

PEACE DIGEST

Published By Hilton Head For Peace

Disaster Spawns New Industry

Sovereign Deed, a private civil defense firm, is enticing Northern Michigan officials with promises of 650 jobs at a regional response center it plans to develop with the help of tax dollars. Not only are citizens puzzled by the concept, they also question tax money supporting a for-profit company.

An enlightening article about privatizing civil defense services is “Disaster Capitalism: The New Economy of Catastrophe” by investigative reporter Naomi Klein in October *Harper’s* magazine. Some excerpts:

- “As Iraq and New Orleans both reveal, the markets opened up by crises aren’t only the schools, roads, and oil wells, the disasters themselves are major new markets. The military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned against in 1961 has expanded and morphed into what is best understood as a disaster-capitalism complex, in which all conflict-and disaster-related functions (waging war, securing borders, spying on citizens, re-building cities, treating traumatized soldiers) can be performed by corporations at a profit...it aims, ultimately, to replace the core functions of government with its own profitable enterprises, as it did in Baghdad’s Green Zone.”
- “Within weeks of Hurricane Katrina, the Gulf Coast became a domestic laboratory for the same kind of government run by contractors that was pioneered in Iraq. The companies that snatched up the biggest contracts were the familiar Baghdad gang: Halliburton’s KBR unit received a \$60 million contract to re-construct military bases along the coast. Blackwater USA was hired to protect FEMA operations, with the company billing an average of \$950/day per guard.”
- “All top contractors (Fluor, Bechtel, Parsons, etc.) in Iraq – were handed contracts on the Gulf Coast to provide mobile homes to evacuees just 10 days after the levees broke. Their contracts ended up totaling \$3.4 billion, no open bidding required. Since then, privatized disaster response has become one of the hottest industries in the South.”
- “Most dramatic has been Blackwater’s investment in its paramilitary infrastructure. Founded in 1996 (by Erik Prince of Holland, MI), the company has used its contracts to build up a private army of 20,000 on-call mercenary soldiers and a military base in N.C. worth between \$40 million and \$50 million.” (Note: Blackwater is buying combat aircraft.)

SEE “INDUSTRY” ON PAGE 2

Mired In War

Americans do not want to be in Iraq. Polls show the Iraqis don’t want us there. Why? *The Nation* magazine puts it in a nutshell – “By one rough estimate an Iraqi is killed every 10 minutes and an American soldier, every 10 hours. And every 10 days, \$2 billion is taken from our Treasury and pumped into the coffers of Blackwater, Halliburton and other war profiteers.” (Editor’s note: Besides, its illegal to occupy another country.)

Yet the war may continue. Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s reaction to General Petraeus’ testimony before Congress was that “it seems to me that General Petraeus is presenting a plan for at least a ten-year, high-level presence in Iraq.” President Bush has said he will withdraw troops to pre-‘surge’ levels of 130,000 sometime in 2008 – a plan critics say fails to respond to public demand to exit Iraq. Question: Would the 182,000 civilian contractors employed by the U.S. for security and logistical support remain behind?

“There never was a good war or a bad peace.”

Ben franklin

Did You Know?

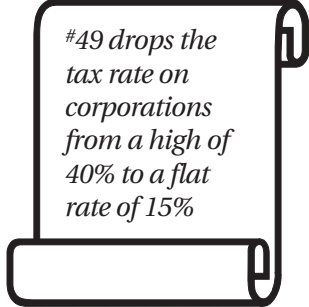
- Of the estimated 210 million women who become pregnant every year worldwide, 500,000 die during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Nancy Pelosi is the first female Speaker of the House, making her second in line for the Presidency. Women account for a scant 16% of members of Congress – only 86 out of 535.
- Many local and state officials in the Great Lakes Basin hope to persuade their counterparts in D.C. to finance a \$20 billion restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem.
- Water is the Earth's most precious resource. Blue October is an international month of action to challenge corporate control of water and to protect water as a shared natural resource available to all. Help save water – turn off water while you're brushing your teeth.
- One-third of Iraq war vets receive some kind of mental-health treatment within their first year home. Depression, flashbacks and survivor guilt are some symptoms resulting from combat duty.
- One-third of adults in the U.S. still believe Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Most of the attackers were Saudi Arabians.
- Minimum number of books about the Iraq war published in the U.S. so far: 835
- Delegates meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, hope to prevent the extinction of Sumatran tigers and elephants due to vanishing habitat. More than 20 million acres of lowland tropical forests, where the animals live, have been lost to farming and logging since 1990.

Spoils Of War

While Iraq was given sovereignty in 2004,

in reality the U.S. is still in charge. The so-called "100 orders" of Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority, remain embedded in the framework of the Iraqi constitution. Order #39 allows for privatization of Iraq's 200 state-owned companies and 100% foreign ownership of Iraqi businesses. Order #17 grants foreign contractors full immunity from Iraq's laws. Order #49 drops the tax rate on corporations from a high of 40% to a flat 15%.

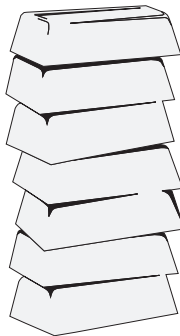
The Iraq Hydrocarbon Bill is largely based on a draft framework for Iraq's oil policy put together by the State Department's "Future of Iraq" a year before the invasion. The law will allow for foreign control over Iraq's oil production without stipulations for reinvestment in Iraq's economy or the hiring of Iraqi workers. The U.S. government, oil companies and the International Monetary Fund got to see the draft months before it was given to the Iraqi Parliament.



#49 drops the tax rate on corporations from a high of 40% to a flat rate of 15%

Cool It

Amidst rumors that the Bush administration plans to attack Iran in the next few months, El Baradei, the chief U.N. nuclear inspector, warns that "we need to be cool," adding: "We need not hype the issue." Saying that only the U.N. Security Council could authorize the use of force, El Baradei urged the world to remember Iraq before considering any similar action against Iran. Although Iran insists its atomic activities are aimed only at producing energy, the U.S., France and other world powers suspect Iranian authorities eventually will seek to make nuclear weapons.



Fraud In Iraq

In a recent article in *Vanity Fair*, Donald Bartlett and James Steele wrote, "During the CPA's little more than a year of life (2003-2004), the New York Federal Reserve

Of \$12 billion in U.S. banknotes delivered to Iraq, at least \$9 billion cannot be accounted for."

Bank made 21 shipments of currency to Iraq in 281 million individual banknotes, (packaged like bricks) weighing a total of 363 tons. Of \$12 billion in U.S. banknotes delivered to Iraq, at least \$9 billion cannot be accounted for." The authors say that some of that may have been put to wise and honest use but quote a former military officer who worked for the CPA: "There was fraud everywhere."

Bizarre Nuclear Weapons Mishap

A recent *Army Times* headline “B-52 mistakenly flies with nukes aboard” raises questions why these weapons were being moved in the first place and why they were sent from a North Dakota Air Force Base to AFB Barksdale in Louisiana .

The Air Force has not permitted its bombers to overfly U.S. territory since the late 1960’s after a series of nuclear weapons accidents involving the Air Force in this country and abroad. Yet, in August, a B-52 with six armed nuclear missiles flew over the U.S. for 3½ hours.

Philip Coyle, an adviser to Center for Defense Information comments: “After years and years of U.S. government officials warning of the dangers of “loose nukes” and accusing Russia, Pakistan or other nations of not adequately controlling their nuclear weapons, we find that we have six American loose nukes right here at home.”

Coyle says “the accident is so bizarre that it has spawned conspiracy theories that those six nuclear weapons were part of a secret plan to bomb Iran, especially since Barksdale Air Force Base is a staging place for deployment to the Middle East.”

Congratulations to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N. network of 2,000 scientists, who share the Nobel Peace Prize for their climate change work. In citing their efforts to raise awareness of the global crisis, the Norwegian Nobel Committee said that “action is necessary now, before climate change moves beyond man’s control.”

Star Wars Riles Putin and People

The Missile Defense program (aka Star Wars) may be “harebrained” as some claim, but Czechslovakia and Poland are buying into it while ignoring public protest and Russian president Putin’s objections. Defense analysts say systems in those countries could not cover all of Europe so why would the U.S. choose to “defend” some European countries and not others? Besides, missile defense tests have not demonstrated the capability to defend Europe, let alone the U.S., from an attack by Iran or North Korea under realistic operational conditions.

David McReynolds of the War Resisters League says the program needs to be examined not for its defense value – it has none – but for the two things it can do. One is to provide enormous profits for the military-industrial complex. The other – the real objective of Star Wars and the U.S. Space Program – “is to give the U.S. military control of space.”

Can Democrats Affect Policy?

At this writing, another supplemental bill requesting \$50 billion for war fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan faces Congress. FAIR Media Advisory says, contrary to widespread belief, Congress does



not have to pass legislation to bring an end to the war in Iraq—it simply has to block passage of any bill that would continue to fund the war. This requires not 67 or 60 Senate votes, or even 51, but just 41 – the number of senators needed to maintain a filibuster and prevent a bill from coming up for a vote.

FAIR claims Democrats have more than enough votes to end the Iraq war – if they choose to do so. “The Democrat leadership may believe – rightly or wrongly – that such a strategy would entail unacceptable political costs. But that is very different from being unable to affect policy.”

“All options are on the table” President Bush regarding attacking Iran.

“Impeachment is off the table.” Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

“INDUSTRY” CON’D FROM PAGE 1

- “The vast infrastructure of the disaster industry, built up with taxpayer’s money, is all privately controlled...the citizens who funded it have absolutely no claim to this parallel economy or its resources.”

Klein’s new book, *The Shock Doctrine*, describes in greater detail the rise of disaster capitalism and what it means for the future.

EDITOR’S NOTE Donations needed. Mail to return address on cover. Share this issue with a friend. If you do not wish to receive Digests, unsubscribe at Bb50@att.net Thanks to Charlotte White for layout.

Saving The Great Writ?

Although 56 senators voted for the Measure to Restore Habeas Corpus, that wasn't enough. A minority of senators, with backing from the White House, was able to block the measure which would have restored the right of U.S. detainees at Guantanamo to challenge their detention in federal court. Habeas Corpus, the cornerstone of Anglo-Saxon legal systems for 800 years, has been one of the most important checks on arbitrary government power based on the principle that no government is above the law. (Friends Committee for National Legislation –FCNL)

What, Me Worry?

Privacy may not feel like much of an issue for most of us. But it should be. Nowadays, 70% of the intelligence budget goes to private contractors leading to concern about their ability to utilize information for corporate benefit. Too, once you're on a "suspected terrorist" list, its difficult to overcome. Air travelers, mistakenly listed, say they have been detained repeatedly at airports despite their clearance.

Women and Peace

In 2000, the U.N. Security Council Unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 to protect women from violence due to conflict. The Resolution marks the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women.

Historically women have borne the brunt of war; yet have little to no voice in decision making processes involving war and conflict. Iraqi women, for example, despite the fact they constitute close to 2/3 majority and include impressive numbers of highly educated and skilled professionals, remain on the sidelines of Iraqi government and politics.

George Bernard Shaw
"Peace is not only
better than war, but
infinitely more arduous."

Hilton Head for Peace
4 Nut Hatch Road
Hilton Head, SC 29926-1824

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