led by a women's group in Sugunami Ward, Tokyo. The twenty million signatures that it collected within months provided a springboard for a national

and international anti-nuclear movement. In August 1955 the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs convened in Hiroshima, the first in a series of annual meet-

ings that became the center of the antinuclear movement. This series of articles, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Bikini test, records the fate of the crew members, the fishing communities that were their homes, and their impact on the subsequent treatment of atomic victims in Japan.

## I: A Fishing Master's Pride

Last May at Fujieda City in Shizuoka prefecture, the former "head of refrigeration," age 71, died of liver cancer. His job was to supervise freezing the fish that were caught on the boat. "In the speech at the funeral tomorrow, please do not mention the name of the boat, do not ever say that he was a crew member," the family said. At the wake, after showing his respect with palms together, Misaki Yoshio, 78, the former "head fisherman" of the Fifth Lucky Dragon Boat was told this.

Of the twenty-three crew members of the Lucky Dragon, which was exposed to radiation from the hydrogen bomb experiment by the United States on the Bikini atoll in the Marshall Islands, eleven people are alive. After half a century, more than half the crew is gone. Misaki and

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## Inc:

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Namara, Butler named names and exposed for whom the system works.

"I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested." Butler acknowledged that he'd spent most of his 33 years in the Marines as "a high class muscle man for Big Business, Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism."<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus did Butler simply and effectively expose a largely unknown truth—how the military serves the strategic interests of property in the corporate form.

Much more commonly known is the corrupt practice of war profiteering.

"...Only twenty-four at the (Civil) war's beginning, (J. Pierpont) Morgan perceived

from the first that wars were for the shrewd to profit from and poor to die in...He received a tip that a store of government-owned rifles had been condemned as defective and with the simplicity of genius he bought them from the government for \$17,500 on one day and sold them back to the government on the next for \$110,000...A Congressional committee investigating his little deal said of him and other hijacking profiteers, 'Worse than traitors are the men who, pretending loyalty to the flag, feast and fatten on the misfortunes of the nation.'<sup>[3]</sup>

Lest examples from yore lead one to believe such traditions are no longer observed, consider the case of Eagle-Picher Technologies Corp. The company produces sophisticated batteries to power the guidance systems of "smart" bombs. Workers claim they were ordered to cover up defects on millions of batteries—defects that would ultimately cause the guidance systems to fail.<sup>[4]</sup> How many Afghanis civilians were killed by bombs "guided" by defective Eagle-Picher Corp. batteries?

In Afghanistan as in every war, corporations<sup>[5]</sup> play a central role to protect their interests—whether those interests are the profits from waging war or the geostrategic spoils of war.

Forget for a moment the indictable war profiteers like J.P. Morgan and consider just one instance of how war wealth,

generated legally, empowers the few "inside the racket" to benefit economically and politically at the expense of the many. The du Pont Corporation will suffice.

Compared to some of its fellow racketeers, the du Pont Corporation's profits during WWI look downright patriotic. The company whose gunpowder saved the world for democracy saw its average annual pre-war profit jump from \$6,000,000 to nearly 10 times that amount during the war.

By the mid-1920's the du Pont family had bought nearly a quarter of all General Motors Corporation stock. Not only did this investment pay off handsomely during GM's successful campaign to destroy urban mass transit systems<sup>[6]</sup>, but who better than a du Pont to run President Eisenhower's Bureau of Public Roads and develop the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways along with Eisenhower Defense Secretary (and former GM President), Charles Wilson?

If war profits are invested this carefully, imagine how much planning goes into the geostrategic spoils of war? For a peek inside this game there are few better tour guides than President Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Having also served on President Reagan's Defense Department Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy,

Brzezinski is well-qualified to write *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*.<sup>[7]</sup> It's one of those books that begs the question, "why would anybody actually put this stuff in writing?" Brzezinski describes the Europe-Asia landmass as the key to global dominance. He asserts that the fall of the Soviet Union cleared the way for the U.S. to become the first non-Eurasian power to dominate this critical area, "...and America's global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained..."<sup>[8]</sup>

In 1977 he named the Central Asian "stans" as the next center of conflict for world domination, and in light of expected Asian economic growth, he called this area around the Caspian Sea "...infinitely more important as a potential economic prize: an enormous concentration of natural gas and oil reserves...dwarf[ing] those of Kuwait, the Gulf of Mexico, or the North Sea...in addition to important minerals, including gold."<sup>[9]</sup>

The former member of Reagan's National Security Council reasoned: "It follows that America's primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space and that the global community has unhindered financial and economic access to it."<sup>[10]</sup>

He further deduced: "That puts a premium on maneuver and manipulation in order to prevent the emergence of a hostile coalition that could eventually seek to challenge America's primacy."<sup>[11]</sup> Leaving nothing to doubt, he clarified "...To put it in a terminology that harkens back to the more brutal age of ancient empires, the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep (satellites) pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together."<sup>[12]</sup>

For those foolish enough to imagine an Earth not ruled by the U.S., he warns that "America's withdrawal from the world—or because of the sudden emergence of a successful rival—would produce massive international instability. It would prompt global anarchy."<sup>[13]</sup>

Brzezinski warns to "keep the barbarians from coming together," and predicts "global anarchy" if U.S. dominance is threatened. The cold warrior's language, while picturesque, is not as precise as that used by Thomas Friedman, foreign affairs columnist for the NY Times. "Markets function and flourish only when property rights are secure and can be enforced...And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technolo-

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# Attacks on civil liberties: past and present

As disconcerting as the current attacks on civil liberties and freedom are, the history of the United States democracy is a history of struggle for the rights promised in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution. Rights have been consistently denied to minority groups, based on their race, ethnicity, gender, or political ideology. Radical organizations and political activists have to deal with a daunting combination of local, state, and federal repression. Not only has history repeatedly illustrated a grotesque and violent history of government repression through the denial of civil liberties, but these restrictions have yet to make the United States a safer country, or expose an attempt to overthrow democracy.

The first significant attack on civil liberties during the 20th century came during the World War I paranoia. The 1917 Espionage Act made it a crime to speak out against the government in a time of war, generating its own war against political dissent and radical organizations. The Espionage Act attacked radicals, socialists, and anarchists, most notably the Industrial Worker's of the World (IWW) and the Socialist Party. According to Howard Zinn<sup>1</sup>, the IWW was

a militant, yet courageous organization composed of anarchists, socialists and labor unionists, who attempted to create a labor union in which anyone, regardless of their profession, race, sex, or trade-skills could and should join. As a result, Zinn writes, "they were attacked with all the weapons the system could put together: the newspapers, the courts, the police, the army, mob violence. Local authorities passed laws to stop them from speaking" (Zinn, 332). The police jailed the IWW for anything: speaking out against the government and the war, organizing labor strikes, and their use of direct action as a means of protest, to name a few. Zinn adds that the government used World War I as a way of destroying the IWW. In September 1917, the Department of Justice agents raided forty-eight IWW meeting halls, seizing any evidence they could use as convictions. As a result, '01 members were convicted under the Espionage Act, receiving up to twenty-five year prison sentences.

History repeated itself during World War II. The Smith Act of 1940 made it a crime to advocate or organize efforts towards "the overthrow or destruction of any government

in the United States by force or violence."<sup>2</sup> As a result of the Smith Act, coupled by Senator Joseph McCarthy's anticommunist rhetoric, the Communist Party, particularly Communist leaders, were arrested, and jailed; and many non-politically active citizens, were tried or in fear of being tried as Communists themselves. Howard Zinn points out that it was the liberals, not the Republicans, that passed the anticommunist legislation. He argues that this was a result of the fear that liberalism would be construed as Communism, at the height of the anticommunist hysteria. Regardless, the Smith Act and McCarthyism was analogous to the Espionage Act of the First World War.

In 1956, a secret, covert FBI counter-intelligence program, COINTELPRO, was formed to attack the First Amendment rights of radical political organizations. Originally formed to spy on the Communist Party, COINTELPRO also attacked the Socialist Workers Party, the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, the White Supremacist Movement, the New Left, and the Women's Liberation Movement. However, the Black Panther Party and American Indian Movement were subjected to the

most extreme levels of government repression.

With the decline of lynching coupled with the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1965, ideological racism was made less

overt, and judicial racism was attempting at reform. However, with the emergence of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of the 1960's, fed-

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eight other former crew members attended the wake and funeral, but hardly anything was said of the experience.

Yakitsu fishing port in Shizuoka, which was known as the leading fishing base in East Asia, received a serious blow from the return of the Lucky Dragon with deadly ashes on the deck. All the boats that returned from the vicinity of the Marshall Islands were examined, and the radiated tuna was destroyed.

"We caused trouble to Yakitsu," Misaki said, "but it is difficult for the crew members to tell the facts because of their families."

Misaki began to talk actively about the radiation experience last year. Six years older than the captain, Misaki chose the route for fishing as the virtual leader. He also made the decision to go near the Bikini atoll.

"Wild people who operated unreasonably in a dangerous area, and didn't bother to contact Yakitsu"... even now this kind of critical gaze is directed toward them.

According to Misaki, on March 1, 1954, about one month after leaving Yakitsu, in the Midway Sea, which had been the planned fishing area, an accident occurred in which the fishing longline was cut. Since the catch was small, they went near the Marshall

Islands to find a new fishing area for subsequent voyages.

Before dawn the waves were calm, and he calculated the boat's location using Antares, the alpha star of the Scorpion constellation. He was on deck when there was a flash.

With no sound, it turned bright yellow, then reddish. A little less than nine minutes later, a blast and a shock assaulted us.

He knew vaguely that Bikini was a nuclear test site. He wanted to get away quickly, but confusion reigned. So he turned the boat in a circle and calmed the crew. Ashes fell like cotton cake and accumulated on the deck. Some crew members tried to taste it.

"Our operation was nothing unreasonable. We encountered the nuclear test while looking for a new fishing area. We then made a desperate effort to return."

Then why didn't he telegram reporting the urgent situation for fourteen days until they arrived at the port?

"Earlier, we had been searched by local forces at sea near Indonesia. We were forced to moor and our wireless message was tapped. So we feared what would happen if we were heard by the United States and checked by them."

According to the boat's fishing diary, the location of the Lucky Dragon at the time of the radiation was North latitude 11 degrees 55 and East longitude 166 degrees 35. It was approximately 160 kilo-

meters east of the center of Bikini. It was clearly outside the off limit area for the nuclear test which the United States had announced and the Japanese Marine Security reprinted as a warning for the voyage route.

Right after their return to the country, there were voices criticizing the crew members who were hospitalized as "going out to have a good time while still carrying deadly ashes" and as "big drinkers". Misaki says, from his experience of directing group life within a narrow boat, "At sea, fishermen are sitting next to death. We cannot live unless we are disciplined. Those criticisms hurt the pride of the seamen."

Misaki lives about 1.5 kilometers south of Yakitsu. Many former crew members left the area, but he remained, running a food shop and what not. While being interviewed, a few times he was at a loss for words.

"I think I will talk for the sake of the honor of the fishermen."

The Bikini Victims. In the Cold War nuclear race, on March 1, 1954, the United States tested a large hydrogen bomb at Bikini, despite the fact that the wind was blowing toward Longelap atoll, outside the danger zone. Therefore, the Bikini islanders and many Japanese boats, including the Lucky Dragon in the sea nearby, were directly exposed to radiation from

the "deadly ashes". In Japan, people started collecting signatures for a petition to ban hydrogen bombs and this led to an anti-H-bomb gathering at Hiroshima.

## II: Muroto: "Bathing in the ashes, we cannot live long"

In Sukumo city, Kochi prefecture in southwest Shikoku, there is a fishing village named Naigai no ura. Twenty percent of residents among the 120 households are women who are living alone. Many of the men who died between their forties and sixties were exposed to the radiation at the nuclear test while fishing for tuna in the Pacific. For a little over nine months after the Bikini incident in March 1954, at major ports, the Japanese government continued to test boats that returned from the sea near the Marshall Islands for radiation. The government made 992 boats discard radiated fish in this period. One third of these belonged to Kochi prefecture.

Like the Lucky Dragon, tuna boats that carried men from throughout the prefecture, including Naigai no ura, were fishing in the area of the Marshalls. These radiated boats bathed in the rain and sea water that were polluted by radiation not only by the test of March 1, 1954 but also by the six hydrogen bomb tests that were conducted that spring.

The 72 tone Shinsei maru carried 7 people from Naigai no ura. Six of the seven died of cancer etc. including three who died in their fifties.

Okamoto Toyoko, 76, who has been living alone for the last five years, says "If a man goes out to fish for tuna, the woman becomes single."

Kiyomi, her husband, was a deck hand on a tuna boat between 1949 and 1970. He was healthy until he started fishing, but several years after he left the boat he started to commute to a hospital. In the summer of 1999, he collapsed and died.

"Because I bathed in the Bikini ashes, I won't live long." This was his habitual expression while he lived.

Yamashita Yukio, a former deck hand who witnessed the nuclear flash on the Shinsei maru, went to sea for the first time when he was 18. He continued fishing for seven years.

"I don't remember the time, but while working I saw the nuclear test which was like an evening glow. The ashes fell. Ashes are scary, so I quickly took shelter in a cabin."

At the outskirts of Naigai no ura is the tombstone of a young man who was exposed to radiation on a different fishing boat.

He encountered Nagasaki bombing in his teens, and in his twenties he encountered the Bikini H-bomb test. After these two nuclear disas-

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gies to flourish is called the US Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps." [14]

With a Silicon Valley reference, Friedman updates General Butler's "I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests..." comment. But updates aside, oil retains its century-old rating as the imperial standard—with now Afghanistan at center stage. And UNOCAL Corp. for one does not hesitate to demand that Afghanistan be made safe for American oil interests. "From the outset, we have made it clear that construction of our proposed (\$2.5 billion Afghanistan) pipeline cannot begin until a recognized government is in place that has the confidence of governments, lenders and our company. UNOCAL envisions the creation of a Central Asian Oil Pipeline Consortium...that will utilize and gather oil from existing pipeline infrastructure in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia." [15]

Smedley Butler learned that in war "nations acquire additional territory if they are victorious. They just take it." With today's popularity of corporate leasing programs, getting the use of additional territory—call it property—can be more profitable than actually acquiring it. But the end result is the same. "This newly acquired territory is promptly exploited by the few—the self-same few—who wrung dollars out of blood in the war. The general public shoulders the bill."

A modicum of historical perspective explains why America's New and Improved War is not a surprise. It's not just oil. It's not just acquiring territory or the use of territory. It's property and property rights consistently trumping human rights. The names change. The song has

remained the same throughout our history.

For instance, check out a few lines of our Constitution: Article 4, Section 2. Imbedded into the most fundamental law of our land is the duty to return property—in the form of slaves and indentured servants—to its owners. Or read Article 1, Section 10, the Contracts Clause. According to Peter Kellman, "The meaning is clear: the obligation of the government, as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution, to promote the 'general welfare' is secondary to the private law, the law of contracts." [16] Or ask yourself why First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and assembly do not apply when you're at work? Or why corporations have more free speech rights than people?

Try this at home. Make your own list of how our world would look if America was a functioning democracy, actually governed by "we the people," if human rights trumped property rights; if the vast decency, wisdom and compassion of the American people and not the interests of the propertied elite guided our foreign and domestic policies.

Here are a few things I'd put on my roster:

- We wouldn't be bombing one of the poorest nations on earth, killing thousands of civilians who had absolutely nothing to do with the inexcusable attacks of September 11.

- General Motors Corp. would not be allowed to replace mass transit systems with oil-addicted highways and automobiles.

- Representatives from UNOCAL and other corporations would not be able to buy their way into congressional offices and write legislation.

Not only could we generate a stunning agenda, we can actually begin making some fundamental improvements once we start finding ways to make the peace movement a

democracy movement, and the environmental movement a democracy movement, and the labor movement a democracy movement, and...  
You get the picture.

[1] Vanessa Gezari, Cold, Despair Envelope Refugees, (Toledo Blade, November 4, 2001)

[2] Smedley Butler, War is a Racket, 1935. (Gainesville: Crisis Press, 1995)

[3] Boyer and Morais, Labor's Untold Story. (Pittsburgh: UE Press, 1953) p. 19

[4] CBS News, December 6, 2001

[5] In the modern era corporations play a central role but pre-dating corporations, the propertied elite were the ones on the "inside" of the racket. Have you ever examined close-up details of the suits of armor worn by feudal lords—the finely-tooled, exquisitely-jointed steel produced by arms manufacturers of the 14th Century? Even then, the cream of technology and wealth went into weaponry.

[6] Taken for a Ride, (New Day Films, 1996)

[7] Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostategic Imperatives, (NY: HarperCollins, 1997)

[8] Ibid pp. xiii-xiv

[9] Ibid pp. 124-25

[10] Ibid p. 148

[11] Ibid p. 198

[12] Ibid p. 40

[13] Ibid p. 30

[14] Thomas L. Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization, (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), p. 373

[15] Testimony by John J. Maresca Vice President, International Relations UNOCAL Corporation, to the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, February 12, 1998. [http://www.house.gov/international\\_relations/105th/ap/wasap212982.htm](http://www.house.gov/international_relations/105th/ap/wasap212982.htm)

[16] Peter Kellman, Building Unions: Past, Present and Future, (Croton-on-Hudson: Apex Press, 2001), p. 15

# Bikini:

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ters, he took his own life in the summer of 1960. He was twenty nine.

The inscription on his tomb reads "Exposed to radiation in Nagasaki, twice exposed to radiation in Bikini." A poem that he composed, Longing for Home, is inscribed.

"I walk to the sea where little waves foam just as if I'm committing suicide."

The U.S. nuclear experiments in the two Marshall Islands atolls of Bikini and Eniwetok continued from 1946 to 1958. There were 67 tests in all. The total scale of the blasts was the equivalent of 7,000 Hiroshima-type bombs. The number of affected boats and the health damage to their crews during the test period remains unclarified.

Now in Naigai no ura, students of the local self-study circle called the Hata High School Seminar are conducting interviews with the former crew members of the Bikini fishing boats.

For seven years starting in 1985, the seminar's senior members, along with their teacher-advisor, followed affected boats and made clear the situation of this twice-radiated young man. This became a documentary film that was much discussed.

Since last fall, students have again begun following affected boats and conducting interviews.

Yamashita Masatoshi, 59, former high school teacher of Sukumo city, who has served as advisor to the seminar from the beginning, has also been visiting Naigai no ura frequently.

"Former crew members whom we were able to interview died one by one within a little over ten years when we had stopped surveying and we did not have much time for follow up investigation."

Radiation-polluted tuna. In response to the Bikini incident, starting on March 18, 1954, the government required tuna fishing boats to check radiation at the ports of Shioyama, Tokyo, Yakitsu, Misaki, and Shimizu. Measuring at a distance of 10 centimeters from the fish, they discarded those with more than 100 geiger counts per minute. Later they checked radiation at 13 other ports including Osaka and Kochi prefectures. In all, 500 tons of fish was discarded. In the midst of the spreading voices asking for prohibition of atomic and hydrogen bombs, the government stopped checking at the end of the year.

Taira returned to Nagasaki prefecture, his home. He had diarrhea, liver malfunction, chronic inflammation of the intestines. Even after returning as a crew member, there was repeated hospitalization. He retired in 1972. When payment that continued until age sixty under the insurance law was terminated, he was left to live on his pension and income from mandarin oranges and vegetable that he grew.

Is there no medical relief from anywhere?

In summer 1975, he applied to the town and the prefecture for an hibakusha health handbook, but he was turned down on the ground that "the law pertaining to hibakusha applies only to victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

Taira died in 1986 at the age of 71. The voice of her husband, who said "we are the same hibakusha," does not leave the ear of his wife, Shimi, 81.

Ironically, it was the Bikini Incident that initially promoted the establishment of

123. This is the number of fishermen who, besides the

crew members of The Lucky Dragon, received funds for treatment. In April 1955, one year after the Lucky Dragon incident, the Japanese cabinet determined the distribution of medical relief funds for crew members suspected of having acute radiation disease using compensation funds provided by the U.S.

The compensation amounted to 605,000 yen for 123 people. In addition, 37 people received funds for injury and disease as compensation for being unable to work. The total amount was 1,470,000 yen.

One of them, Taira Mitsuyoshi, was the helmsman of the Yahiko maru, a cargo boat owned by Itaya Shipping, whose main office was in Otaru, Hokkaido.

The boat carried to Japan phosphate rock from Makatea Island near Tahiti in the Pacific. Around the time that the U.S. conducted six tests around Bikini in March 1954, this boat made two trips about 1,200 kilometers North of the Bikini atoll.

Yamamoto Kin'ya, 82, who had served as a ship doctor, warned the crew not to bathe in the sea, however, "I could not really stop the crew members, who were covered with sweat."

After returning to Japan, Taira and 47 crew members were examined and six were hospitalized in the Okayama University-affiliated hospital for three weeks to one month. The result of the examination was "Suspicion of decreasing white cells due to radiation."

At that time, the Ministry of Health stated their view that "Even when the decrease in white cells is caused by the H-bomb tests, that can be the basis for compensation." Taira and others received insurance benefits.

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# Liberties:

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eral, state, and local government repression took on a new method of silencing political dissent. COINTELPRO was headed by J. Edgar Hoover and aimed to "exploit all avenues of creating...dissension within the ranks of the BPP" and that "recipient offices are instructed to submit imaginative and hard-hitting counter-intelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP". These measures included shutting down community programs, house and office raids, wire taps, surveillance, infiltration, framing, murder, and co-optation.

Furthermore, federal police worked with local agents using infiltrators to sow internal dissent within the movements. On the Pine Ridge reservation, in South Dakota, the federal government successfully pitted the Goon (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) squads, which were the local American-Indian government and law enforcement, against members of their own race, the AIM activists. Between 1973 and 1976 gun battles killed at least sixty-nine individuals, as AIM members fought to liberate the territory, under the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, in chapter 4 of *Agents of Repression*, comment, "federal interest in fostering such a situation lay in the probability that it would suppress and isolate... if not destroy outright... AIM" (Churchill, Vander Wall, 128).

The loss of civil liberties was again initiated by a new wave of government repression, as

a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and Pentagon in Washington DC. President George W. Bush not only declared a war on terrorism, but also a war on the citizens of the United States. This domestic war took on the form of the 2001 USA PATRIOT Act and aimed at destroying the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 14th Amendments for U.S. non-citizens, as well as activists and any other individuals or groups the government considers to be "domestic terrorists."

Contemporary terrorism is an ambiguous term that can reference almost any act of violence, coercion, or political dissent against any "noncombatant" whether it be actual civilians or just property damage. In 1986, far before the September 11 attack, Noam Chomsky defines terrorism as a process of "us" versus "them." However, while he references "them" to mean other states or marginal groups outside of the U.S. inflicting "retail terrorism" (90) against U.S. noncombatants, the last two decades have illustrated terrorism to mean any actions of individuals, groups, or states, including domestic cases, that the U.S. government chooses to deem as a "terrorist" activity.

Nancy Chang's *Silencing Political Dissent*, criticizes the "domestic anti-terrorism measures" (pg. 13), in light of the September 11 attacks, and points out how these measures have undermined the civil liberties of both non-citizens and citizens alike. She is particularly concerned with the 2001 USA PATRIOT Act and its ambiguous addition of

of deal to make the law pass quickly, leading the ruling party to compromise."

The Atomic Bomb Medical Relief Law passed in March 1957 continued to exclude the victims of the Bikini tests.

The examination group of Bikini hydrogen bomb tests of Kochi prefecture, which followed the Yahiko maru and other boats in the late 1980s, places importance on the fact that "The area declared dangerous was enlarged after the Lucky Dragon encountered the ashes. The series of H-bomb tests spread damage to areas beyond even the enlarged area."

Half a century after the incident the same survey group was reformed, and as early as next month they will propose that the prefectural governor call on the country to extend the victim compensation law to the victims of nuclear tests.

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Translated for Japan Focus by Kyoko Selden.

# Bikini:

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the atomic medical relief law. Demand for medical care for hibakusha, which had previously been ignored by the public, came to be supported and momentum for the bill rose.

Nakajima Tatsuni, 76, a Tokyo representative of the Citizens Committee for Hibakusha Residing in South Korea, obtained a memo from the legal office of the Upper House of the Diet, recording the process of establishing the compensation law.

In August 1956, Yamashita Yoshinobu, a socialist member of the upper house from Hiroshima, conveyed orally the contents of a private draft of a memo to the legislative bureau.

In this draft, not just Hiroshima and Nagasaki hibakusha, but those "designated for relief" included victims of all atomic tests in the past and the future. However, within the month, the passage about atomic tests was deleted.

Nakajima assumes "Perhaps there was some kind

the crime, "domestic terrorism." She argues that the USA PATRIOT Act "stands out as radical in the degree to which it sacrifices our political freedoms in the name of national security and consolidates new powers in the executive branch" (Chang, 43-44). She criticizes the USA PATRIOT Act as justifying undemocratic actions by the government against its own civilians. This is a result of the Patriot Act's new definition of "domestic terrorism," which denies individuals the right to freedom of speech and political association, allows the government to increase their surveillance of individuals or organizations, and violates non-citizen rights of due process if their political activities coincide with the new definition of terrorist activities (Chang, 46). Not only this, but she points out that with these newfound government powers, out of the 2,000 Muslims detained under the Bush administration, the only one indicted for a crime related to September 11, Zacarias Moussaoui, was arrested before the attacks. However, despite this fact, the governmental administration still chooses to implement the USA PATRIOT Act, and has drafted a second USA PATRIOT Act, to be implemented in 2005 if passed.

According to Nancy Chang, "environmental activists, antiglobalization activists... who use direct action to further their political agendas are particularly vulnerable to prosecution as 'domestic terrorists'" (Chang, 45). This is a result of the fact that "domestic terrorism," "threatens to criminalize protest activities and stifle dissent" (Chang, 13). Direct action and civil disobedience, which were utilized by the IWW and sixties activists, and have resulted in thousands of arrests throughout the last decade, have now been attacked as terrorist activities under the new Bush administration. Under the USA PATRIOT Act, direct action and civil disobedience have transitioned from a non-violent tactical activism strategy, including such actions as sit-ins, lock-downs, street or building blockades, and some acts of non-violent property damage, to a "domestic terrorism" strategy. This is not a result of changes in the tactics utilized in direct action and civil disobedience, but rather, a change in attitudes by the current government administration, and thus, another method utilized by the government to silence political opposition. This has also generated the recent interest in the controversial term, "eco-terrorism."

The FBI's interest in monitoring "political activity" has culminated not only in investigations against foreign activist groups, but domestic ones as well. They exemplify the case of Earth First! Not only was Earth First! attacked

as a result of their reliance on direct action tactics aimed at environmental concerns, predominately deforestation, but they were the first group referred to as "eco-terrorists." Eco-terrorism, or environmental terrorism, applies the terrorist jurisdiction of the "use of violence... for social/political ends... targeting the innocent", yet defines the "social/political ends" as environmentalism. Again, the ambiguity of what constitutes "violence" has resulted in individuals jailed or arrested as eco-terrorists for solely inflicting property damage. In fact, almost all groups and individuals targeted as "eco-terrorists" have never once physically harmed a single person. Not only has the ambiguity of the term "terrorism" resulted in activities, which by no means physically harm individuals, being considered terrorism, but, as Nancy Chang points out, this ambiguity also allows local and federal law enforcement agents to additionally disrupt the activities of political activists through covert investigations and surveillance.

Though the FBI's COINTELPRO was exposed and thus ended in the 1970's, the actions undertaken post-September 11 by the FBI parallels actions during the sixties. 20-year old African-American Los Angeles activist Sherman Austin, webmaster of the radical, politically-informative website: [www.raisethefist.com](http://www.raisethefist.com), was arrested and sentenced on August 3, 2003, to one year in a federal prison. He was the first individual ever to be charged with felony 18 U.S.C. 842 (p)(2)(A):

to distribute by any means information pertaining to, in whole or in part, the manufacture or use of an explosive, destructive device, or weapon of mass destruction, with the intent that the teaching, demonstration, or information be used for, or in furtherance of, an activity that constitutes a Federal crime of violence.

California Senator Diane Feinstein, as part of the 1996 Anti-terrorism Act, pushed this charge into law. Sherman was tried and convicted as a result of a post made by an anonymous individual on the website's message board, which had a link to the Reclaim Guide: a pamphlet which details homemade bombs. This was a convenient excuse to single out a radical activist, and use him to make an example out of him to discourage political dissent. Similar books, such as the Anarchist Cookbook, which also details bomb-making, can still be purchased on the internet or in bookstores, and similar information can be found free online, without any fear of reprisal.

Shortly after Austin was sentenced, the FBI, again under U.S. penal code 842(p) (2) (a) raided a home in San Diego. This was an attempt by

the FBI to seize a videotape containing footage of environmental activist Rod Coronado, who was asked to speak at a San Diego teach-in on animal-rights. The investigation was prompted when an individual in the crowd asked Coronado how to make an incendiary device. What is most disturbing about this case is, though the victims of the house raid did videotape part of Coronado's speech, they left before even hearing the question about incendiary devices. This activist responded to this infringement of his basic civil liberties: "It seems like the intent is to silence political activists through intimidation. The worst part is not when the FBI just comes into your house, but that they're probably listening to your phone calls, following you around." 3

The instances of this FBI raid and Austin's conviction invoke memories of past civil liberties violations. These two cases parallel the COINTELPRO raids, infiltrations, and surveillance of the Black Panther Party in the 1960's. The ambiguity of the San Diego raid; whether it was an activist or an undercover law enforcement agent who asked the incendiary device question, how the FBI knew about it, and knew that there was video footage, implies that both the local and federal government utilized covert infiltration.

Howard Zinn offers in his foreword of Nancy Chang's *Silencing Political Dissent*: "the juggernaut of war crushes democracy, just when the nation claims it is fighting for democracy" (11). The past century of American history has shown that not only is political dissent repressed by governmental actions, but that these actions have not revealed any grand conspiracy to overthrow the government. However, the government has consistently rationalized its actions as necessary for the well being of the United States. The gross civil liberties violations over the last century, predominately during times of war, have illustrated that governmental actions are not for the well-being of its citizens, as citizens and non-citizens have consistently been denied the rights to every individual under the United States Constitution. The lesson from this past and current legacy of civil liberties violations suggest that the government and Constitution only exert themselves to protect the well-being of the citizens of the United States, so long as these individuals do not exercise these Constitutional Rights in any manner that conflicts with the ideology of the United States government.

1 Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States  
2 Nancy Chang, *Silencing Political Dissent*, taken from 76th Cong., 439, 54 Stat. 671 (1940).  
3 anonymous interview with a San Diego resident.

# Bananas:

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## Multinationals Manipulate the WTO

Under the Lome Convention, and the later Regulation 404/93 of the European Union - which sought to protect former colonial ACP countries' privileged access to European markets - ACP bananas were granted tariff-free access to the European market, whilst Dollar banana imports were restricted to 2,553,000 tonnes per year at a tariff of 75 ECU per tonne. The 404/93 regime, as well as resulting in the smuggling of Dollar bananas into the EU, has led to complaints of discrimination from both coporations and some

countries. In 1996 the World Trade Organisation launched a 'dispute panel', between the EU-15 on one side, and the USA, Guatemala, Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico on the other. After more than a year of restricted hearings and deliberation, the WTO panel decided that the EU regime discriminates against US-based corporate - and Latin American governmental - interests. An EU appeal has been rejected, and barring a negotiated compensation deal, the EU shall have to reform its banana import regime to make it

'WTO-compatible'. Whatever the conclusion of the dispute, it looks set to leave the major social and environmental issues unaddressed. Indeed, the whole process has been manipulated by multinationals - Chiquita in par-

ticular, to suit their own aims. Chiquita Brand's chairman and billionaire, Carl Linder Jnr. is under investigation by a US Senate Committee for giving US\$415,000 to state democratic parties throughout the US in April 1996, only hours after the US administration filed its challenge to the EU with the WTO. He made similar gifts to the Republicans - just to make sure! - and has made donations during previous US elections. Linder was subsequently one of the select few to be personally invited by Clinton to stay in the White House's Lincoln Bedroom - by way of thanks. Chiquita has also been active politically in the Caribbean, within Latin American governments, and in Germany, with donations to Kohl's Christian Democratic Party.

III: The Law for the Protection of Radiated People

123. This is the number of fishermen who, besides the

# Paradise or a Multinational Jungle?

Bananas, as well as being Britain's most popular fruit, are also the fourth most important staple crop in the world, critical for food security in many tropical countries.

Although the Cavendish banana is a crucial source of export income for at least 15 Latin American and Caribbean producer countries, more than 85 countries are actually involved in banana and plantain production. For example, India and Brazil do not export their bananas, but are still the largest producers of bananas and plantains in the world. Millions of small-scale farmers in Africa, South Asia and Northern Latin America grow bananas for household consumption and/or local markets. Most of this production is achieved with little or no external inputs. However, once a producer starts growing bananas for export to the industrialised world, considerable and increasing levels of 'external' inputs (seed and agrochemicals) are required to effectively compete in this market. Less than 20% of bananas grown enter world trade, but the socio-economic and ecological sustainability of production for export is increasingly challenged in both producing and consuming countries, as the trade becomes increasingly dominated by a small number of aggressive transnational companies.

## A classic example of inequitable trade

Economic power in the banana trade has remained in the hands of a few large businesses which, historically, have not had to consider their socio-economic and ecological impact on the people and the countries that grow their bananas. Workers on medium- and large-scale plantations and small farmers supplying the world market are being marginalised, receiving few of the benefits of this lucrative trade. At the same time recent competitive pressures have forced producers to seek productivity gains, often at the cost of labour and the environment. In their drive for EU and world-wide market share, the big four transnational companies involved in banana production - Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte and Fyffes - gained a great deal of influence over the governments of countries ranging from Colombia to Belize. As a result, these countries had to accept unfair export tariff duties and customs preferences, the duty-free export and import of their products and raw materials, and the preferential financial treatment of foreign companies in their banking systems. Foreign transnational corporations also pressured Latin American governments

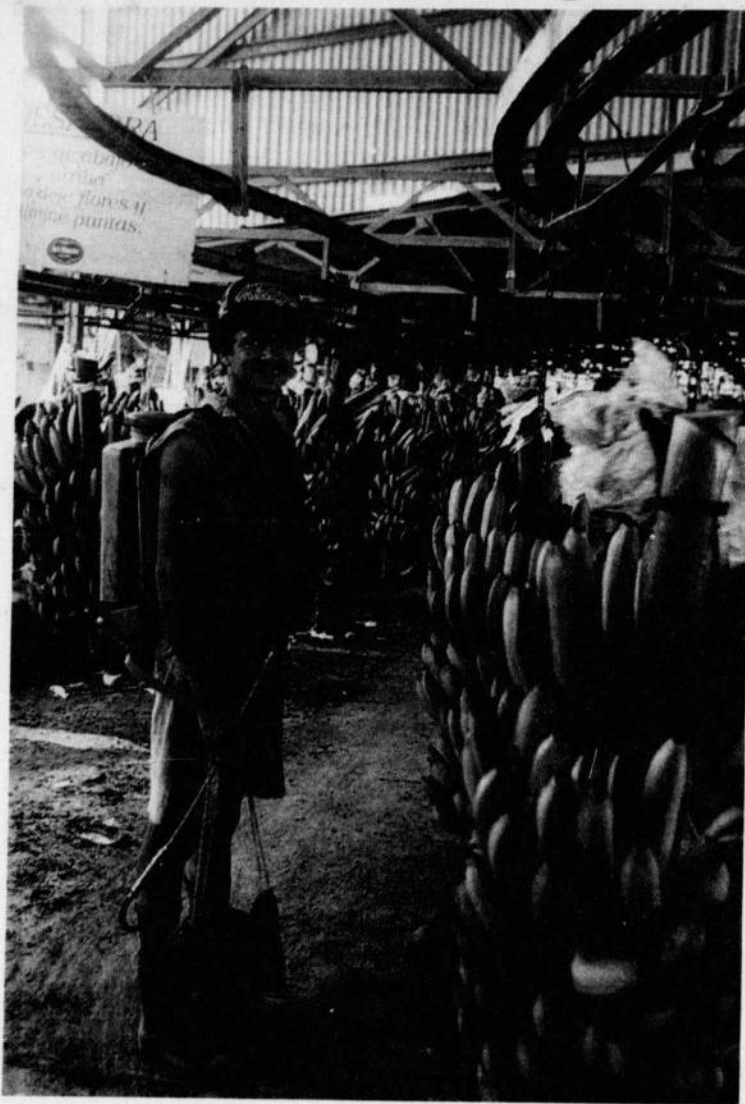
to push through new labour policies directed at the partial or total modification of existing laws.

Taking advantage of the world-wide banana market price crisis in the mid-1980's, multinational companies, national producer companies (such as Noboa in Ecuador) and governments in Latin America began to eliminate many workers' social and health guarantees. These measures include: refusing to sign collective agreements; reducing salaries; increasing the length of the working day; fuelling anti-union sentiments by substituting legitimate trade unions with company-friendly solidarismo associations; increasing the persecution of trade unionists; and the movement of production from region to region and from country to country in order to threaten workers and weaken trade unions.

## The Big Three

The world's largest producer and marketer of bananas is Chiquita (formerly United Fruit), a US company as well known for bribery and its links to a Guatemalan coup as for its fruit (see Stephen Sleazinger's "Bitter Sweet", Anchor 1990). Chiquita is owned by United Brands and sells about a third of the world's bananas. These sales account for 60% of the corporation's profits. (Chiquita's prepared foods division, mostly meats and packaged goods, accounts for about half of its sales but less than 10% of profits). Close on Chiquita's heels is the US company Dole, owned by Castle & Cooke, a property and food group. Dole is the world's largest producer and marketer of fresh fruit and vegetables. Both these companies own vast banana plantations in Central America, and together effectively act as price-setters. The third largest transnational banana company is Del Monte, which was taken over in June 1996 by Grupo IAT, which owns Chile's third-largest fruit exporter. (Del Monte's canned food division eventually went to a consortium of Del Monte management, Japan's Kikkoman food company, and Citicorp investors). Meanwhile, Irish-based company Fyffes (which together with WIBDECO, a company set up by the Windward Islands' governments, bought up British company Geest in 1995) is the UK and Ireland's main banana distributor.

These multinationals are closely associated with banana exports from Latin America, and especially Central America, where they are directly involved in the production of around 60% of their export supply. However, they were quick to become involved in the Philippines and more recently in Indonesia after the



Herbicide being sprayed on picked bananas  
Nick Shaw/Banana Link

opening of the Japanese market in the 1980's. They are also active to a lesser degree in certain ACP exporters. Chiquita, for example, has been involved in the management of the banana industry in Belize, Suriname and Jamaica and, until the mid 1980's, owned Fyffes which was closely involved with ACP production. Since the beginning of the 90's however, transnational corporations have gradually relinquish direct ownership of plantations, preferring guaranteed supply contracts with medium- and large-scale producers from the countries that actually grow the bananas. This trend is not confined to the banana sector. It allows Northern-based corporations to shift the responsibility for labour and environmental conditions in the plantations onto local shoulders, arguing that they have no control over these conditions, and that national legislation is in place to ensure that minimum standards are respected. Trade unions and other NGOs in the region regularly report that wages, labour conditions and environmental management practices on these nationally owned plantations are generally as bad, if not worse, than in their multinational owned neighbours. Adequate labour and environmental legislation often exists, but is rarely enforced until directly challenged in court. Sources: FAO, CIRAD 1995

## Dollar vs. ACP

World banana exports have traditionally been split between 'Dollar' bananas, which

are produced on large estates (which may extend over 5000 hectares) in Central America and the North West of South America and traded by a handful of large companies, and 'ACP' bananas.

Afro-Caribbean-Pacific bananas are grown in countries that have trading relationships with European countries. Many of these relationships were developed during the colonial period, with the consequence that many of these countries are largely dependent upon the banana trade for survival. One example is the Windward Islands, (St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica and Grenada) located in the Eastern Caribbean. Banana production here is characterised by smallholders, who grow their fruit on family-owned farms - usually less than five hectares in size. The system is labour intensive, and use of agrochemicals is low. In stark contrast, Dollar banana production is directly or indirectly controlled by the multinationals, and the plantations require massive capital investments in the form of roads, cableways, irrigation, drainage and packing facilities. Despite these inputs, production costs are much lower than ACP bananas. However, the plantations have an unhappy history of low-wages, limited workers' rights, poor working conditions and high levels of agrochemical use.

Frequent applications of the nematicide DBCP (used in banana producing regions for some years after it was banned in the countries where it was manufactured), combined with inadequate worker pro-

tection, has led to more than 20,000 cases of male sterility amongst workers, as well as skin cancer and birth defects. The chemical companies Shell, Dow Chemical and Occidental Corporation, and the banana companies Dole (Standard Fruit) and Chiquita are all involved in legal cases relating to the production and use of DBCP.

## Pesticide hazards

Intensive banana production and the application of pesticides can have a devastating impact on the ecosystem of producing countries. For optimum production, plantations need an array of drainage ditches, all of which eventually empty into the region's rivers and finally the sea. According to a 1992 International Union for the Conservation of Nature report, the average use of pesticides on banana plantations in the second largest banana exporting country in the world, Costa Rica, is as high as 44 kg/ha/year, compared to an average of 2.7 kg/ha/year for most crops in industrialised countries.

The EARTH College (Escuela de Agricultura de la Region Tropical Humeda) estimates that of the fungicides applied by aeroplanes (some forty times during each cultivation cycle), 15% is lost to wind drift, and falls outside the plantation; 40% ends up on the soil rather than on the plants; and approximately 35% is washed off by the rain. This results in a 90% loss of the estimated 11 million litres of fungicide, water and oil emulsion applied each year to banana producing regions.

Furthermore, for every ton of bananas shipped, two tons of waste are left behind - not least mountains of plastic bags sprayed with herbicides. Costa Rica is also at the top of the list of countries with a high incidence of pesticide poisonings. The average consumption of pesticides per capita is 4 kg per person per year - eight times as high as the world average of 0.5 kg. - and twice as much as the average in Central America. Studies conducted by the National University of Heredia reveal that rates of pesticide poisonings in the banana regions are three times higher than in the rest of Costa Rica. According to a 1993 report, banana production has the highest number of occupational accidents (72%), followed by decorative plant and flower production (7%), sugar cane (6%), coffee (5%), pineapples (4%) and pesticide manufacturers (2%). The figure given for occupational poisonings in Costa Rica is 4.5% (i.e. 4.5% of all agricultural workers suffer from some kind of pesticide poisoning every year), and is well above the World Health Organisation estimate of 3% for developing countries.

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