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Wars Without End?

Matthew Evangelista

The rosy scenario for a war against Iraq is rosy indeed. It is largely the product of a very imaginative Pentagon official named Paul Wolfowitz. "Wolfie," as President Bush affectionately calls him, is an Ithaca native, Cornell graduate, and now deputy secretary of defense. He has advocated war against Iraq since long before September 2001. In an article for *The New York Times Magazine* last fall, journalist Bill Keller reported Wolfowitz's vision of how a war against Iraq would go. A "choreography of unmanned aerial vehicles, precision-guided weapons, indigenous insurgents and special-operations soldiers on the ground" would "in the first hours of an attack" destroy the weapons of mass destruction that serve as the primary public justification for the war. What then? Watch the qualifications, but don't miss the main point, as Wolfowitz put it to Keller: "I don't think it's unreasonable to think that Iraq, properly managed—and it's going to take a lot of attention, and the stakes are enormous, much higher than Afghanistan—that it really could turn out to be, I hesitate to say it, the first Arab democracy."

It is something of a truism that the foreign-policy advisers around President George W. Bush are captive of the Cold War policies they pursued in a previous era, however irrelevant they may be to today's international problems. Wolfowitz is no exception, but his policy prescription for Iraq is not based so much on the standard "peace through strength" story of how the United States out-arms-raced the Soviet Union into surrender. His focus is on the contagious appeal of democracy. The image that animates his crystal ball on the future of the Middle East is the chain reaction of popular movements that overthrew communist regimes in Eastern Europe in autumn 1989, in quick succession, and largely without violence.

An exception was Romania. According to Keller, Wolfowitz loves to tell a joke about Saddam Hussein's barber who queries the dictator every time he cuts his hair about the fate of Nicolae Ceausescu, the Romanian tyrant who was murdered in the course of a violent anti-communist uprising in 1989. When Saddam asks the barber why he always brings up this subject, the barber responds, "because every time I do, the hair goes up on the back of your neck, and it's easier to cut it." Wolfowitz acknowledges that a postwar Iraq might be closer to the Romanian example than to the peaceful, "velvet" revolution that led to communism's downfall in Czechoslovakia or the negotiated roundtable and electoral transition in Poland. Anarchic violence, combined with a tenacious grasping for power by the dictator's erstwhile cronies, could be Iraq's immediate postwar future. Such a prospect suggests a darkening of the deputy secretary's rosy picture.

But the rest of the picture remains very bright. Wolfowitz foresees the eventual emergence of a democratic Iraq as a beacon to its

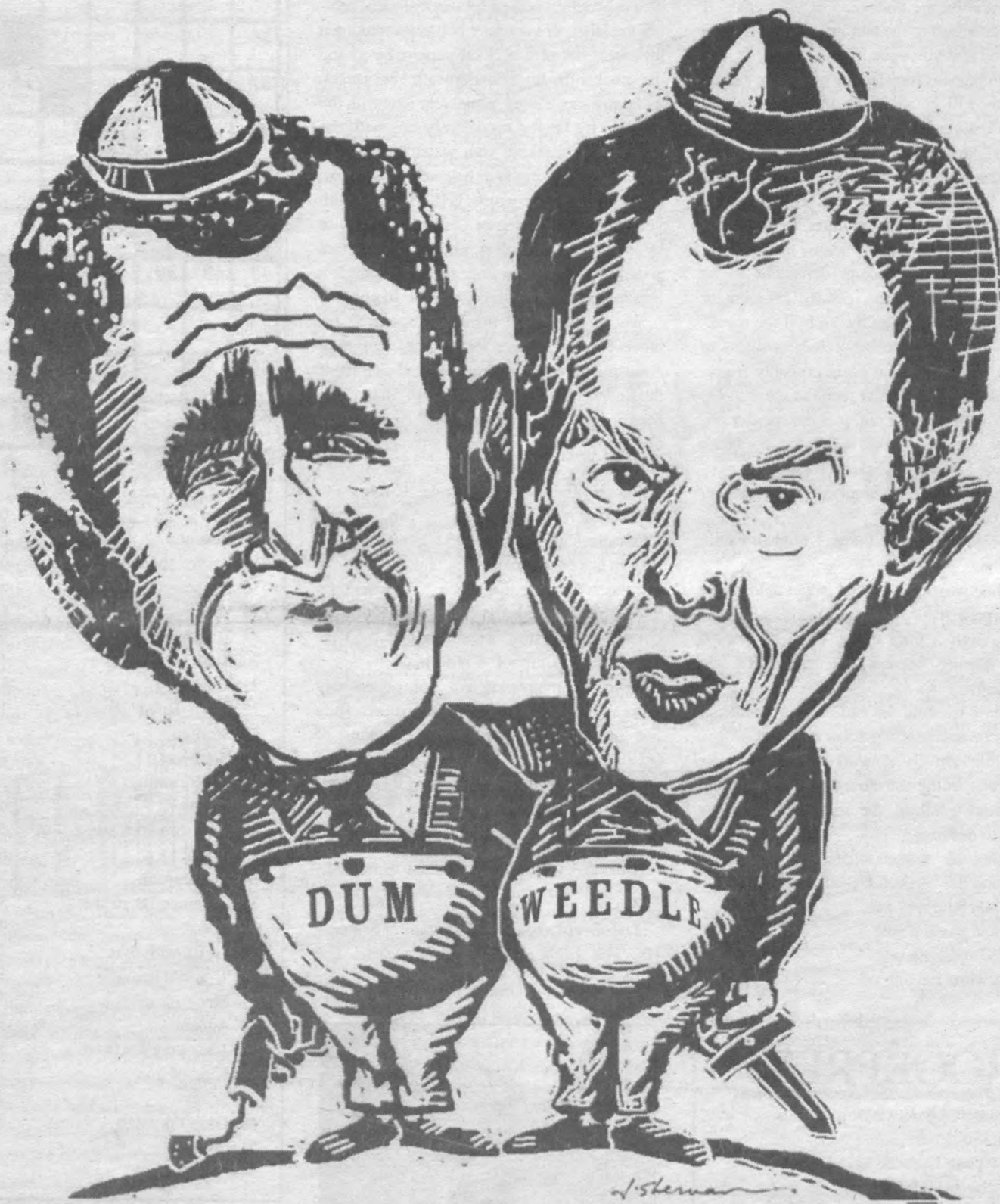
Arab neighbors, where multitudes languish under feudal monarchies or modern despots. Imagine Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria transformed into democracies on the American model! Following the all-good-things-together maxim, we further imagine that the newly democratized states guarantee the flow of cheap oil to US consumers and contribute to a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on terms acceptable to Israel's right wing.

The Bush administration's plans for "pre-emptive" war against a country that poses no imminent threat of attack on the United States or any regional neighbors have given rise to an unprecedented "preemptive" peace movement. The administration's rationales for launching a war have not convinced the vast majority of people, in the United States or

worldwide, who fear that its risks do not justify abandoning more promising alternatives, such as an intensification of the efforts of international inspectors. One is compelled to wonder if administration officials themselves really believe their own arguments for insisting that war is the best policy. At least in the Wolfowitz scenario we can glimpse a positive, hopeful vision of the war's objectives rather than the negative goals of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and undermining international terrorism—goals that many believe will be hindered rather than advanced by an attack on Iraq. A recent poll, for example, found that the average American gives an estimate of 70% probability that there will be a major terrorist attack in response to a US invasion of Iraq, rising to 79% if the US attacks without UN approval.

However positive the vision, one can, however, reasonably doubt the plausibility of the sequence of events Wolfowitz predicts—from forceful "regime change" in Iraq to a democratic and peaceful Middle East. But let us consider just the initial set of assumptions: that a war against Iraq will be relatively quick ("It could last, you know, six days, six weeks—I doubt six months," according to war secretary Donald Rumsfeld); that casualties will be low; that the majority of Iraqis will welcome US intervention; and that establishing postwar order will be a relatively straightforward task. These points are all interrelated.

Regardless of what the experts say, there is no way of knowing in advance how long the



*"Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle..."*

Jack Sherman

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Briefing

J. Robert Lennon

Good evening, and thank you for attending tonight's presentation. Before we begin, we would appreciate your cooperation in listening to a few simple guidelines.

During the presentation, we ask that you remain silent. If someone in your vicinity is failing to remain silent, we ask that you ask that person to remain silent, but that you do so in a silent manner. To this end, we recommend a slashing motion with the hand across the throat; a finger held before the lips, accompanied by bug-eyes; or a handkerchief and a length of duct tape. If your silencing efforts fail, please notify us by pressing the glowing red button on the underside of your chair. If you must resort to the button, we strongly recommend that you duck.

Simultaneous translations of tonight's presentation will be available in Pig Latin and Rude Gesture. If you would like a transcript, a pen and paper will be given to you before the presentation. If you have a question during the presentation, please raise your hand, and then, humiliated, lower it again thirty seconds later. If you find the speaker's ideas, mannerisms, word choices, or general demeanor to be offensive to your race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, join the club. If the speaker gives you the heebie-jeebies, willies, or creeps, remember that he is probably frightened of you, too. Do not feed the speaker. Do not freak the speaker out, piss the speaker off, get the speaker's goat, yank the speaker's chain, or harsh the speaker's mellow.

Please refrain from smoking in any manner listed below:

- while saying, "I know I ought to quit, but...";
- while wearing a special jacket tailored for the purpose;
- through a long ebony cigarette holder, while purring, "At last, you have fallen into my trap";
- while twisting the end of your handlebar mustache and emitting a low chuckle;
- while furtively glancing from side to side;
- while sitting astride a horse, and surveying, from a hilltop, the small town you are about to destroy;
- using the "French inhale";
- using the "French-Canadian inhale";
- while pumping gas;
- while passing gas;
- while passing out;
- or, while passing on.

In the event of an emergency, exits can be found in the front and rear, beneath the illuminated signs. To expedite the evacuation process, please allow men and women with attractive behinds to exit first, followed by children, people with disabilities, people with inabilities, people with clever but ultimately useless talents, people with issues, people with tissues, party people, people who gave you a ride here, regular folks, and sickos.

To enhance your enjoyment of tonight's presentation, we recommend that you periodically nod while supporting your chin with your fist, wipe a tear from your eye, laugh hysterically while pounding the table, or whisper to your companion, "That is so true." If the presentation fails to hold your attention, please occupy yourself by meticulously peeling the label off your beer bottle, by making a little boat out of a cocktail napkin, by giving the speaker the finger underneath your jacket, by fantasizing having sexual relations with the speaker, by having sexual relations with the speaker, by checking your watch every three minutes, by tucking your hair behind your ear, by spelling out the words THIS SUCKS with your finger on the leg of your companion, or by imagining yourself receiving an important award. If you remain unengaged by tonight's presentation, Jesus Christ, you are so cold.

We would like to thank our sponsors for this event: the Society for the Perpetuation of Amusing Misconceptions, the local chapter of the Smirkers' Guild, the League of Shame, the Men's Appendix to the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Loyal Order of the Caribou, Persons United for a Better Name, the Schism Alliance, the Schadenfreude Circle, the Weltschmerz Institute, and the Unglückselendzerstörerspaß Club. The sound system has been provided by that guy with the eye patch down at that place. The speaker's wardrobe is furnished by the speaker's mom. Crowd scene extras were supplied by Reel Life Casting, Burbank, California.

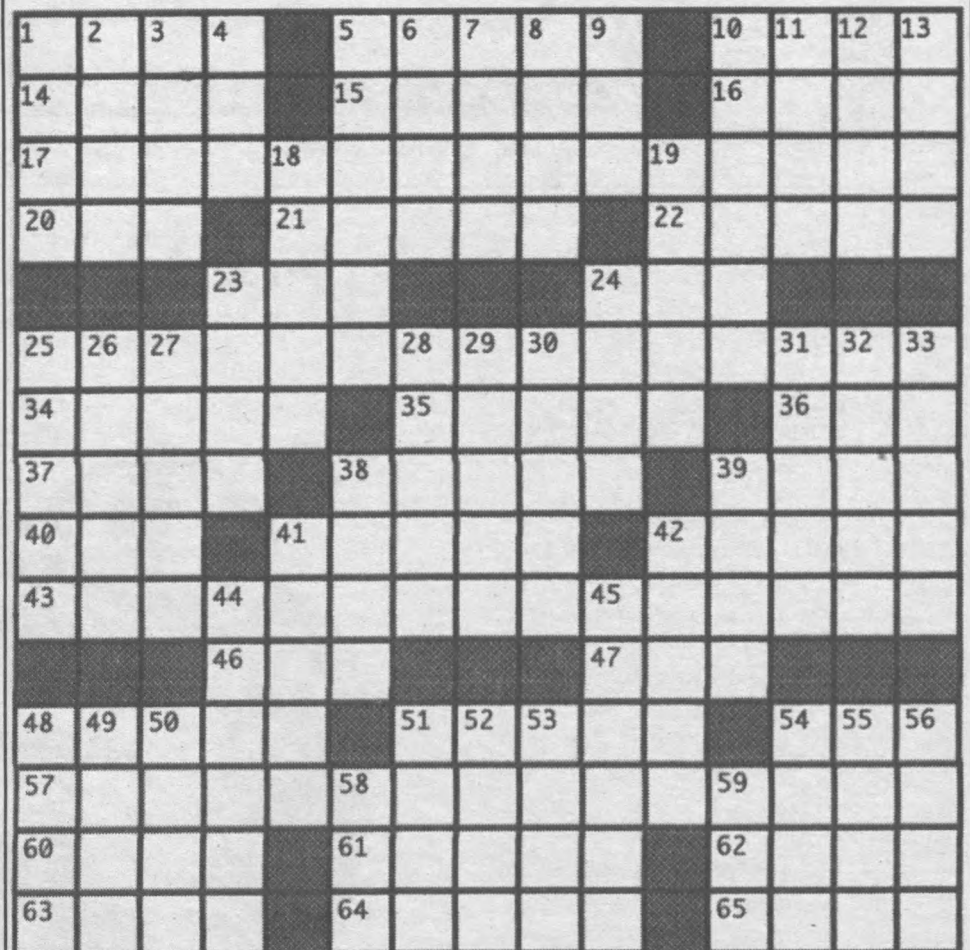
Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the speaker or his underwriters. They just sort of come out of nowhere, kind of existing in a kind of, I dunno, ether type of thing. Unlicensed reproduction of this presentation is not permitted, though God knows it'll be all over the Internet in the morning.

Thank you for your cooperation.

J. Robert Lennon is the author of two novels, *The Light of Falling Stars* and *The Funnies*.

Crossword Puzzle

by Adam Perl



ACROSS

1. Gaelic
5. Open
10. Reveal
14. Spilled the beans
15. Bashes
16. Solo
17. Top choice?
20. Sixth sense
21. Lend _____
22. "____ Road"
23. Strange
24. Big heart?
25. Deteriorating situations
34. Semi-precious stone
35. Go off
36. VCR button
37. Commercial award
38. About
39. Prefix with byte
40. "____ not heavy"
41. Mr. _____
42. Appeal
43. They may get fired
46. Kind of gun
47. Scam
48. Didn't divulge
51. Space _____
54. Nile menace

57. What you are doing and title of puzzle
60. African nation
61. Bow _____
62. Taper off
63. Powerful cartel
64. Springs
65. ¿Como _____?

DOWN

1. Start of N. Carolina's motto
2. Knocks
3. Cinch
4. Breakfast staple
5. It may be hidden
6. Entrance
7. _____ Vista
8. Jacks, perhaps
9. Curve
10. Sweeney Todd, e.g.
11. Breed of steed
12. Ready
13. A no-brainer
18. "____ only known"
19. Assumed
23. Not fooled by
24. Datebook entry, for short
25. Russian country house
26. Wolf
27. Middle
28. Nurse Betty portrayer
29. Bleak
30. Cheerful
31. Shakespearean sprite
32. Corporate department
33. A lot
38. Confederate
39. Valley
41. Trolley sound
42. Kind of finish
44. With a twist
45. Some magazine inserts
48. Asian sport
49. Stat
50. Blank, perhaps
51. Manage
52. Vibe
53. Coffee choice
54. Summer quaffs
55. Blind spot?
56. Former Secretary of Energy
58. Fashion monogram
59. Be light

answers on page 11

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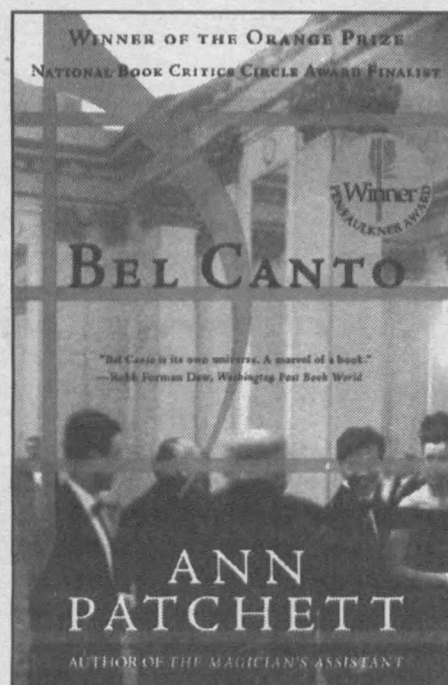
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Pat Duffy reading from *Blue Cats and Chartreuse Kittens*. March 9, 2:30pm.

Beth Sauliner reads from new novel *Ecstasy*. March 16, 2:30pm.

Karl Leopold reading from Aldo Leopold's classic *A Sand County Almanac*. March 30, 2:30pm.

All events are held at and co-sponsored by Tompkins County Public Library.
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The Resistible Rise of Bush/Cheney

Paul Sawyer

Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, written in Finland in 1941 when he was an exile from Nazi Germany, tells the story of Hitler's rise to power through the fiction of an American gangster story. As Richard Watson played him last fall in Cornell Theater's powerful production, Hitler/Ui is neither fascinating nor charismatic. He's a petty thug who growls like a dog and walks with a slightly twisted neck; he cringes, blusters, gets red in the face; he's mean, sick, dangerous—and banal. At the end of the play Watson moved to the front of the stage, rubbed off his grease-paint and mustache, and spoke Brecht's epilogue, congratulating the audience:

If we could learn to look instead
of gawking,
We'd see the horror in the heart
of farce.
If only we could act instead of talking,
We wouldn't always end up on
our arse.
This was the thing that nearly had
us mastered;
Don't yet rejoice in his defeat,
you men!
Although the world stood up and
stopped the bastard,
The bitch that bore him is in heat again.

Was this unmistakable comparison between the forty-third presidency and the ultimate modern evil simply an expression of anger? Or did the play contain genuinely illuminating, and disturbing, parallels? Examining my own reactions, I find two deeply suggestive implications that seem partly opposed to each other. The first parallel is the sense in both cases of nearly unprecedented political danger—of a liberal constitutional system held hostage by a small band of ruthless fanatics. On the surface, of course, George Bush seems the complete opposite of a fanatical demagogue: he is plain-talking, likeable, backslapping—a real “people” person. But according to one recent analysis of Bush's language, (*The Bush Dyslexicon* by Mark Crispin Miller), the well-known gaffes and jokey stumbles disappear whenever the President talks of vengeance—a mark, for Miller, of a psychopathic personality. A “draft dodger,” a “stock market swindler,” a “stooge for the oil interests,” cried the Mayor of London on February 15: “And we are asked to send our young women and men to die for this creature? I don't think so.” The greatest fear, obviously, comes in imagining what such a “creature” would do with the full powers of

the modern American military arsenal. “He says the word and whole peoples die,” someone wrote of Hitler in the early years of World War II. Studs Terkel, quoting from King Lear (“Like flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods; They kill us for their sport”), wrote of Bush in the *Nation*: “Today a wanton boy is the most powerful man on earth.” And so, as we now know, even before war has begun, thinks the rest of the world.

But this fear and loathing seem contradicted by an eerie normalcy pervading the American body politic: a vaguely troubled electorate who still (though by a slim majority now) “approves” of the President's handling of his job; an opposition party that is largely silent, uncertain how or even whether to oppose war; and a press that reports the President's most extravagant lies and maniacal threats with a straight face, if not downright enthusiasm, and which until recently failed even to acknowledge the presence of an anti-war movement at home.

This business-as-usual leads to the second parallel suggested by the performance of Brecht's play. The Nazis came to power legally, through the timidity and collusion of the Weimar Republic (one historian has called it “the suicidal self-destructiveness of democratic government”). In the U.S., Bush's radical policies moved in and took root with an extraordinary ease not fully explainable by September 11. How could this have happened here? How, specifically, could a brutal preemptive attack on Iraq, justified by bogus arguments, which is certain to cost the lives of tens of thousands of civilians, seem to so many people not only thinkable but inevitable and even, somehow, sound, prudent and humane?

A partial answer to this complicated question might begin with the way mainstream politicians and commentators created a mythical version of the Vietnam War. As I have written before in these pages, the reigning orthodoxy about Vietnam begins with the claim that Vietnam was an understandable, if tragic, strategic error which traumatized America—that is to say, not just American soldiers and not the Vietnamese, who are erased from this account, but all the rest of us. This view that the greatest military power in the world was the greatest sufferer then combined with an ideologically related view—that those who protested the war at home were largely an irresponsible and aggressive group of pot-drunk hippies and hooligans who spent their time spitting on soldiers. Together these myths—the “quagmire,” or mistake; the traumatized republic; and the irrelevant, marginalized “protesters”—worked to re-legitimize the official policies and attitudes that brought us into Vietnam in the first place and that now bring us to the brink of war with Iraq.

The strongest effect of the myths is to obscure the legal facts about the war, which were and remain absolutely clear and include the following: Dioxin is a chemical weapon, the use of which is a war crime. Declaring civilian areas “free-fire zones” is a war crime. Forcible removal of civilian populations is a war crime. The Vietnam War was a preemptive attack, justified by a largely fabricated event; it was therefore illegal under international law. These facts should have been for all Americans the true “lessons” of Vietnam.

I have said that in some ways George Bush represents an unprecedented danger; but in other ways, his policies are the opposite of unprecedented. Grenada was a preemptive attack; Libya was a preemptive attack. When the World Court found the U.S. support of a guerrilla war in Nicaragua illegal under international law, the Reagan administration declared itself exempt from the Court's jurisdiction. The Clinton administration bombed Iraq in 1993 on the very day that the World Court opened hearings into that preemptive move. In short (as many commentators have pointed out), since the end of World War II, the U.S. has acted unilaterally, in its own self-perceived interests, largely unconstrained by any international institution or system of international law.

How, thirty years after Vietnam, do we now think about the potential victims of war? We are twelve years into an embargo that produces malnutrition and disease and withholds adequate medical supplies to treat those conditions in children, with the result that an estimated five thousand Iraqi children die a month—a figure that not even Madeleine Albright disputed in a now-notorious exchange. Dr. Helen Caldicott and others have detailed how hundreds of tons of depleted uranium (DU), used as a super-hard material for anti-tank ordnance, now litters the soil of Iraq, where particles with a radioactive half-life of 4.5 billion years (literally equal to the remaining life of the earth) sink into the groundwater, contaminate food crops and drinking water, and have produced alarmingly elevated levels of birth defects and breast cancer, which now occurs in girls as young as ten. (DU is also a suspected cause of Gulf War syndrome in American veterans.) Suffering like this—which will vastly increase as US bombs start falling again—is as real and as horrific as the deaths in the World Trade Center and much more widespread, but Iraqi civilians do not figure in the “analyses” and opinion pieces of the establishment press. To mention civilian victims in this context seems somehow soft-headed and bleeding-hearted; it is not thinking “realistically” or “strategically.” (A liberal political scientist told me last year that the Gulf War was done the

“right” way—we reversed the invasion and then pulled out—he was speaking, he added, “like a political scientist.”)

On the other hand, the press is fuller than ever with compassion for American deaths—as shown in the current fixation on the Columbia shuttle, which has been treated like a second September 11. Setting the tone for many, was the response in the *New York Times*: “For a nation already beset by hard times and a coming war, the Columbia disaster prompted many to wonder, ‘What next?’” The loss of any innocent life is tragic; but to produce equivalences and erasures like these—seven deaths against what “we” will suffer in Iraq with no mention of the UN's estimate of a half million civilians killed or displaced—borders on the pathological, though in this case the pathology probably does not belong to the analyst but to the audience he is constructing. It is “we” Americans who are too preoccupied with fear and grief to care about where our bombs are falling.

Another article in the *Times* suggests how that comment might appear to readers abroad. On February 16, a reporter who was interviewing a group of Iraqi exiles in Jordan paraphrased their views of the U.S. this way: “This America, in the migrants' telling, has enabled the humiliation of Palestinians by arming Israel; craves control of Iraq's oil fields; supported Mr. Hussein in the 1980's and cared not a fig for his brutality then, and grieved for seven lost astronauts even as its forces prepared to use ‘smart’ weapons that, the migrants said, threatened to kill thousands of innocent Iraqis.” These are ideas that can enter the pages of the *Times* only by attribution to others whom the journalist hastens to discredit (the Iraqis may be under the influence of Al Jazeera). But the words form a convenient summary of what our mainstream press—including the newspaper that once published, at considerable risk, the Pentagon Papers—has to filter out in order to remain the mainstream press, which in this case is the whole crux of the antiwar position: the cost in lives; the true war aim (control of oil); and the fact of American military hegemony.

Prior to the Bush administration, the American “right” to act unilaterally in world affairs has been largely unstated, occupying a peculiar epistemological position in official propaganda—a kind of open secret, simultaneously taken for granted and vigorously denied. (An almost comical local example occurred in February 2002, after Asma Barlas, professor of Political Science at Ithaca College, told an alumni publication that the U.S. throws its weight around any

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A Statement in a Time of War

The following statement, signed by over 400 Cornell faculty, staff, and graduate students, first appeared in the *Cornell Daily Sun* on Wednesday, February 12. The statement was composed and the signatures were gathered by CFJP (Cornell Forum for Justice and Peace) as part of Cornell's Week Against the War. This week-long series of teach-ins, seminars, concerts, and rallies was held at the same time as similar events in several dozen campuses across New York State, beginning on February 10 and climaxing in the demonstration in New York City on February 15.

The impending war in Iraq represents the gravest danger faced by the US in more than a generation. It is already both a

humanitarian catastrophe and a constitutional crisis. As in the 1991 Gulf War, advanced American weaponry will kill and wound thousands and inflict lasting social and environmental damage. At home, the war reflects a disturbing deterioration of our political life. The Administration's National Security Strategy, which proclaims as a goal US military domination of the world and justifies first-strike doctrine, dangerously threatens traditional conceptions of international law. Legislation in support of a vaguely defined War on Terror undermines traditional conceptions of civil liberties. The scope and implications of this “Endless War” are poorly understood by the American people, partly because of the absence of effective Congressional opposition, partly because of a media estab-

lishment that has too often acted as an agent of official propaganda.

Extraordinary events require extraordinary responses. In a similar crisis nearly forty years ago, American universities, through teach-ins and other activities, became crucial sources of information, as well as settings for dissent and debate on the war in Vietnam. That experience showed many that the university's obligation to free and disinterested pursuit of truth in no way implies neutral disengagement from urgent issues and practical matters. On the contrary, universities have a particular obligation in times of crisis to provide a forum for principled dissent.

Together with colleagues at other New York State universities and colleges, therefore, we have organized for February 10-14

a series of campus-wide events, as a “Week Against War.” The week will culminate in a world-wide day of actions, to be held on February 15 in New York and at least fifteen other cities around the world, against the Bush administration's looming war on Iraq.

We urge Cornell faculty and instructional staff to make class time available during the week of February 10-14 to discuss issues relating to the war in Iraq, emphasizing as far as is possible the pertinence of their courses and their disciplines to the ramifications of the current crisis. And because we are not only academic professionals but citizens with a conscience and a voice, we urge our colleagues to oppose the war and sign this statement in support of Cornell's Week Against the War.

Disarming the War-Makers

Tom Hirschl

I joined the Cornell Forum for Justice and Peace (CFJP) shortly after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. That invasion made no sense to me, and even appeared counter productive vis-à-vis the stated goal of defeating terrorism. I wanted answers, and, working with my CFJP colleagues, found one.

This past summer we read and discussed various books and documents related to the current crisis. We discovered a 15-year track record of statements and studies by current members of the Bush team, culminating in the September 2002 publication of the White House document "National Security of the United States." This document projects US military domination of the planet and intensive surveillance of the American people. It provides a rationale for the invasion of Afghanistan, the plan to invade Iraq, and for countless other hostilities. It underlines Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's statement that we have entered a period of endless war. In summary, it describes how the Bush administration intends to displace the rule of law with the rule of force, both domestically and internationally.

In December 2002 CFJP linked up with faculty at other New York State colleges to plan the "Week Against War." We quickly realized that we weren't alone in our opposition to the War on Iraq. Thirty-four colleges and universities around the state signed on to our program, and linked to our web page. Most of these campuses already had students and/or faculty who were organizing against the war.

Our experience, and similar ones that I have read about, suggest that a large section of the American people oppose the war. For example, reports from Los Angeles and San Francisco note that anti-war marchers are

drawn from a diverse cross-section of the population, including many who have never before marched or participated in political resistance. Reading these reports lead me to conclude that average Americans are not just fed up with this highly immoral war, but are in some sense fundamentally dissatisfied with their life situation. That is, opposition to the war is connected to broader social disaffection.

The only winning strategy for disarming the war-makers is to unite the broadest section of the population in opposition to war. Accomplishing this will require knowledge beyond the many questions of war and peace. It will also require understanding the social conditions of those who are in opposition. It is in this spirit that I offer the following analysis.

The Current Situation

It would be surprising if Americans were anything but disaffected by their current social situation. Although earnings have increased for a select few, the vast majority of workers have seen their paychecks shrink significantly since 1980.*

There is nothing to suggest that the long-term depression in wages will end. The dynamics of the world economy firmly reinforce this trend, especially now that China has entered a phase of export-oriented growth.

At least 40 million Americans have no health insurance. Many elderly, including my father, are spending down their retirement income to pay for medications which aren't covered by Medicare. In most cities housing prices are out of sight, and the homeless are without humane relief. State

*Topel, R.H. "Factor Proportions and Relative Wages: The Supply-side Determinants of Wage Inequality." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 11:55-74. (1997)

governments are facing their worst fiscal shortfall in decades, and the cyclical recession is deepening the unemployment crisis.

All of these social indicators point to one resounding fact: the poor and middle classes are caught between a rock and a hard place. The majority of Americans need immediate as well as long-term relief. The only body capable of providing relief is the federal government.

President Bush, Congress, and both major political parties have instead decided to provide relief to the wealthy, and to make war on Iraq. They add injury to insult!

So we have a classic situation where fundamental political realignment is inevitable. The people desperately need relief while the government has decided to prosecute war and attack our civil liberties. War will only make matters worse for the majority of Americans, even as it enriches the corporations and military interests who support it.

Education and Vision

I offer the following two principles for successfully disarming the war makers. First that most Americans are on our side, and especially the poor and middle classes. Our allies, however, lack the political education and know-how to act appropriately. Bush's popular support is based in the religious right and the upper crust of the Republican Party, and he doesn't have much outside of that. His core of power, I believe, lies in corporate control of the media. If we can find ways of reaching Americans with our education and vision, then we can win handily. The obstacle is that our country is gripped by a monopolized corporate media.

Second, our most important weapon in this fight is our ability to project a vision of a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous future. Can we harness powerful technologies such as the Internet and biotech to our compassion in order to build a world where

life is honored, where creativity is central to all human activity? Of course we can. The problem is how to convince ourselves and others that a wonderful future is not only possible, it is feasible. As in all big problems, the key is to start small and steady, and then build slowly.

One obvious place to start is right on our campuses. Why should a student have to acquire a mountain of debt to obtain the basic education required to function in a post-industrial society? The Labor Party estimates that tuition for all students at all public colleges and universities is equal to 2% of the federal budget. In other words, we are talking about peanuts. Is college education a right or a privilege for those who can afford it?

After World War II, there were more veterans than there were jobs. The government decided not to turn its back on the men and women who sacrificed so much in the war. So Congress passed the G.I. Bill which paid veterans to go to school and develop their skills.

Today we face a somewhat similar situation. Market driven capitalism will not support our needs and aspirations. Our first task is to come together to disarm the war makers. Once that task is secured, we will be free to create a world where we decide which jobs are socially required to get on with the business of building a society worthy of the human creativity we all possess.

The Labor Party. <http://www.thelaborparty.org/>

—
Tom Hirschl is a Professor of Rural Sociology at Cornell University, and Director of the Population and Development Program. His research touches on social stratification over the life course, demography, and social policy.

A Serious Risk to Oil Supply

Shibley Telhami

U.S. military sources have warned that the Iraqi government may be planning to blow up its own oil fields in the event of war.

These reports may be in part intended to explain why U.S. forces are likely to move very early to control Iraq's oilfields—at a time when many in the Middle East and around the world are suspicious that the war is mostly about oil. But there are serious reasons to be concerned that Iraqi oil fields could be put out of commission for an extended period, with huge consequences for the United States and the international economy.

Certainly Iraq blew up oil installations in Kuwait as it withdrew from that country during the 1991 Persian Gulf war. Fortunately for the international economy, the outcome was that the oil fields remained out of commission for only months, not years.

But evidence from history suggests that if denying oil to the West becomes Iraq's priority, it can be far more successful than it was in Kuwait. In fact, as early as 1949, the Truman administration investigated the most effective methods for preventing an enemy from using Middle East oil fields. Fearful of a possible Soviet invasion of the Arabian Peninsula, President Harry S. Truman put in place a plan to blow up the Saudi oil installations so as to prevent the Soviets from making use of the oil and thus becoming even more powerful.

In 1950, the CIA conducted a feasibility

study that considered the use of radiological weapons as a way of making it impossible for the Soviets to benefit from the oil.

The CIA report ruled out the use of radiological weapons as a method for two reasons: First, it was found that "denial of the wells by radiological means can be accomplished to prevent an enemy from utilizing the oil fields but it could not prevent him from forcing 'expendable Arabs' to enter contaminated areas to open well heads and deplete the reservoirs. Therefore, it is not considered that radiological means are practicable as a conservation measure." In other words, while such a method would have prevented the Soviets from using the oil, it would have also prevented the United States from using it upon reoccupation.

Second, the CIA report found that the use of explosives and conventional plugging methods of the oil heads could be effective enough in denying the Soviets the ability to access the oil. As a result, the Truman administration put in place an oil-denial policy using conventional explosives that were stored in the region. This policy was later reinforced by the Eisenhower administration.

Unlike in Kuwait, Saddam Hussein's government has had much more time to contemplate more effective methods. It would also be less constrained, knowing that a war would bring the end of his reign. Regardless of the evidence that U.S. intelligence may have about actual Iraqi plans, it would be surprising if Iraqi rulers have not prepared such a contingency.

Consider the logic: If oil fields were put out of commission for an extended period,

the consequences for the global economy would be significant and would have huge ripple effects on sectors of the economy such as the troubled airline industry.

Other major oil producers would suddenly emerge with far greater influence than they command today. And the amount of investment—and time—needed to restore Iraq's destroyed economy, bring stability to the country and restore the oil fields would be great.

Iraq may calculate that America's staying power in that environment may be significantly undermined. It would be very puzzling if such a calculation did not result in an actual oil denial plan by a regime that must know that it will go down in the event of war—especially when you add the mere propensity for revenge and foiling America's plans. After all, most in the region believe that the United States is simply after the oil.

It is certainly possible, even probable, that the United States could move fast enough to prevent the implementation of such a plan or that Iraqi subordinates would refuse to implement it. But it is improbable that the Iraqis do not know how to do it or that their leaders have not seriously contemplated an oil-denial plan as a contingency of last resort.

This means that the possibility of such a plan is not negligible and that no prudent policy can ignore its severe consequences.


—
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"Will Bush Bomb Us?"

Maura Stephens

The young man tugged on my sleeve. "Bush. Bomb. Us. Now?" he asked. His mouth was pinched, his eyes squinted. His friend looked equally worried. The two of them searched my face, hoping I would give them the answer they wanted. But I could only look at them helplessly and reply, "I hope not. I hope not, my friends."

On the walk back to my hotel another half dozen men and women stopped me in the street, asking the same questions, in varying degrees of English fluency. The most articulate said, "Will he come after us now? Can you stop him?" And they said to me, directly to me: "We are counting on you. You have to stop him. Please. Please, don't let him bomb us."

This was two days after Colin Powell spoke to the United Nations Security Council and the morning after George W. Bush made a speech at the Pentagon saying, "The game is over. Saddam Hussein will be stopped," and "The Security Council must not back down when those demands are defied and mocked by a dictator...The United States, along with a growing coalition of nations, is resolved to take whatever action is necessary to defend ourselves and disarm the Iraqi regime." Saddam Hussein, he said, was given a "final chance" to comply, but that he was "throwing that chance away."

Powell's speech was given considerable coverage on Iraqi television news, and the mood in Baghdad changed overnight. The following morning in almost every building, including our own Andalus Apartments, people were fastening strapping tape to the big front windows to keep the glass from shattering inward when the bombs started falling. Men were working on old generators and filling them with fuel in readiness for the inevitable electrical power outages should the city be attacked. Men and boys welded scraps of metal together to use as shields in front of their homes and businesses. And everyone wanted to ask us westerners if we could stop the war. Even the normally stoic police and military men who hung around outside some of the hotels were worried, and there was little I could say to reassure them. I was worried too. I was worried sick. Because now I knew these people, and I'd fallen in love with them and their beleaguered country.

* * *

My husband, George Sapio, and I had been in Iraq for a week as members of a mission that included 10 other people from the United States. We'd started out petrified ourselves, having been fed on a diet of U.S. media reports. We expected an armed citizenry aiming its weapons at us, filled with hatred of Americans. George and I had rewritten our wills. The last thing we did before leaving home was to stop at the Candor branch of Tioga State Bank where the wills were notarized and signed by witnesses. Then we mailed copies to my sister and our attorney. We'd said some pretty emotional goodbyes to friends and family members, we weren't sure we'd ever see again. We were, after all, putting ourselves in harm's way in a country where we were hated, by people who wished us ill.

Now we know that nothing could have been further from the truth. We found a debilitated country but the most hospitable people imaginable. Everywhere we went we were met with welcome, generosity, and gratitude for our willingness to be there right now, at this time in history, at the brink of a war that would forever alter their landscapes and what would be left of their lives—a war that would be perpetrated by our country. Yet we experienced not a bit of hatred, resentment, or fury, only hospitality and kindness. What noble

people, these Iraqis. Who would have guessed? Many other things started to seem more than a little fishy—just how much misinformation had we been fed all along? What was the truth? Could we uncover just a little bit of it?

After a fairly arduous trip (leaving from New York City's JFK Airport for Amsterdam, then flying to Amman, Jordan, and packing ourselves into cars for the 15-hour overland trip through the Jordanian/Iraqi desert), we'd arrived at the Andalus Apartments. The whole way in I'd been too excited and nervous to sleep, and the entire week I felt the same, sleeping only a couple of hours a night. I was eager to spend as much time awake as

standing, rocking or breastfeeding their babies, when the bombs hit. Their images, with mouths frozen forever in the rictus of a scream—they must have had a split second to recognize the horror that was about to annihilate them—are burned into the concrete walls. And burned into the heart of any person with a heart who visits this shrine, now a memorial to those who died.

We were also fortunate to stop in a few neighborhoods, to be invited to the homes of several families for conversation and meals, to attend a brilliant ensemble theater production and a concert of traditional Iraqi music (did you know that the first stringed instrument, the precursor of the guitar, was invent-

remain inoperative. Some half-million tons of raw sewage are dumped into the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers every day. Sanctions don't allow even chlorine into the country (it could be used for weapons of mass destruction) to detoxify the water.

Of the 20 to 24 million Iraqis, about half are children under the age of 15. In 1989 the Iraqi infant mortality rate was 25 per 1,000 live births. Now it is 130 per 1,000. Since the Gulf War and the UN sanctions, an estimated half million children have died of childhood diarrhea alone. UNICEF reported in 1998, "Malnutrition was not a public health problem in Iraq prior to the embargo, [but its] prevalence has increased greatly since then: 31 percent in 1996 of [children] under 5 [have] chronic malnutrition (stunting); 26 percent [have] underweight malnutrition; 11 percent [suffer from] wasting (acute malnutrition). By 1997 about one million children under five were [chronically] malnourished."

Things haven't improved since then. When people's bodies are already under stress from deprivation and fear, and when basic sanitation isn't available, other diseases can become epidemic. The director of the Al-Mansour Pediatric Teaching Hospital in Baghdad, Dr. Luay Kasha, told us, "Hepatitis A, hepatitis B, cholera, dysentery, typhus, and malaria are rampant. There was a typhoid epidemic in 1992. The incidence of cancers has skyrocketed since the United States started bombing the country in 1991. There's a lot of depleted uranium lying around these days. We're facing the aftereffects of the nuclear pollution now. We see leukemia, lymphomas, soft-tissue sarcomas. We expect more lymphomas in the next year, because it's now 12 years after the highest bombing rate and that's when a lot of lymphomas tend to be seen. We see five times higher congenital deformities than before 1991, many spontaneous abortions and ectopic pregnancies. Years ago we'd see few cancers in young people. But now we see cancers that used to be more prevalent among the elderly—brain tumors, blastomas, carcinomas—in teens and young people in their 20s. Three months ago I diagnosed cancer of the rectum in a 12-year-old boy from the north."

Treatment is almost nonexistent. There is no radiation therapy because sanctions won't allow radium or the equipment into the country. "There are eight radiotherapy machines in Baghdad," said Dr. Kasha. "Five are out of service. Two date from the 1970s. France sent this one machine. There is a waiting list of more than three months to use it. That means it is too late for most people."

That truth hit us hard in the children's leukemia ward. Every child we saw there is likely to be dead in just a few months. Adhra Zeyad is eight years old but looks a few years younger because he is wasting away. He'd been in the hospital for three weeks. He was dying of leukemia, but his mother, a beautiful young woman named Atared who was staying in the hospital around the clock to be with him while her mother stayed with her other two children, didn't know it. She said to me, "He will be better soon. The doctors are making him better." The doctor answered my question later by saying simply, "How can we tell her? How can we tell any of them?"

How can we tell them their children are dying, and they don't need to be dying? How can we tell them that treatment would be a viable option in another place, like Kansas or Massachusetts or even Riyadh or Amman. But here there is no chemotherapy, because of course that would require chemicals, and as all Americans have been told repeatedly, chemicals can be used for weapons of mass destruction. There isn't even aquatherapy for children with muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and other diseases that would benefit



George Sapio

The director of the Amiriya Bomb Shelter shows the outline of a woman whose image was burned into a concrete wall when the shelter was bombed by the US in 1991.

possible, meeting and talking to people.

Our days were crammed full of opportunities to do just that. We visited a children's hospital, an orphanage, oil-for-food distribution sites, an oil refinery, weapons inspectors' liaisons, the reconstructed site of the world's first university, the largely restored ancient city of Babylon (missing huge sections that were plundered by Europeans and are now in German and English museums), restaurants, the Iraqi Women's Federation and the Iraqi National Women's Museum, a sewing factory, the tower of Baghdad (and its now-rarely-open-for-lack-of-business rotating restaurant at the top with a 360-degree view of the city), the press center, a mosque that feeds 1,000 people a day, the private home of a high holy imam, and other public places, all of which made a tremendous impact on us.

We visited the site of the Amiriya bomb shelter, where at 4:30 on the morning of February 13, 1991, more than 400 people (mostly women and children) were vaporized by a U.S. "smart bomb" as they slept in this "safe place" where they'd sought refuge from the shelling. Their images are burned into the concrete, sleeping curled up or stretched out, some of them hugging a sister or brother or mother or child. Two of the women were

ed in Iraq?), and to visit the studio of one of the greatest Iraqi painters. It was poignant and painful to visit these artists and see how little they have to work with. The actors and director of the original, ensemble-written comedy—which ran with unflagging high energy for three hours and kept the audience of men, women, and children delighted the entire time—were starved for news of theater from outside of Iraq. The musicians have no access to new sheet music, CDs, or tapes to see what is going on in the music world outside. The painters have little or no access to oil paints (they could be used for weapons of mass destruction) or canvases, let alone to patrons—for who will buy their works when people are worried about keeping a roof over their heads and feeding their families?

* * *

The situation in the hospitals and schools, of course, is even more devastating: not only is there a severe shortage of medicines and medical equipment but there isn't even potable water. Iraq had excellent health care and education systems before 1991; both are free and provided by the government. But water treatment and sewage plants throughout the country were destroyed during the 1991 bombings, and more than half of them

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October

Joel Ray

Part 1

Aurora

I'm sitting on the dock looking north across the lake, pants rolled up and feet in the water, watching the aurora, and its pale reflection on the surface—or perhaps it's from the depths; mostly I am a stone with eyes, though I have seen this before and my mind knows what it is, huge flares erupting on the surface of the sun, the energy of it sometimes enough to knock out Quebec's transmission systems.

After a time there emerges from the aurora a flight of geese, at first a smoky smudge against the slowly wavering light, found by their high far-off barking; it's as though the aurora is audible, and some kind of retort out of which life emerges; the noise rises, I can hear the geese circle several times and finally land, up the lake in the quiet bay behind the islands, in a crescendo of hilarity and exhilaration, the sound echoing against the hills like the shattering of a thousand crystal glasses. Soon the aurora has spread and brightened and is pulsing overhead, a circular white searchlight of fire flaring, coming, going.

Earlier this still, sunny day, soon after I had arrived back from the Montreal airport: a cloud of geese bicker and won't land with me in the red canoe, out in the middle, and I recall my daughter's comment about them traveling at the speed of the slowest flyer, when I had said, "Well, of course" and then thought, Ah, yes—I see what you mean. They must think I am a man with a gun, a misperception indeed, as I have never killed an animal to stay alive. You can come on and land, I want to yell. High up they circle again and again, and send scouts halfway down, but finally after much disputation they re-form and fly away, fading south toward the mountains.

Now, tonight, here in this in-between state, somewhere between animal, human, and stone in the brightening glow and flow of solar time, I watch the flaring light till my legs go numb in the freezing water and when I stand up the blood begins to flow again, time taking over again, I go inside, open the bed, stoke the fire, lie down to begin *The Shooting Party* before sleep. The novel begins, "You could see it as a drama all played out in a room lit by gas lamps, perhaps with flickering sidelights thrown by a log fire...and then a fierce electric light thrown back from a room beyond, the next room, into which no one has yet ventured, and this fierce retrospective light through the doorway makes the lamplit room seem shadowy...and the people...seem like beings from a much remoter past...." I cannot get beyond this passage, thinking of the night before, sitting with Freddie and Annie in their house in Nemaska, five hundred miles to the north, where the power had gone out, looking by candlelight at the photographs of his parents who spoke only Cree, and of the huge hydro dams on the La Grande, examining the map of his trapline near the Rupert, perhaps the next of the great northern rivers to be sacrificed.

Earlier that day Freddie's brother Walter had said, Isn't New York a violent place? And I found myself helplessly saying, Yes, but, but...it's full of wonderful art and music and libraries and restaurants of the world and.... And the movies, said Walter. And it's well lit, I said.

Trout

I eat the rainbow standing at the stove, straight from the pan, picking the curved layers of sweet red flesh carefully from the

bones with a fork. I had leftover beef stew from last night but the rainbow had caught herself snugly on my Rappala, wagging in the water behind the canoe, and luckily this time I had not forgotten the net. Thomas was going to take me fishing in Nemaska but he was not there when I arrived. I didn't miss the fishing. Noah, who took me around in his truck to see the power lines and the huge substation, told me that Nemaska—he pronounced it something like "n'm'ska"—means "many fishes." A hundred years ago this north country lake was called Trout Lake, and on the wall of one of the old boat-houses I've seen the penciled outlines, from the 1920s and '30s, of very large native speckled (brook) trout. A few old fellows, like the man who ties flies over in the village and comes to take care of the camp next door till the owner arrives, still know how to catch big ones, though not native. Mostly now it's put and take. The rainbows are stocked by the state as the lake now has perch and bass, recent introductions, that eat the fingerlings. It can't support a native population.

One year the weather was extremely warm in the spring, and we helped the state hatchery man dump buckets of rainbows into the deeper water of the lake from our boat. They would die otherwise in the very shallow water by the public boat launch, he said. We'd been excited to help, but the fish kept leaping out of the buckets and thrashing around on the floor of the boat, and it disturbed me to handle these creatures that I would later try to catch with a rod from the canoe, pretending that they were wild when in fact they had spent their lives in a crowded fish prison eating hatchery pellets. I felt the disgust of my friend who was fishing over at the river when the hatchery truck began to dump trout in under the bridge. Hellfire, he said to the driver, why don't I just fish in the truck?

In January, well after I have gone back to Ithaca for the winter, local men will set up shanties here to fish through holes in the ice. Walter had shown me the ingenious method the Crees use, with nets and sticks underneath a series of adjacent holes they chop with their spuds and axes. No reels and line and flags, no hooks. I lived in the north country for fifteen years and ice-fished too, and I miss those skills and pleasures. The breathlessness and sweat of chopping the holes, and then the waiting, and the keen excitement of the flag going up and the invisible pike pulling hard on the braided handline beneath two feet of ice. The fish freezing quickly on the ice in minus 20 weather as we baited the hooks and reset the flags—to come to life again later, thawed on the kitchen drainboard, where it would flop and menace your careless fingers with its needle teeth.

Leaving-time

It's fall and time to close up. To empty the water lines and pump, winch the motor up off the boat and lay it on the side of the slip, then winch up the boat and slide two-by-fours underneath. There's some glazing to do, and cleaning out the gutters, and splitting and stacking wood and scouring the deck of the green deposits of the hemlocks and replacing the rotten boards on the dock. Trying to keep a step ahead of water-entropy. No one is around now and the woods are silent, so first I take a walk up the hill on a path soft with years of fallen leaves, which goes gently a mile or so up toward the top of the ridge, from which you can see the lake. Halfway up, just off the path, there is a red posted sign nailed to a tree with the name of the new owner who has recently bought the land around the lake. It startles me, as though I had run into a fence—this

machine-printed name there on a "do not" sign in the middle of the woods. Does he really mean to warn me away from walking here? With a couple of sticks I dig up some mud from a little marshy swale and smear the sign thickly with it, thinking of Woody's optimistic verse that was never allowed to be sung on the radio, about the No Admittance sign—"but on the other side, it didn't say nothin' / This land belongs to you and me."

Near the top of the ridge there are boulders as big as a hunting camp. Underneath one there is a big hollow, and the bear whose recent scat lay in the middle of the path may soon settle in there for winter. I saw him this summer, his big black rump just entering the woods as I came around a curve on the lake road in my car. I remember Willie Awashish's story in Richardson's *Strangers Devour the Land* about his father Isaiah tracking a bear to its den.

To glimpse such an animal is always startling, stirring. Last year I saw a coyote cross the road and got out quickly to see if I could spot him in the woods. He had stopped in midstride, in a little sun-dappled glade, and was looking back over his shoulder at me. He was larger than I had imagined coyotes to be, the size of a German shepherd, sharp-nosed and very beautiful in his reds and blacks and grey midriff. We looked intently at each other for a few seconds, and when I spoke he was gone. My guide to the mammals says they are the fastest runners among the canines, faster than wolves. Only once have I heard them laughing together, around midnight. I read somewhere that for every coyote you see there will have been ten that were seeing you.

I do feel at times, especially in the early evening, that the woods are watching me. That I am being seen. The idea that I am a subject in the lives of animals, and not just the other way around, pleases me in a way I cannot explain. It is an idea, I imagine, that the Cree in their cousinly relation to animals would understand quite instinctively.

Perhaps I need to be seen for what I am by something other than humans.

Back near the camp sits a big brown snowshoe hare that in a couple of months will be pure white; often I see him in the spring when he is half-and-half; he is my symbol for the in-between state that I love so much about this place in spring and fall, when the sharp edges of winter and summer begin to dissolve and shimmer like the aurora. During part of the year he lives under the camp. Mice and squirrels live inside in the winter.

Starting my work in the boathouse, I realize that some of the Cree hunters will soon begin the reverse procedure, getting their boats ready for the trip into the bush before ice-in forces them to walk. The boulders up on the hill tore through this country during the retreat of the Ice Age a hundred centuries ago (whose thousands of remnant lakes I flew over)—not too long, in geological time, before the Cree first peopled the Ungava Peninsula. They are one of the oldest cultures on earth. For an eyeblick of time some have spoken English, since our 17th century when the Nonsuch sailed into Hudson's Bay, and they became trappers of beaver for the European fur trade via the Hudson Bay Company. Few of them speak French which angers the Quebecois who want their rivers and their land.

After disconnecting the power controls and fuel supply and steering cable for the motor, I have trouble with the winch, which won't release properly. I can hear myself curse and mutter in the silence. I imagine Freddie laughing gently at me, with my southern technology (simple though it may be). Just pull the boat up on shore, why don't you, he might say. It's heavy but two men

could do it. Cover it with a tarp and those hemlock boughs for the winter. But see, I would say, it's just me and the winch, my son lives in California and my neighbor has gone back to Florida.

The Dire Prophecy

The evening I arrived in Nemaska I met a young Innu man who was studying international law in Ottawa. He lived in Schefferville, nearly six hundred miles northeast on the Labrador border, where, he said, it was common to see herds of 40,000 caribou. The Innu in that region were the first natives on the peninsula to suffer the developed world's addiction to electricity, when Churchill Falls, the most beautiful falls on earth, some say, was destroyed to create a dam, and their hunting lands were flooded.

He told me the Innu elders had prophesied that one day there would be farming in the north. Stated so baldly, this remark took me aback for a moment—So? I almost said, we are losing farms fast, it's a way of life that needs to be protected, we need the ornery-ness and skepticism of farmers to keep us honest—and then of course I realized what he meant. The animals leaving, the permafrost thawing, fences erected, the lakes drying up, a new diet of vegetables and sedentary domestic meat filled with fat.

Global warming, yes. But the prophecy was like a flashback to the 19th century—cutting down the forests and settling into villages. Well, I thought, that would end the walking, wouldn't it. I had read in Richardson's book of Cree men who walked all the way across the peninsula from the coast of James Bay to Labrador, then back again, during the winter, in their search for food. Fifteen hundred miles.

We were eating dinner in the restaurant at the Cree Grand Council headquarters, and the young man's wife began to seem uncomfortable hearing him speak to me about Indian visions. I could see her knee trotting up and down under the table and feel her tenseness.

I told them a little about the power line fight fifteen years back when farmers battled the Power Authority for three years in the fields to stop the import of this Quebec power. Those big lines from the dams, I said, one of them came across the border and cut through our farmland, and in the north country (pardon me, I said, but that's what we call it) Indians came to defend the farmers.

Speaking to him I remembered that frigid January day at the Barse farm when the whole thing started in earnest: the huge predawn bonfire blocking the service road, ignited with the clearing company's ripped-up survey stakes; the eight-hour standoff with the cutting crews; Doug being removed from the big live elm tree by two state cops in a cherry picker; the Seneca woman being chased down and tackled in the snow and shoved into the cruiser, the trooper's hand roughly pushing her head down; and my son, then only eight, looking on wide-eyed. I could see his tears welling up as the cruisers took their cargo of twelve off to jail and the chainsaws began to whine and roar at the trunk of the elm tree, and in my speechless anger I was little comfort to him.

For me the trip to Nemaska completed a circle: Hydro Quebec's assault on the Cree land beginning in 1973 had led directly to the north country farmers' resistance, to the five-year court hearing in New York and the unfolding of the magnetic field threat; it had led to my friendship with Andy Marino, who in the hearing had stubbornly elaborated the scientific evidence for a health risk and suffered a kind of shunning in his profession as a result; led to our book, and the years of consulting with citizens' groups and

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exposed people; then finally to the James Bay conference where I first met some of the Cree leaders and spoke with Boyce Richardson. Standing with Noah under one of the big lines on the first morning in Nemaska, feeling a headache coming on, I told him about the fluorescent bulb trick, how in such intense fields it would light up in your hand without benefit of any connection except your grounded body. He said that Hydro had warned people not to build their camps near the lines, but that they gave no

Hostages

Richardson wrote that once the Cree were off the land their tremendous skills as hunters and naturalists would qualify them for nothing better than to pick up the garbage, just as north country men (some of them still, no doubt, part-time trappers) have been reduced now to taking work as guards in the many new prisons that have been built across the St. Lawrence valley since I moved away. Walter—a beautiful man, tall and

along the Rupert in the old settlement.

How odd to think that I have brought back with me Freddie's address and phone number; not so long before, only twenty years, Job Bearskin had great trouble getting the Quebec court, which was hearing his testimony about the land and animals and the proposed dams, to understand that he had no permanent address. Certainly no telephone.

After the Quebec Mohawks' armed stand-off with police over a golf course that was

have used the testimony of sympathetic white scientists. In fact the most serious physical threat to the La Grande project was labor riots and sabotage by the white workers. Yet now there is a plan for a police force in the north to monitor the Cree as the province gears up to go after the other rivers—Great Whale, Nottaway, Broadback, Rupert.

The morning I left, a Hydro security man appeared in the Council building, a well-dressed Quebecer about my age, graying at the temples, and he stared at me with a most inquiring gaze.

The young Innu man, whose people were battling a dam on the Ste. Marguerite River at Sept Iles, said the Innu might not be so temperate as the Cree. Perhaps youth speaking. But Quebec politicians, taking a leaf from our book, are becoming skilled at the divide-and-conquer technique—that is, at pushing people toward violence. Freddie cannot understand why other Cree want to work for whites, but once enough of them do and they come to believe their livelihoods depend on whites, I wonder whether there will be violence within the Cree world, too, more than the bar fights in Mistassini and Val d'Or. They are a fundamentally peaceable people, yet who is a more convenient and fitting target than one of your own who has gone over to the other side and who by doing so is destroying a part of you?

Flags on Trees

During my canoe paddle today I see that the new owner whose posted sign I smeared with mud has attached red banners to trees on his lakefront property at the southern end, twenty of them, marking boundary lines for hundred-foot lots. Twenty new camps here would kill this lake for everyone. How to respond? Remove the flags? Write a letter?

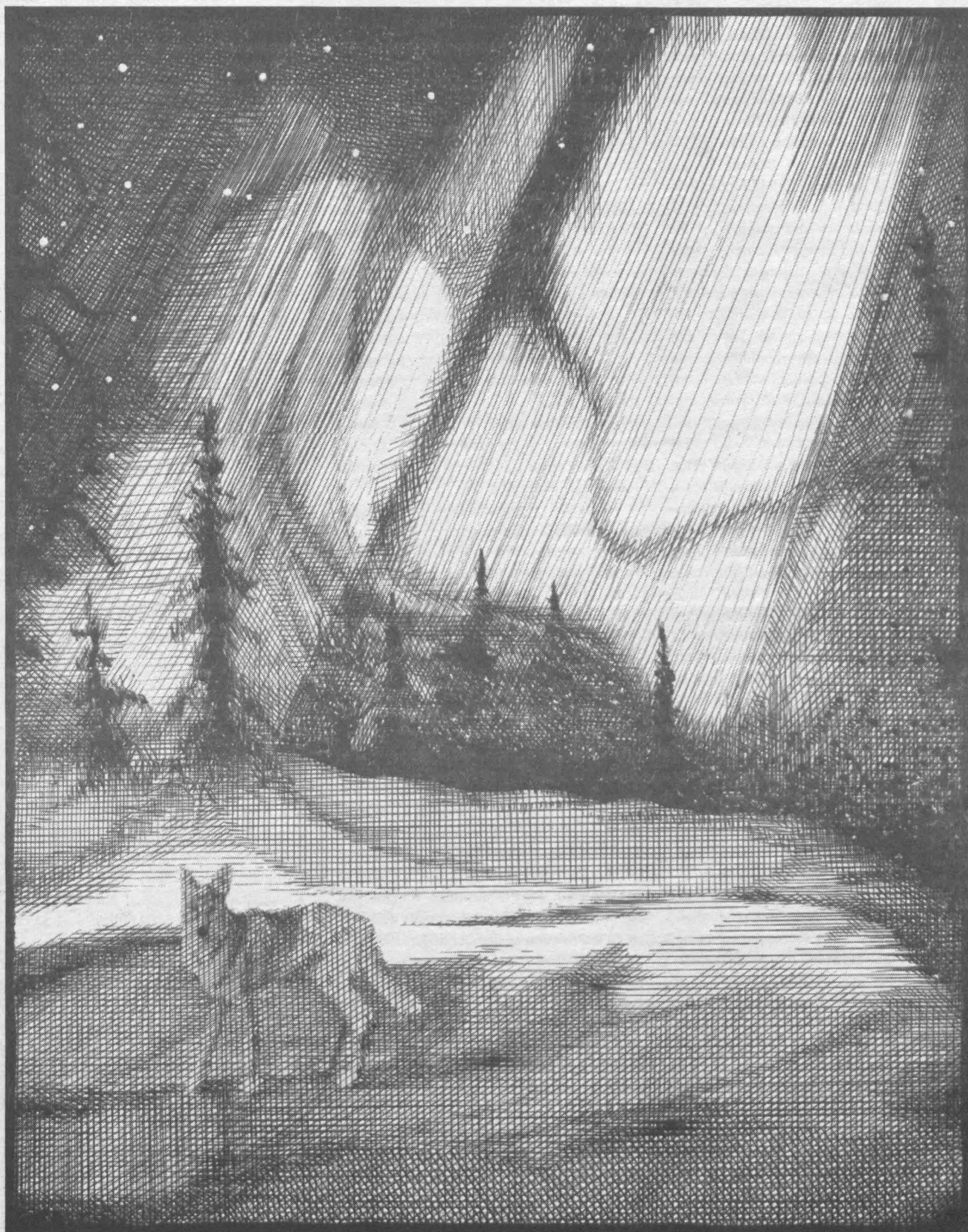
Power Outage

On my second day in Nemaska a storm put the entire village in the dark. In the afternoon as I was leaving the Council building to take a walk, Freddie's sister Bella, who works with J-P in the kitchen, was leaning on the sill of her open window. She had seen me the day before with my meter, measuring the magnetic fields. She called and said slyly, "Maybe you put the power out with your *in*-strument." I laughed, seeing myself for a moment as a comic white man with a little black box. I liked her wit—at my expense and Hydro's in one quick jab. We were all white men playing with fire—or "thunder lightning" as Noah called electricity in the long unpronounceable Cree word....

There was a generator in the Council building, where my room was, and lights were on in the lounge. The chief, after walking the village to see who had lost power, came and sat with me there for awhile. He was shy and droll. "This is supposed to be a hydro project," he said, looking at me quickly through his tinted lenses and then gazing out the window at the Hydro security truck passing, his bland expression barely flickering. "But from time to time," he said, "we have trouble with the power." The chief's dry and seemingly resigned remark would give an outsider little hint of the Cree's spirited and intelligent resistance now for twenty years. They do not rail and threaten and exaggerate. They speak from what they know, and they believe in the facility of reason based on centuries of experience and observation (of people as well as the land). They see with a keenness fast being lost to us in the south the disjunctions between statement and act.

How long will it take for such keenness to

continued on page 10



Don Karr

reason for the warning. Their own studies, I told him, show increased cancer risk to electrical workers. Noah said, "They told us once, at the beginning. But you have to tell people more than once."

The Innu elders' prophecy was no doubt a true native vision, but also a scientific and cultural *fait accompli*: the power generated by damming their rivers and those of the Cree drove the industry that increased the carbon dioxide that warmed the earth's atmosphere, and it intensified the electronic distractions that encouraged everyone to forget the link. The Cree children in Chisasibi, a few miles from the La Grande dams, were hooked now on video games.

strong—told me, "Our people were never fat and sick until we began living in this village." It strikes me now that Nemaska is a prison and the Cree who live there are hostages. Built by Hydro near the big switching station (where five 735,000-volt lines from the Le Grande dams converge to be stepped down) it collects many of the once-nomadic Cree in a place where they can more easily be watched. It is a village of 70 duplex houses on a lake in the bush, near the Rupert River, and near one of the most important electrical substations in Quebec. All the houses are heated by electricity. According to Noah, some of the older people refused to move there and still camp

planned on their sacred ground, the Quebec Sûreté apparently tapped certain phones in Nemaska, having heard that a plan was afoot to occupy the substation. (Mohawks and Cree could hardly be more different in their culture and history, but as usual they all look alike to whites with property to protect.) The chief told me that sabotage or other violence against Hydro was the last resort. In their twenty-year battle against the dams the Cree have never committed a single act of sabotage so far as I know, nor even, I think, used passive resistance. They have used personal observation, tribal knowledge and history—evidence and argument—in the law courts and the court of public opinion; and they

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war would last, how long it would take for the United States to induce an Iraqi surrender. But we do know how some people around the Pentagon hope to speed up the victory. They refer to their strategy as the "shock and awe" approach. Its main proponent is Harlan Ullman, a former Navy official and current "defense intellectual" who first developed his ideas several years ago. He has recently appeared on television to articulate a plan that reportedly has become a favorite of the White House. The goal of the initial stage of a war, according to Ullman, is to "deter and overpower an adversary through the adversary's perception and fear of his vulnerability and our own invincibility." It requires an "ability to impose massive shock and awe, in essence to be able to 'turn the lights on and off' of an adversary as we choose," and "so overload the perception, knowledge and understanding of that adversary that there will be no choice except to cease and desist or risk complete and total destruction."

According to CBS News, the Pentagon plans to implement a strategy like Ullman's by launching 800 cruise missiles at Baghdad in the first two days of the war. "We want them to quit. We want them not to fight," Ullman told CBS reporter David Martin. So "you take the city down. You get rid of their power, water. In two, three, four, five days they are physically, emotionally and psychologically exhausted." Probably many of them are dead as well. Perhaps that is where Rumsfeld got his low-end estimate of six days to win the war. Ullman is confident that the mass cruise-missile attack will work: "You have this simultaneous effect, rather like the nuclear weapons at Hiroshima, not taking days or weeks but in minutes."

Baghdad is a city of over five million people. If officials in the Pentagon and the White House expect its citizens to welcome US military forces as liberators, they had better not treat them as enemies. If US leaders authorize the launch of 800 cruise missiles in the expectation of turning Baghdad into another Hiroshima, any surviving residents will view them as war criminals, and well they should. Much the worse if the United States employs actual nuclear weapons, which some officials have advocated as a means of destroying deep underground bunkers.

At least in the sphere of public relations, the Bush administration has been emphasizing the need to spare civilians in a war against Iraq, an approach that would seem inconsis-

tent with the "shock and awe" strategy. A recent *New York Times* article reported favorably on the military's purported intention to reduce "collateral damage," but included this telling remark from a retired Air Force colonel who directed the bombing campaign in the 1991 Gulf War. According to the reporter, the colonel "argues that while preventing the deaths of civilians should be a priority, it must not outweigh another objective: ending the war quickly." The incoherence of the statement aside (how can something be a priority without outweighing other objectives?), it suggests a means-justifies-the-ends approach that is inconsistent with the laws of war and reflects considerable ambivalence about the international legal obligation to avoid disproportionate civilian casualties.

In an exchange a few years ago in the *Naval War College Review*, Harlan Ullman made the suggestion, now quite commonplace within certain circles, of looking to the Roman empire as a model for US foreign policy after the Cold War. Not surprisingly he was keen to propose "the example of the Roman legions and their relevance to shock and awe." According to Ullman, "the threat that dissent or disobedience in the hinterlands would ultimately be crushed by Roman power indeed produced enough 'shock and awe' to affect will and perception." In response, Mark Conversino, a military historian and a major in the US Air Force, suggested that "a cursory look at Roman history, particularly following the turn of the third century A.D., would reveal an empire often convulsed by major upheavals and rebellions, not all of which were easily or even successfully put down." "Was it merely the 'shock and awe' supposedly generated by the Roman legions," Major Conversino wondered, "that established order and stability?" One would hope that in today's Pentagon similar voices are raising questions about the relationship between military strategy and postwar efforts at establishing order and stability, not to say democracy.

Let us assume for the sake of argument that the damage to ordinary Iraqis from a US invasion is relatively low. What about the next stage? Will democracy, or even some semblance of internal order, be easy to achieve? There are several reasons to doubt it.

Few claim that Iraq would be another Afghanistan, the archetypal country riven by tribal and regional conflicts, ungovernable by any central authority, let alone a foreign invader. But to assume the opposite seems unrealistic—that a postwar Iraq would evince sufficient coherence or homogeneity as a society to provide the basis for democratic governance. In the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, the first Bush administration refrained from removing Saddam Hussein by force, not only out of concern for the US casualties that a march on Baghdad would entail. One could hardly avoid the impression that Bush the elder and his advisers valued Saddam Hussein's strong hand as the only thing capable of keeping Iraq together. Fearful of creating a "vacuum" that other regional powers would seek to fill, the Bush team longed to replace Saddam with someone just like him, only slightly less nasty.

Now many of the same advisers recommend "regime change" and some of them speak hopefully of democracy. But the conditions of a postwar Iraq, even one not devastated by a military campaign of "shock and awe," might not provide the most fertile ground for democracy. This claim has nothing to do with arguments to the effect that Islamic societies are not culturally suited or ready for democracy. In fact, the Kurdish areas of Iraq, free from Saddam Hussein's rule and under the protection of a US no-fly zone, seem to have implemented a reasonable system of democratic self-governance. But this only reinforces doubts about postwar Iraq's governability. Within the Kurdish regions there

are two major areas ruled by separate and competing political organizations. They engaged in a bloody internecine conflict in 1994, but have since worked out a modus vivendi in the form of a geographic division of rule. Secretary of State Colin Powell has recently revealed to the United Nations a third Kurdish area, run by an Islamicist organization, purportedly with ties to al Qaeda. Add to these the Shi'ia region in southern Iraq, with links to Iran, and the various members of the minority Sunni community who were favored under Saddam but might fear retributive discrimination in his absence. Is it realistic to expect that these disparate groups will be able to work together in a democratic fashion once their common enemy is eliminated? And what about the possible intervention of Turkey in the Kurdish regions—a recent source of conflict between the United States and key NATO allies? Do we expect external interference (perhaps from Iran as well as Turkey) to bolster the prospects for democracy in Iraq?

The precedent of US policy in postwar Afghanistan does not bode well for a future democratic Iraq—however dissimilar the countries themselves may be. Indeed, the extraordinary efforts that Bush administration officials are making to promote a new war come at the expense of the attention and aid they had promised to rebuild Afghanistan after the last war. Perhaps more significantly, there is still a strong streak of that peculiar mix of unilateralism and isolationism among key Washington officials that renders implausible the idea of a long-term commitment to fostering a democratic Iraq.

We shouldn't forget that the Bush administration came into office criticizing the limited efforts its predecessors had made in trying to fashion a workable political solution in the wake of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Soldiers from NATO countries were serving as peacekeepers there, with the US contingent making up about 15 percent of the total. Even that was too much for candidate Bush, who vowed, if elected, to withdraw them. His advisers dismissed the Clinton administration's limited "nation-building" projects as an unrealistic and inappropriate use of US resources. As Condoleezza Rice, a Bush campaign consultant, and now national security adviser, put it in an interview with *The New York Times* in October 2000, "We don't need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten." Such attitudes remain just below the surface for many officials who now spout the rhetoric of democratization-by-war. They hardly imply a sustained commitment to building a postwar Iraqi democracy.

But that is what US citizens expect of its government if it launches this war. Eighty-six percent of respondents in a recent poll believe that the United States would have the responsibility to remain in Iraq until there is a stable government. Seventy-four percent claim that it is important to bring democracy to the country, although the median estimate is that this will require US troops to stay there 3-5 years. The Bush administration's isolationist hawks seem to be setting up the American public for a disappointment by trying to sell them the Wolfowitz scenario. It looks like a bait-and-switch operation.

Let us, for the sake of argument, suppose that Iraq does emerge from a US invasion as a relatively stable and democratic place. What next? Will the administration's appetite for violent promotion of "regime change" be satiated or will it increase? Judging by *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, a document issued by the administration in September 2002, the country should already be at war with the other members of the "axis of evil." The North Korean government has made clear its nuclear ambitions, and the Iranian one is probably not far behind. "America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed," according to the document,

which even includes the sophomoric, albeit dangerous, cliché: "our best defense is a good offense." Moreover, the Bush administration vows to "make no distinction between terrorists and those who knowingly harbor or provide aid to them." This commitment puts several more countries onto the target list, including supposed allies in the war against terrorism, such as Pakistan.

Having named the countries and indicated the grounds for "preemptive war" against them, the Bush administration has created a dilemma that can lead only to bad choices. It either follows through with its threats, embarking on a series of wars without apparent end. Or it refrains from attack and reveals its threats to have been hollow ones. In the meantime it has provided an incentive for the "evil" countries, and probably others, to accelerate their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, if only to try to deter a possible future US attack. The administration's reluctance to follow through with its threats against North Korea could represent a case of temporary sanity, given the destruction that Pyongyang's "conventional" weapons could wreak on its South Korean neighbor. Or the Pentagon may be taking the pragmatic approach of one war at a time (despite years of military budgets premised on the need to fight simultaneous wars). But even if the Bush regime does not pursue the endless-war strategy, its bellicose rhetoric will have made the world a far more dangerous place.

The Wolfowitz scenario is apparently the best the Bush administration can manage for a positive vision of the results of its planned war against Iraq. The new peace movement, very adept at responding to the administration's shifting arguments, pseudo-evidence, and diplomatic maneuvers, has by necessity conducted itself mainly in a reactive mode. Can the peace movement offer a positive vision beyond "anti-war?" The emphasis on international law, the United Nations, letting the inspectors work, is all for the good, but it still reacts to Washington's agenda. A positive agenda for the US peace movement, as globally connected and internationally oriented as it is, should probably focus on matters at home.

It might not be an easy sell during a time of tremendous national insecurity, but somebody has to say something about the extraordinarily bloated US military budget. The Bush administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2003 is nearly \$400 billion, over \$45 billion more than the previous year — and, incredibly, it does not even include the cost of fighting wars like the one in Iraq. The total figure represents a 13 percent increase over the average military budget during the Cold War (also subtracting the cost of the hot wars), when the United States was locked in conflict with a nuclear-armed Soviet Union fielding millions of soldiers.

Today the United States faces no such enemies. US military spending is greater than that of the next twenty-six countries combined, and most of them are US allies. The closest thing to a major-power rival on the horizon is China, with its high growth rate, vast territory, natural resources, and large population. But China's gross domestic product in 2001 was \$1.3 trillion, less than the size of California's, whereas that of the United States was \$10.2 trillion, nearly eight times larger. The increase in US military spending from 2002 to 2003 is alone more than twice the entire Chinese military budget.

If security is the purpose of military budgets, one could imagine many alternative ways to spend the money that could enhance US and global security. However much the threatened war against Iraq has to do with oil, for example, a clear domestic priority (with evident international implications) should be the pursuit of renewable energy sources. Here

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Shibley Telhami has become a voice of reason on American policy toward the Middle East. —Jimmy Carter

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Report from Porto Alegre

Zillah Eisenstein

The third World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 23-28, like its predecessors in 2001-2 was a spirited response to neo-liberal/capitalist priorities and the excessive inequities being visited on most countries as part of these policies. The WSF was meant to be a "movement of movements"; a "coalition of coalitions" embracing a "universal planetary citizenry" saying that "another world is possible". The earlier charters from these gatherings write that: "political action is the responsibility of each individual and the coalitions they form" and that the Forums are a place for diverse agendas to be openly discussed. The hope is to create new dialogues between the local and global. Ithaca was a place where some of these local meetings took place. The Ithaca Social Forum (ISF) took shape at a series of discussions through the fall, held at Autumn Leaves Bookstore, which culminated in a weekend Forum, on November 23-24. Approximately 350 people partook in the weekend of music, poetry, and small group discussion of "building a better world" in Ithaca. The sessions were held in downtown churches. Several committees were set up at the ISF to begin to work on local issues. A few of us from these meetings attended the Porto Alegre Forum.

Though people from all over the world were there, as one might expect, Europe and the U.S. were over-represented, with very few people from countries in Africa and the Middle East in attendance. Of course, many people came from countries in South America, with huge numbers from Brazil. I expect that the election of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, known as Lula, of the Workers' Party (PT), energized this large mobilization of peoples and delegations from Latin countries. Altogether, it is roughly estimated that 100,000 people were at the WSF.

On the first day of the Forum it was hard to know where to go because programs had not yet been printed. It quickly became obvious that things were not going to be easy; there was just too much to do and too many people for things to go smoothly. But there were hundreds of workshops to attend and disorganization did not prevent important discussions from happening, nor did it dampen people's excitement. It did, however, limit exposure and attendance to many meetings that never got publicized.

I attended the WSF as a delegate of

the Women's Economic Development Organization. My participation was defined through this lens. The forum was much like the globe—you cannot experience the whole of it from any one particular site. Throughout the five days I was in Porto Alegre, I met with women activists and a wide array of women's NGOs and feminists. However, the focus of many of these discussions—the particular effects of globalization and militarism on women and girls—was not a dominant theme at the WSF. Noam Chomsky and other luminaries critiqued capitalism and neo-liberal policies, but did



not address the specific uses of patriarchy and racism by global capital. Many of the women delegates I shared my time with thought that there was not enough attention paid to the reality that the new working class of global capital is disproportionately girls and women of color, between the ages of 14-17.

Nevertheless, those of us concerned with women's issues did attempt to specify the plight of women refugees, girl/women sweatshop workers, women as rape victims in war, and the growing numbers of women and girls affected by HIV and AIDS. Women representing a variety of feminisms attempted to articulate new strategies to resist the growing militarization of the globe. There was open resistance to the increasing marketization/privatization of everything public: be it health, or welfare, or education. Most of the feminists from South American countries united around what they termed an anti-fundamentalism politics. The campaign, which was called "Against Fundamentalisms,

People are fundamental!" seeks to develop radically democratic politics to resist the growing excesses of extremism, be they religious, anti-woman, capitalist, etc. Alliance building among women's activists, through and across differences, was keenly embraced at all these meetings. Before the Forum was over, it was clear that many of us were already hoping that next year's WSF would better expose these issues as central to an anti-globalization stance for the world community.

There were also earnest attempts at widening and deepening debates and connections,

even if incomplete. This was very true of the international AIDS meeting I attended where the concern was to build concrete policy options about how to address the disease both locally and globally. There were the beginnings of a common agenda for the transnational level between ACT Up, Women's Network, and Oxfam. The AIDS theme was named, "One World, One Fight". (<http://www.aids2003.net>) And, "Globalize Human Health".

Upon returning from Porto Alegre, Joanna Kerr, director of the Association for Women's Rights in Development wrote that the WSF "brought together global social movements including the women's movements...but there is still limited cross-fertilization or alliance building across these movements". She goes on to say that feminist and women's activists need to address their marginalization within the broader anti-globalization movement. I think that one of the most important things about the World Social Forum is the 'community of commu-

nities' that it was able to create and hopefully can nurture elsewhere. Despite the fact that many of the people attending were connected through complex e-mail networks, they needed to see one another and build communities with each other to take home with them. So much of what happened at the WSF happened between people talking and sharing their ideas with each other, sharing and learning from one another, about the specifics and similarities of their home-country's struggles.

Shortly before leaving for home I attended a small workshop about the recent murderous riots in Gujarat, India. The film-maker, Deepa Dhanraj, spoke about the film she wishes to make in order to document the recent atrocities visited on Muslims by Hindus. She especially wants to uncover and expose the special abuse Muslim women faced in the rioting. She shared with us her concern that, in all the coverage of the Gujarat riots in India, there had been virtually a complete silence about the sexual abuse, rape and murder of Muslim women there. But Dhanraj wants her film to do more than record the violation of Muslim women. She wants it to show how Muslim women are organizing against this kind of violence and how Hindu feminists join them in these struggles to create a better world, free of violence to women. She intends that her film show the complexity of local patriarchies within the larger system of globalization. I have come home determined to try to build some local support to assist with this film.

It was time for me to leave although the meetings were not over. I left for Ithaca thinking how incredible it is that all these people came to share their experience in striving for world peace and economic and social justice. On my trip home, I wore a Lula button on my jacket and was greeted with nods of approval from people of all types in the Porto Alegre and São Paulo airports. The airports in Brazil were so much friendlier and relaxed than at home. It was sad to realize upon setting down at JFK airport, that I was re-entering the home country of the 'war on terror'. There were the wands and the screeners waiting for me in full force, again. This is not the kind of life I want for any of us.

Zillah Eisenstein is a well-known feminist author and professor of politics at Ithaca College. Her newest book will be *Who is the West?: Feminisms, Slavery, and Democracies*, with Zed Press.

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again the budgetary connection to the war in Iraq is instructive. The Bush administration proposes to spend \$720 million over the next five years to develop the infrastructure for hydrogen fuel-cell production, distribution, and storage. It may seem like a lot of money, but more than that gets burned up whenever the United States launches a fleet of 800 cruise missiles (about a million dollars a piece) at a foreign country.

If the focus on alternative domestic priorities for US military spending seems too parochial and selfish, consider an international example. The United States, one of the least generous among the industrialized countries in foreign aid, grants about \$20 million to the average African country in a given year. A single jet fighter costs about \$30 million. The Bush administration plans to spend \$12 billion this year on developing three new models of fighter and attack aircraft. There is no country in the world that can match the current generation of US military aircraft (or other military technology), so the Pentagon is

in effect running an arms race with itself as it strives to produce ever more capable and lethal weapons.

Last fall, student anti-war organizers at Cornell came up with the clever campaign (alluding to projected costs of a war in Iraq) centered on the question, "How would you rather spend \$200 billion?" At a time when school budgets are being slashed and local taxes raised, when the health care system is in terminal crisis, when corporate greed has sent pension funds plummeting and put the future of Social Security in doubt, such a campaign holds great promise. The Bush administration plans to invade Iraq in the utopian expectation that war will bring democracy to the Middle East, eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction, and seriously undermine international terrorism. It proposes vast increases in military spending, while giving enormous tax breaks to the rich, and offers us the prospect of endless wars in the pursuit of peace. By comparison, proposals to reorient US military spending to peaceful purposes, in an effort to redefine security in terms of the well-being of average citizens, appear quite realistic.

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A Note on References:

The quotations of Wolfowitz come from Bill Keller, "The Sunshine Warrior," *New York Times Magazine*, 22 September 2002; those of Ullman are from Ira Chernus, "Shock & Awe: Is Baghdad the Next Hiroshima?" *CommonDreams.org*, 27 January 2003; of Ullman and Conversino, <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/press/Review/1999/spring/imv-sp9.htm>; of Rumsfeld, *National Public Radio*, 7 February 2003, <http://www.npr.org/programs/atc/transcripts/2003/feb/030207.gjelt.html>. Poll data come from the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland.

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be dulled? In the center of the village was a huge satellite dish that brings in American TV for the entire village. Cinemax, Detroit. Walter's movies. For a generation or so, perhaps, they will use what they learn from it to resist the colonizers. After that? Will they begin to learn how they need it, like the Chisasibi children?

Near the dish was a Pentecostal church. J-P tells me the church has helped many of the villagers in their problems with alcohol, but I think with such help must come also pacification, softening up. The alien proselytizing church and the irresistible TV seem to me like veils being drawn between the Cree and their old life. On Sunday nearly everyone in the village was in church for two hours singing hymns.

There is also a school here. The teachers are white Quebecers who live separate from the main village; J-P says they have no particular investment here and do not stay for long. But perhaps it's better than the old days when Cree children were sent south to be educated, where they were wheedled and brainwashed and their culture derided, and they returned north embarrassed by their illiterate parents and unsure whether they wanted to continue hunting. The chief told Richardson that his time in the south had been "pure misery."

Liver Spots and Shrunken Gonads

Walter wanted to know if the magnetic fields could affect the animals. He did not express concern about himself or his wife, who is pregnant, or his children, but about the animals. This was true of everyone I spoke with. Bella, Walter, Freddie, the chief, and Thomas's sister all told me about animals with anomalies: water on the heart, green spots on the liver, enlarged kidneys. Noah, driving me in his truck to the substation so I could take readings on it and on the big lines, wanted to know if the fields could hurt the fish underneath the lines. He said the ptarmigan landed near the lines and were easy to hunt there (interference with their magnetic homing, I think), and that the blueberries under the lines were gigantic.

Walter said there were fewer moose and almost no lynx anymore. In my work on this issue over the last ten years I have been concerned with what happens to people, to farmers and others who live in the power corridors. In my report I will summarize for the Grand Council the many experiments on animals that have brought this problem to light, and no doubt their native sense of irony, always on a simmer now, will be stirred to a low fire; we are profligate in using animals to find out if we are in danger, but for them animals are the point of everything they do.

Recently I attended a big biology conference in Washington, where the organizers were very nervous about the demonstrations outside the hotel by animal rights activists. In the printed program for the conference there was a specially prepared defense of animal experiments and advice to the delegates about dealing with the media, written and packaged by a big national consulting firm. In the session on electromagnetic fields, a researcher described exposing Syrian hamsters to the fields, which resulted in shrunken gonads. There were nervous titers from the men in the room. But of course no one raised a question about the use of the hamsters. Nor did anyone object that the "sacrifice" of animals probably would make no difference in the exposure of humans because the utility industry would spend millions funding bogus research and opposing every experiment that found an effect.

What do the Cree think of our animal rights movements, of vegetarianism? Surely it must puzzle them—to be constantly worried about taint and guilty about the condi-

tions in which the animals live, and yet be unable to change, enslaved to the vast and intricate structures of scientific research and the international food supply. How much they know about how we treat our food animals I can't be sure, though it's not so long ago that we used to live with cows, pigs, goats, sheep—even chickens—as coequals of a sort, and they had names and were touched and looked at and talked to, and they were killed with some sense of obligation to be quick and merciful, and perhaps even a sense of gratitude.

The Cree have been condemned as "aristocrats" by the Quebec government. What a bizarre accusation, I thought at first. Yet



considering this matter of animals I understand a little what that may mean. They are privileged, for one thing, to eat uncontaminated food. So they must become enlightened and democratic. The first step of course is to remove them from the land and confine them in villages.

Supplies

I call my wife to tell her I'm staying a little later than I planned. I can't yet face heading south, hitting the three lanes on Rte 81 at Central Square where the force of gravity begins to suck me toward the abstraction of my work in Ithaca. I drive in for more supplies. It is ten miles through the woods to the nearest store, located along a two-lane route that stretches across the top of the north country to Lake Champlain and Vermont. Emerging from the dense woods at edge of the village you can see, on a clear day, Canada stretching away into infinity on the other side of the St. Lawrence. Just at this one spot at the top of the escarpment, nowhere else, is it visible. Five hundred miles away, in a wilderness stippled with millions of lakes from the time of the ice age, is Nemaska. And here, across the road from the store, is a huge factory dairy, with hundreds of cows permanently inside, stand-

ing in their stanchions, eating, shitting, and being milked probably three times a day rather than the usual two, treated with bovine growth hormone which truncates their productivity and their lives, and puts humans at risk of ingesting both the BGH and antibiotics that will lower their own resistance to disease. It is a monstrous thing, a straight-line technology like the power lines, aimed at greater and greater concentration of mass, and today in the stillness the place stinks horribly. Traveling through Kansas and eastern Colorado a few years back we saw the huge outdoor feedlots where beef cattle were crowded together, but this is worse because it is forever for these nameless cows, which never in their brief lives see a pasture or get wet in the rainfall. The manure from this operation has polluted local wells and the creek which runs through the village and feeds the trout river, but the owner is on the town board and no doubt the richest man in town. It is his son who has bought up the woods at the lake.

A White Admirer

When I wondered that first morning who might come to take me over to see the substation, J-P said, "With the natives you have to sit, and listen, and wait."

J-P is an Acadian (he still called it Acadia) who has worked as a dietitian for the Cree for nearly ten years (their new stationary life in villages is full of such indigestible ironies). A tall strong man with blond hair under his white chef's hat, he fixes me breakfast each morning and sits to talk. We discover a common interest in music. He tells me that when he heard Mississippi John Hurt at the age of fourteen, a new life opened up for him; he goes to his room and brings back pictures of two beautiful old steel guitars he owns, and talks admiringly about Tommie Johnson and other old blues players. I promise to send him my article on Roy Bookbinder, and tell him about meeting John Hammond, who plays a beautiful steel. And so we go, back and forth, not quite high-fiving. Then he tells me about a Cree fiddler named Spencer, whose father was a Scot. "Before he died," says J-P, "he visited Scotland to see where his father had grown up, and he played reels and jigs there the Scots had never heard—or had forgotten." J-P gets a kick out of the Scots not knowing, obviously, and I suddenly understand why he does not call his homeland Nova Scotia. The stories of the 1756 Acadian exile—of peaceful farmers from Brittany who would not pledge allegiance to the British Crown—have been passed down to him in bitter detail through his forebears, some of whom wound up in the South, Virginia, Louisiana, some in Australia, scattered around the world.

He wears his devotion to the Cree on his sleeve, speaking with a kind of awe when he says, "The natives are different from you and me, you know. They talk with the animals." One of his proudest moments, he says, "was when they interviewed me on TV, and I told the province of Quebec that the Cree were more mature people than the whites." Forty centuries of becoming mature, I think. Forty centuries of talking with the Ungava animals, who have made it a conversation. He is happy to have brought up his children with the Cree, speaking their language and learning to call the geese.

After our talk I took a short walk off into the low black-spruce woods which enclose the village, and saw three spruce grouse, a male and two females, who seemed hardly afraid of me, allowing me to come very close. I spoke aloud and they were unfazed, the beautiful black-breasted male fanning its tail for the females. Our naturalists would call them "foolish" because they can so easily be killed. But to the Cree, the animals are in a state of cooperation with humans when they offer themselves as food. If they do not

want to be caught, the hunters would say, you simply have to accept their decision and understand their wisdom. In Richardson's book there is a beautiful and mysterious picture, taken from behind, of the hunter Ronnie Jolly, kneeling in his sock feet, legs apart, his face turned to the wall of the lodge, playing the drum and singing after the successful killing of a moose.

A Pilot Fish

At breakfast the second day a white man sat at my table and began to tell me about his work as a housepainter. He was here to relieve the Cree of some of their "settlement" money, and he obviously thought that because I was a white man I would be sympathetic to him. I recalled what J-P had said about his time in Chisasibi, where the dam workers had assumed he was one of them and said many vicious things about the Cree women. It was a strange moment for me—the only other white visitor drawn to me because of my color, and me feeling that to insult a white man in a Cree village would be a mistake. But it was because we were both their guests, as much as because of my instinctive racial sympathy, that I listened politely and even went with him into one of the rooms to see his work, which was merely decoration, a trading of trinkets (how many things from these few days have reminded me of old, painful history repeating itself). "See," he said, "I'm just a little guy in the corner. But it's profitable—the paint costs me \$9 and I charge them \$800. After this trip, and a few weeks in Chisasibi, I'll be good for the winter." Quebec surely was aware when they promised compensation for the dams that whites would wind up getting their share. Yes, he was a little guy in the corner, like a whore following a war. A pilot fish. As the Cree have often said—it is the principle which has guided them from the beginning—the money does not matter, it will be quickly gone; what matters is the land.

The painter's decoration in the room was one stripe of paint stretching around the walls horizontally, near the ceiling, applied with a roller; and in the middle of the stripe on each wall a stenciled device of spruce boughs and caribou. It incensed me, this representation, especially remembering the news of the 10,000 caribou drowning in the Caniapiscau River as the dammed waters rose, and Hydro Quebec calling it "an act of God." The animals are going away, and the Cree will be able to remember what used to be by having their walls embossed. Perhaps I finally understand postmodernism.

(End of part one)

Joel Ray is a former editor of the Bookpress. He lives in Ithaca.

brunch

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basil cheddar grits

cornbread

scones

eggs florentine

eggs benedict

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SPECIALS CHANGE EVERY WEEK

DEWITT MALL, ITHACA

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"Will Bush Bomb Us?"

continued from page 5

from working in a pool (because of the dangers of chlorine). We watched an 18-month-old child with cerebral palsy wail in pain as the physical therapist worked on her limbs. Her agony could have been largely avoided, the treatment more humane, if she'd been given the same therapy in a pool of water.

These days, too, nearly a quarter of the children of Iraq do not attend primary school, which like higher education is free and provided by the government. The kids are too busy trying to help their families earn money by shining shoes, peddling cigarettes or boxes of tissues (tissues are used by individuals in this country in place of toilet paper and napkins—you bring your own), or herding sheep and goats. And besides, the schoolbooks are ancient and the school supplies hard to come by. One of the University of Baghdad students whose home we visited, Mahmoud, showed us what he uses to study from—photocopies of his professor's single copy of various linguistics and rhetoric textbooks, the most recent of which was published in 1986.

* * *

Virtually all of the people of the country are dependent on the largesse of the Iraqi government (via the oil-for-food program) for 20 kilos of food (sugar, flour, coffee, rice, beans, salt, oil) a month, which keeps them from starvation. The value of the package is about US \$5 on the world market; the Iraqis can purchase it for about 20 cents. This diet provides little protein, but it does provide the basics to keep from starvation. The packets also provide something to sell if the family is in desperate need of something else, like clothing or rent money or black-market medicines, which may or may not be of any use but to desperate people may be a sign of hope. "The United Nations decides what food is given, based on a calorie chart they use," explained Kaisel Atir, director of one of the four World Food Programme Distribution Centers ("Food for Oil") that together feed the 5 million people of Baghdad. "Some people are so poor that the food ration is their main income. Actually, that's much of the population."

Although it's not enough to keep everyone fed nutritionally, the program does reach almost everyone legally living in Iraq. In the north, local Kurdish governments distribute

the food packets; in the center and south of Iraq, the Iraqi government is in charge of distribution. "The food reaches the people. We are very efficient," says Atir, "because of our computer system and the 2,293 agents who distribute the food." When we asked deputy director for distribution Dr. Ibrahim Kissan Al Attuay what would happen if there is a war and the distribution system is disrupted, what kind of preparations are being made, he

up against such an oppressive regime. While you're busy struggling to feed, clothe, house, and give medical care to your family, you're unable to concentrate on anything but these basic human needs. Politics seems much less urgent by comparison.

We are more convinced than ever that an attack on the country would be immoral and unjust, as well as an invitation to further bloodshed and attacks against Americans. We

the world is now a shrine in Baghdad. You can feel the learning through the ages when you walk through its corridors and into its carefully reconstructed classrooms. At the ancient city of Babylon, also lovingly recreated, one can almost feel the spirits of our ancestors gliding amidst the bricks made of the yellow sand of the Euphrates River.

* * *

But today life expectancy, the economy, and hopes for the future have shrunk here in the birthplace of humanity, and things are looking grim now as terrified people prepare for the onslaught. For make no mistake—this would not be a war, but a genocidal massacre by the most powerful nation on earth of a decent, loving and lovable, but debilitated people.

As we leave the hotel on our last day in Baghdad, people from the neighborhood join the hotel staff and the police and military men who have been assigned to the area during our stay. They come to say farewell, to give us gifts, to press into our hands cards to bring back to our fellow Americans, and to be sure we take their pictures. They are eager to be photographed, as people have been all week.

They want us to show their pictures to our compatriots back in the United States. They smile and wave, blow kisses and give us the peace sign. They think it will help Americans to see their faces. They think that once Americans see their faces, Americans will not want to bomb them.

Hassan, the young boy who'd been shining George's and my sneakers every day for as many dinars as we can stuff into his hand, hasn't shown up this morning, and we are disappointed not to be able to hug him goodbye. But we have photos of him from earlier in the week. And his face, like the others, is etched into our minds. And their stories tug at our hearts. We only hope that we can live up to the responsibility they have charged us with: "We are counting on you. You have to stop him. Please. Please, don't let him bomb us."

Maura Stephens is a writer and editor who lives in Spencer, New York. She and her husband, George Sapio, had never traveled to the Middle East before this trip. They hope to return to Iraq soon.



George Sapio

Srur, a little girl at the Dar AL Dawla Liltufula orphanage in Baghdad, holds a photo of an Ithaca boy. The wall behind her is decorated with drawings, photos, and letters from Ithaca people, who also donated some 116 pounds of medicines, vitamins, and supplies.

replied, "We have enough to give the whole population what they need through May."

The Iraqi economy is a shambles. The inflation rate is hardly calculable. The 250-dinar note was worth \$750 in 1991; today it is worth a dime. Paychecks average \$2 to \$4 a month. Rents are \$45 to \$50 a month. Eight to 10 percent of the people of Iraq are actually employed by the Iraqi government (besides the usual bureaucrats and the military, health care and education are government-run), so they depend on it for their meager paychecks.

It would not be prudent for them in any case to comment on the political scene within Iraq; it is, after all, a brutal dictatorship. It is clear to us that a people undergoing such suffering and hardships will never be able to rise

in the United States and parts of Europe are being told untruths and half-truths. The 20-24 million people of Iraq are not all fascist nuts with guns. They are decent, caring people with families and friends and a strong social system, with vibrant art and music and dance and theater, with amazingly still-sharp senses of humor, with generosity of spirit, with compassion and caring, with delectable (if limited) cuisine, indeed with the pride deserving of the oldest civilization in the world's history.

For we are talking about Mesopotamia, the cradle of western civilization. Remember names like the Tigris and Euphrates, the Fertile Crescent, and Babylon? These places encompass modern-day Iraq and are visible to any visitor. The first known university in

The Resistible Rise of Bush/Cheney

continued from page 3

way it wishes in world affairs. A columnist for the *Ithaca Journal* spiritedly defended her constitutional right to say these words, then dismissed them as "a paranoid fantasy.") That "fantasy" has of course since been officially proclaimed as policy in "The National Security Strategy of the United States." The contribution of George Bush, in his "wanton" way, has been to speak the

unspoken and to proclaim the system of American military domination as official policy.

On February 15, the largest coordinated international political demonstration in the history of the world exposed that system as never before to vilification and contempt.

But real change, as Noam Chomsky and others have pointed out, must begin in the heartland. It is up to us to understand and oppose not only George Bush but the military, political, and ideological system he inherited so easily—what Brecht would have called "the bitch that bore him."

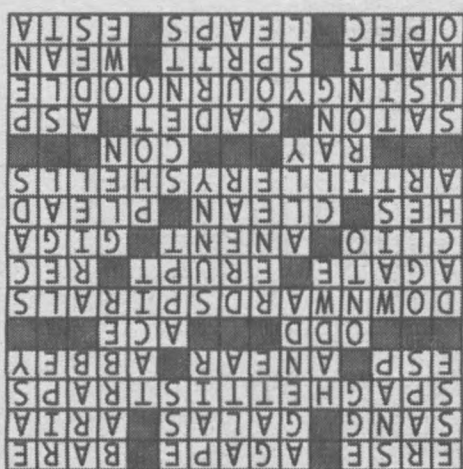
Ordinary Americans are complicit in that system. Millions of people abroad seem to have moved beyond the comforting distinction between the American people (good) and its bellicose government (bad) to a deeper questioning of the entity which Martin Luther King in his day called "the leading purveyor of violence in the world." This is a disturbing but understandable development. My colleague Brett de Bary has suggested that the current fear and bellicosity among Americans reflects real conditions of economic insecurity—people rightly fearful of groups like Al-Qaeda, but also deeply appre-

hensive of losing living standards, jobs, insurance benefits, pensions—none of which can be solved by the (invisible) massacre of the Iraqi people. But Americans must begin to assume responsibility for the actions of a government that cynically manipulates our fears and believes itself above the rule of law.

A strong grassroots movement against war in Iraq is now in place. It must become a permanent, broad-based opposition to the doctrine of American hegemonic power. It must link the issues of economic inequality at home with irresponsible military adventurism abroad; it must continue to grow and to join with the social movements now burgeoning across the world; it must become powerful enough to influence elections and to change policy, bringing this most dangerous of rogue nations into a community of nations under law.

Paul Sawyer is a professor of English at Cornell University. He has written several articles for Bookpress, including "War and Trauma: The Misremembering of Vietnam," Sept-Oct 2001.

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Spider-man/Al Qaeda-man and Men In Black II

Steve Coffman

8/11/02. On this humid 94-degree Sunday in the hottest upstate New York stretch of summer that anyone around here can remember, our old farmhouse is wheezing and so are we. Even the Sunday Times newsprint is smudging off on our sticky hands. My wife Bobbie and I head down to the mall in Big Flats, someplace cool, intent on taking in the least-worst summer movie and getting me a couple of much-needed pairs of pants. As embarrassed as I am to admit it, my last year's expansion to 36s are already pushing at their buttons and resisting closure, a condition that I could try to lay off on laundry shrinkage or 9/11, some better rationale than sheer excessive drink and gluttony. My favorite excuse is that I'm still trying to fill the tobacco-created void left by my having given up after-dinner cigars as part of my New Millennium self-improvement regime, and now—like our post-9/11 War On Terrorism—dinner has come to seem like one long meal that never ends.

So, there we are, me with my new pants in a white plastic bag from Kaufmann's, the two of us coolly escalating to the food court and Arnot Mall 10. Since last year we liked *Men In Black*, we decide on *Men In Black 2*—which at least figures to be more palatable than *Blade 2*, *Spy Kids 2*, *Halloween* (the umpteenth) or *Roadkill*. Beating the heat at matinee prices, it could be worse. I present a twenty dollar bill to the harried skinny girl at the candy counter, whose job now requires her to cover cashing and ticket-taking as well as popcorn-making, snack-selling, and *more*, I discover, as her blank face says: "No packages allowed in the theatre, a new Hoyts Theatre policy for your protection."

"What—this, you mean?" I chirp, opening the package so she can see. "This is just two pairs of pants."

"Sorry, no exceptions."

"You're kidding! This is a *mall*! Isn't buying things the whole idea of a mall?"

"Look—it's a POLICY!"

"You look. It's *pants*! Not guns, not box cutters, not shoe bombs, not anthrax! Just khaki pants, two pairs—two legs each!"

Bobbie's tugging on my arm reminds me of what I already know—it's not the kid's fault. She didn't make the policy. She's just looking to make a few bucks to pretty herself up with some new duds from Banana Republic or The GAP. Or—what do I know—maybe she's also got rent and three little kids to take care of, daycare, medical bills and a drunk deadbeat dad hanging around looking for a touch.... I ease up.

"So, is there at least someplace here where we can leave the package then?"

"You have to take it back to your car and leave it there."

"If I go back to my *car*, I'm going to start the engine and take my pants *home*!"

Her chickenwing shoulders shrugging toward heaven, "Up to you, your choice," she says.

On the way home, and several other times over the next few weeks, I find myself wanting to write a letter to the Mall Corporation, to Hoyts Cinema, to a local op-ed page, to *USA Today*. But what do I want to say? In

terrible times, sacrifices must be made. Is this one of those sacrifices then? It defies all reason.

The Pentagon...

The World Trade Center...

The Capitol...

Hoyts Arnot Mall 10 in Big Flats, NY?...

Is this a pattern? Is there some inkling of logic here that I don't understand? Yes, of course I know that my country was attacked in a terrible and outrageous way. Of course I feel sympathy for those and for any other unjust victims. Of course I've heard and heard and heard how everything has changed and no place is safe or will ever be safe again, how evil and doom could be lurking in every dark space including inside my Kaufmann's bag. But what sense could there possibly be in this bag policy when no one even bothers to check my pockets or wave a wand over me to see what I might have strapped to my body or hidden in my shoes? The lump in my gut tells me this policy isn't in the least about keeping anyone safe. What, then? Some contract business between the Theatre Chain and the Mall Corporation? Some symbolic solidarity with secret purposes of our security-pot-stirring leaders?

Suddenly, I'm sure I've got it. This policy is merely Hoyt's newest weapon in their never-ending war against patrons trying to sneak in snacks to avoid the theatre's detestably overpriced popcorn and Raisinettes. The puzzle temporarily solved to my satisfaction, my letter-writing campaign dissipates, and like a sliver no longer under a fingernail my riled-up feelings over the incident pull back to appropriate insignificance.

A month later, however, the episode re-emerges from its cocoon in new form.

One day less than a month later. On Tuesday—9/10/02.

Again a sweltering day of record-breaking heat, just the kind of day that gets under my bad skin. I'm off early and on my own for dinner because Bobbie's got a Family Planning meeting and will be late. I'm irritable. It's not just the heat and my skin that's eating me up, it's the shameless flood of non-stop 9/11 hype that's been on every radio and TV station for this whole past week. Taking over every newspaper and magazine like this event is a coronation—Super Bowl, D-Day and Princess Di's birthday all rolled into one. Pardon my unpatriotic apostasy, but you'd think that no one else ever suffered unjustly in the history of the world, that no one else died a horrible violent death last year. That there were no other victims not yet ready to die. Whose grieving families were not acknowledged, let alone hailed as heroes and commemorated with great nationwide gushings of sympathy and compensation.

How many in America alone last year—hundreds of thousands?

Worldwide? From war alone—beyond comprehension. How many more from AIDS, cholera, starvation, TB? People just in the wrong place at the wrong time? Children? Young people? People with lives to live, whose least expectation was a wayward bullet or drunk driver, a surgeon's slip or slippery ladder?

This has been a hard and unheralded year for so many.

For the second time in a month, to escape record-breaking heat and 9/11 memories, I find myself seeking cool refuge at Hoyt's Arnot Mall 10 in Big Flats. This time, pantsless, except for the pair I'm wearing, I walk past an installed sign that now boldly proclaims the new policy: "no packages or over-size purses...for the protection of our patrons".

I decide on *Spider-Man*. Inside, the 10th and last cineplex theatre is entirely empty: a private showing; even the automated projection booth is empty; the projector, seemingly running itself for my benefit, is dispensing its pre-main attraction program of trailers, ads and candy-counter teasers.

Spider-Man is surprisingly entertaining. For a while it's a relief to see the world's mayhem reduced to silly comic book violence. Peter Parker—the painfully shy and reclusive high school boy, who, after being bitten by a scientifically souped-up spider, morphs into the multi-talented, campy-creepy Spider-Man. Equally astonishing, Mary Jane Watson—the smart and gorgeous class knockout, Peter's secret flame, whose very presence ties his tongue into eight hairy knots, by some benign coincidence, just happens to have two secret soft spots of her own: for nerds and spiders.

At first, our fearless, super-acrobatic arachno-teen doesn't know what to do with his new powers except to outbully bullies—until dying old Uncle Ben tells him: "Remember, Pete, with great power comes great responsibility!"—whereupon, with Uncle Ben's wisdom coursing through him, Spider-Man-Pete settles down to his superhero chores of saving all in danger, especially those endangered by the deliciously malicious Green Goblin (played to the hilt by Willem Defoe).

Although Uncle Ben's thought was hardly original, sitting alone in the theatre, something also begins to happen to me, thoughts and feelings suddenly begin spinning out of me tether and strand, trying to latch onto some important truth and make it stick. What I can't exactly tell you, but I need it so much I could cry.

Part of me wants to return to my own gullible innocence. Wrap myself in the flag like a superhero's cape. If only our leaders were as virtuous as this shy teenage hero who battles only to save the innocent and preserve what's just and good. If only Osama and Saddam were as pure evil as the Green Goblin. If only I could believe in my heart that we really were the world's great freedom fighters battling on behalf of the weak and the poor and the oppressed. Not just to protect our glutton share of sugar, Asian markets, coffee plantations, oil by the bloody imperial gallon.

At the movie's end Spider-Man obliterates the supremely evil one. And lovely, leggy Mary Jane—saved yet again—gives Peter Parker a super-kiss and vows her everlasting love. But, his bulbous head still swelling with Uncle Ben's words, Pete demurs. No, he can't give her his love—not so long as poor mortals are still unsafe.

"We'll be friends," he tells her.

"YOU IDIOT!" I want to yell out loud, though in this empty theatre I'd only be yelling to myself, "GO FOR LOVE!"

The movie over, I realize I've been had, like Mary Jane, left dangling for a string of sequels and endless parade of new evil ones. Still, I've been entertained, diverted and beat the summer heat, haven't I? What do I expect for six bucks?

But as I step into the brighter light of the lobby, the theatre's new bag-and-purse policy sign again sets me spinning. How different policies are from movies. Policies truly reach out with sticky hands. The bigger the hands and the longer the reach, the more powerful and invasive the consequences. For a strange moment, I imagine projecting my own message on the policy sign's blank backside:

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Steve Coffman is a writer who lives on a farm in Yates County.

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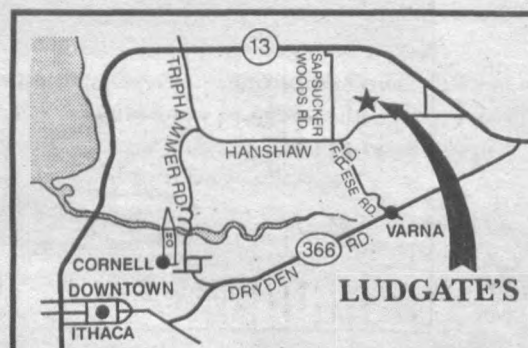
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