

**INSIDE:** DUBYA AND THE GOOD BOOK ● THE PRICE OF SOLIDARITY ● HITCHENS VERSUS RITTER: THE STRANGE DEBATE ● KARL ROVE COMES OF AGE

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**DOCTOR AT WAR,  
LOOKING FOR PEACE**

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In his latest book, trauma surgeon Jonathan Kaplan lists idealism as one of the many casualties of war. **Andrew Donaldson**, London bureau chief of the Johannesburg Sunday Times, spoke to him about the book and his life as a war surgeon in a bar in Islington, North London

# DOCTOR AT WAR, LOOKING FOR PEACE

I first met Jonathan Kaplan in 1987. He had moved to the UK some years earlier rather than serve in the SADF and I was spending a week in London. I stayed over at his flat, sleeping on the floor under a pinball machine in his cluttered lounge.

One night we traipsed off to a local cinema to see *Dead Before Dawn*, the second in Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* horror movie trilogy. It was spam-in-a-cabin stuff, youngsters trapped in a shack in the woods and picked off, one-by-one, by flesh-eating zombies. In one scene, a ghoul's head gets stomped with such force that one of its eyes flies through the air into the mouth of a screaming woman. Later, the film's hero, Ash, amputates his own arm with a chainsaw after it is possessed by evil spirits. Kaplan laughed the whole way through. He found this kind of cartoonish gore good, clean escapist fun.

Within a few years, Kaplan would be confronted with the all-too-real horror of war. Much of this formed the basis of his first book, the Alan

Paton Award-winning *The Dressing Station* – searing and often shocking accounts of his work as a surgeon on battlefields and trauma units in the most remote corners of the planet.

The last time I met Kaplan he told me *The Dressing Station* was recommended reading with the British army's medical establishment. Such an accolade had come as something of a pleasant surprise, Kaplan suggested, as we settled down to a bottle of wine at an Islington bar to discuss his latest work, *Contact Wounds: A War Surgeon's Education* (published by Picador).

Thanks to what could be described as the gristle of his debut memoir, Kaplan is in demand as a lecturer at seminars for army doctors. It was at one of the first of these that Kaplan, possessed of an irreverence unsuited to the “military temperament”, first learned of the esteem accorded *The Dressing Station* by some of Her Majesty's military surgeons. It had been a “weird experience”, he said, talking to stiff-upper-lip type doctors, but then one senior

**“Some patients had been injured by the world's most advanced weaponry . . . but there was no commensurate sophistication in the treatment available”**

## INTERVIEW

**"There were actually far cruder conditions working in the middle of Baghdad, in the University teaching hospital. . . than in the tents in the mountains in northern Iraq"**

officer broke rank and instructed his audience to forget the textbooks and instead read Kaplan's book if they wanted an idea of what it was like to actually work on a battlefield. "I was kinda chuffed," said Kaplan.

The anecdote underlines a moral conflict explored in the excellent *Contact Wounds*, which, as a companion volume of sorts to *The Dressing Station*, albeit of a more personal nature, may also wind up as recommended reading for the British military.

Towards the end of his new book he describes how, just 19 days after the US-led coalition forces entered Baghdad in April 2003, he arrived in the city to volunteer his services and discovered again that it is civilians who are increasingly the casualties in modern warfare.

With the casualties came chaos. The bombing campaigns that the Bush administration said were meant for military targets had claimed, as "collateral damage", the city's hospitals and clinics. Doctors and nurses struggled to cope with dwindling medical supplies. There were power cuts, so the wounded had to be carried up flights of stairs to operating theatres and all but the most urgent surgery was avoided for fear of infection. Instruments could not be sterilised. Water was carried in buckets. Sometimes doctors had to battle with looters trying to strip hospital pharmacies. Relatives with AK-47s stood guard over patients, otherwise armed gangs would steal hospital beds.

"It seems inconceivable," Kaplan writes of the protracted anarchy and

destruction in Iraq, "that no strategy existed to restore order in Baghdad."

In the city, Kaplan's work included assessing facilities that could accept and treat patients. This required him to travel around Baghdad, which put him at risk as locals grew increasingly angry and distrustful of foreigners. What he saw appalled him.

Describing shattered buildings, dirt roads fouled with raw sewage, children playing in garbage heaps, burning vehicles and other horrors, he writes: "Some patients had been injured by the world's most advanced weaponry . . . [but] there was no commensurate sophistication in the treatment available."

"It's interesting," Kaplan told me, "because the first war I was in was northern Iraq in 1991, during the Kurdish uprising that followed the first Gulf War. I worked in tent hospitals quite a lot, and that seemed very primitive. But we managed to set up a working, operating environment.

"In Baghdad in 2003, I was working in a country that used to have the most advanced healthcare in the Middle East, though it became run down during sanctions. But there were far cruder conditions working in the middle of the city, in the University teaching hospital. . . than in the tents in the mountains in northern Iraq."

For all this, *Contact Wounds* is primarily a personal memoir, an account of growing up. Kaplan's Durban childhood was that of many white middle-class South Africans – one of privilege, oblivious to apartheid until much older. But a summer in Israel on

a kibbutz came as something of an eye-opener to the 14-year-old Kaplan, and it was here, rather than at home, that he became aware of racism and the injustices of poverty.

The kibbutz experience also ended his childhood fascination with the “glory” of warfare. “We were available manpower,” he told me. “Or rather, boy power. Fourteen years old. We were helping with the security of the kibbutz. ‘Here’s your rifle. Go out on patrol.’ The whole country was on a war footing.”

And so began the “education” of *Contact Wounds*’ sub-title. Kaplan fled apartheid South Africa after qualifying as a doctor. In the book, he details his quest for sanctuary in exile, experiencing along the way riots, tropical fevers, political upheaval and a heart-breaking search for a friend lost in the bush in Madagascar. He eventually finds himself in the war-ravaged town of Kuito in Angola, taking charge of a combat-zone hospital, the only surgeon for 160,000 civilians – and beginning a career devoted to saving people caught in the crossfire of war and the ravages of disaster.

“The process of discovery – of personal discovery – was of starting off with a very structured career,” he said. “There was training in surgery here [in the UK] and in the States – and then just stepping off the traditional career ladder and becoming a medical vagabond. Going wherever I was called. It was a process of losing my career path and thinking I’d basically blown it, but discovering that, in fact, the world has changed.

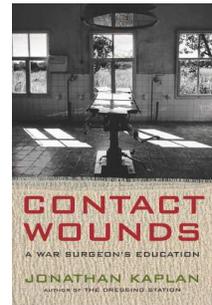
“And the combination of skills that I have is very much in demand at the moment, so I’ve become a sort of specialist, without intending to. And I’m still teaching a lot and lecturing a lot, Royal College of Surgeons, that sort of thing.

He described his medical training in South Africa: “There’s no doubt that in SA there was this unusual combination of First World medical training in a Third World environment. So you saw a lot of trauma and it made us good at dealing with it. And, partly, it gave you the confidence of knowing that if you have to deal with something you will. You may not be able to call on a skilled senior.

“My first case in Angola was a woman who’d been shot in the back of the neck and the bullet came out through her eye – I’d never done surgery like that. But I could do it because . . . well, you just have to be able to do it. If there’s no one else available, you do the best you can.”

Kaplan concludes his book with a suggestion that among war’s myriad casualties is “the idealism we offered”. Some of his Iraqi colleagues are dead. These days, he reads the war news as he would job-vacancy ads, but “looking for peace”.

“So,” he concluded, “My education? In an odd way, I’ve found that I haven’t changed, but the establishment has changed. “Starting my first war in Kurdistan and finishing most recently in Baghdad doesn’t seem to have any pattern to it. But, in fact, the pattern has been created by the increasing disorder in the world.” ●



**CONTACT  
WOUNDS**  
A War  
Surgeon's  
Education

By Jonathan  
Kaplan.  
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## THE GOOD BOOK?

*Do you have trouble reconciling the blood-thirsty rhetoric of religious leaders (step up, Pat Robertson) or rulers of the free world (that's you, Mr Bush) with the turn-the-other-cheek attitude exemplified by Jesus? Well, says **John S. Hatch**, look no further than the Good Book, if you want to see where they get their inspiration*

# PAT, DUBYA, VIOLENCE AND THE GOOD BOOK

**How could George W. Bush square his profound belief in the Holy Book with his premeditated lies-based, illegal invasion of Iraq, 'shock and awe', the savage use of cluster-bombs, 500 pound bombs, napalm, depleted uranium, the razing of Fallujah . . . ?**

I was wondering how to reconcile holy man Pat Robertson's exhortation to assassination regarding Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (murder being normally considered a bad thing) with the teachings of the Good Book, and those of Jesus. Did there not seem to be a contradiction here? Or was I missing something?

And while I was at it, another conundrum involving (if you can believe it) an even holier man, one to whom God speaks directly and often – how could George W. Bush square his profound belief in the Holy Book with his premeditated lies-based, illegal invasion of Iraq, 'shock and awe', the savage use of cluster-bombs, 500 pound bombs, napalm, depleted uranium, the razing of Fallujah, snipers shooting civilians and the wounded and ambulances, the blockading of hospitals, the detention and torture of innocents, including the rape of young boys (that the latter occurred is not in dispute; government lawyers argue that releasing the videotape evidence would only inflame the Muslim insur-

gents to ever more heinous acts of terrorism.) And then of course there's Guantanamo and no shortage atrocities at home. Alleged atrocities.

Well hold on, I thought, don't be too quick to condemn holy buddies Pat and W – God whispers to W ('He told me to smite Saddam...') who converses with Pat ('Pattyboy') all the time. And W seemed fine with the assassination thingy, or at least he didn't condemn it. Anyway who talks to me? Hint – Jesus isn't my personal savior, for crying out loud, and I'm not on a waiting list for a rapture plan.. Which leaves Dr. Phil, but it's not really that exclusive a deal. He's on channel 12. But already I had stumbled upon a clue. Smite. 'God told be to smite Saddam, so I did.' Who on earth uses language like that? You don't hear it in bars that much, or say at a rodeo – 'Take that back, mother\*\*\*\*\*, or I'm going to smite your ass...' No, there's only one place to find such quaint parlance – The Good Book.

Now the thing about the Good Book is, everyone swears by it (like

when you're on trial for an armed robbery of a Wal-Mart, for instance – 'I swear to tell the truth, I do, I do...') but few people know what's really in it, and they usually don't really want to say that much. Oh we're all a tiny bit familiar with some hearsay about what the New Testament contains: there's this handsome white guy, Jesus (no pimples, good teeth, strong jaw, great hair) with either blue or brown eyes depending on who you talk to, who loves you and will get you a Hummer (my favorite) and eternal salvation if you just play your cards right. Oh yes, there were miracles (the wine one is the most inspiring if you ask me – imagine, well water transformed into Chateauneuf du Pape!), and he died for your sins. (Yours, not mine. I'm not in the 700 Club remember). You killed Jesus, you bastard. Might as well have driven a wooden stake right through his sacred heart (which reminds me – isn't it odd that Catholicism would embrace as a sacrament a ritual involving the twin taboos of cannibalism and vampirism? You eat the body and drink the blood. Slightly sick?) You killed him, but lucky for you (or not!) he didn't stay dead. We'll call this Jesus who rose from the dead and disappeared (see? the vampire thing again!) Good Jesus. There's another one, as we'll see.

Pat Robertson once said (to paraphrase) that America's foundation was becoming infested with termites (Muslims, get it? Isopterian Rag-heads) and that a godly fumigation was due. Perhaps he was thinking of

Cyclon B as a fumigant, or maybe the same stuff that America gave to Saddam to use against the Iranians and which they later used on the Kurds, an atrocity which America vehemently protested years later, when it became convenient. Most people had never heard of Kurds except:

*Little Miss Muffet  
Sat on a Tuffet  
Eating her Kurds and whey;  
Along came a spider,  
And sat down beside her  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.*

So now we know that Little miss Muffet, ambassador to Iraq in 1990 was a Catholic, and therefore a cannibal. The spider, of course is Saddam. When Miss Muffet ran away, the Butcher of Baghdad took it as a green light to invade Kuwait – boy, was that ever a mistake! Bible studies can be instructive, but we still haven't offered an answer to the question: was Pat 'Biblical' in his assessment that Muslims needed to be mass murdered? Is George righteous in his Crude Crusade for Christ? Turns out to be a resounding yes on both counts.

Read from the Good Book:

**Leviticus 20:15-16** "And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." *Very nice.*

**Bible studies can be instructive, but we still haven't offered an answer to the question: was Pat 'Biblical' in his assessment that Muslims needed to be mass murdered? Is George righteous in his Crude Crusade for Christ?**

## THE GOOD BOOK?

**"Now listen to what the Lord Almighty says. He is going to punish the people of Amalek because their ancestors opposed the Israelites . . . With 210000 soldiers they killed all the men, women, children, babies, cattle, camels and donkeys"**

**Matthew 26:26** "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." *Seconds, please.*

**Numbers 15:32-36** "Once, while the Israelites were still in the wilderness, a man was found gathering firewood on the Sabbath. He was taken to Moses, Aaron and the whole community, and was put under guard, because it was not clear what should be done with him. Then the Lord said to Moses, "The man must be put to death; the whole community is to stone him to death outside the camp." So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the Lord had commanded." What about 'Let he who is without sin...?' *The lord can be a real prick. This is 'Bad Jesus' A real badass Redeemer. Watch out!*

**Genesis 22:9-10** "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." *What kind of screwed up God would play a trick like that?*

**2Kings 6:28,29** "And the king said

unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son." *Very civilized.*

**Exodus 4:22-23** "Then you must tell him that I, the Lord, say, 'Israel is my first born son. I told you to let my son go, so that he might worship me, but you refused. Now I am going to kill your first-born son.'" *So there!*

**1Samuel 15:1-8** "Now listen to what the Lord Almighty says. He is going to punish the people of Amalek because their ancestors opposed the Israelites... 3-8 : With 210000 soldiers they killed all the men, women, children, babies, cattle, camels and donkeys." *Is that all?*

**Hosea 13:16** "Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up."

**Exodus 32:27-28** "[Moses' orders to his army] he said to them, "The Lord God of Israel commands every one of you to put on his sword and go through the camp from this gate to the other and kill his brothers, his friends and his neighbours. The Levites obeyed and killed about 3000 Men that day."

**Deuteronomy 7:1** “When Yahweh your god has settled you in the land you’re about to occupy, and driven out many infidels before you...you’re to cut them down and exterminate them. You’re to make no compromise with them or show them any mercy.”

**1Samuel 6:19** “The Lord killed seventy of the men of Beth Shemesh because they looked inside the Covenant Box.” *What the hell is a Covenant Box? No, I don’t want to know...*

**Hosea 13:16** “Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.” *Don’t you just adore Him?*

**Revelation 6:8 (the 4th seal)** “I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! It’s rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”

**Exodus 21:20-21** “If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand, he shall be punished. If, however, he survives a day or two, no vengeance shall be taken. The loss of his property is punishment enough.” *So that’s where you got it from.*

**Deuteronomy 20:14** “But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil

thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself.”

**Joshua 6:21:** “The army advanced on the city – they destroyed everything – they put everyone to the sword. Men and women, young and old, and also cattle, sheep and asses.”

And on and on.

Nobody reads that crap, but an entire ‘civilization’ is built upon it. The Jesus of Bush and Robertson is Mean Jesus, Crazy Jesus, Psychotic Jesus, a Jesus who has no problem with slavery, rape, torture and murder, and whose incipient return is to bring revenge and violence to people who disagree with him and Bush and Robertson, and of course Jews who don’t immediately convert to Christianity. Muslims, presumably, are screwed. And His Father is a murderous asshole.

So here’s a Bush-league Christianity that is entirely consistent with assassination, murder, child-rape, incarceration without trial, and the use of otherwise unconscionable weapons such as napalm, cluster bombs and depleted uranium. No mercy. No forgiveness.

The president is Biblical after all. It’s just a Bible that should be read with gloves on as Nietzsche suggested, to avoid contamination. Everyone should read the Good Book. Just once, then have a shower. And then burn it. ●

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**Here's a Bush-league Christianity that is entirely consistent with assassination, murder, child-rape, incarceration without trial, and the use of otherwise unconscionable weapons such as napalm, cluster bombs and depleted uranium. No mercy. No forgiveness**

## FIREWORKS IN TARRYTOWN

*There's something energising about observing malicious political debate, and Christopher Hitchens, the famously savage gadfly, is one of the stars of the genre. Lawrence Houghteling was in the audience when he was paired off against former arms inspector Scott Ritter, over 10 bloody rounds in Tarrytown, New York*

# RITTER v. HITCHENS: THE STRANGE DEBATE

**Ritter is outspoken to the point of being unsubtle; he lays it down, and it stays there. Hitchens, on the other hand, tends to sneak up on his subjects**

I recently attended a strange debate on the war in Iraq at the Tarrytown Music Hall, on the Hudson River about 30 miles north of Times Square. It was strange for a several reasons. First off, the two debaters were a queerly-matched set. Speaking for the “Iraq is an illegal war and a big mistake” point of view was Scott Ritter, the former Marine and UN arms inspector in Iraq, who was introduced as a “Reagan Republican who voted for Kerry in 2004.” Opposing Ritter (and hence in favor of the war) was Christopher Hitchens, self-described socialist, stylish magazine columnist, and a famously savage gadfly. (So far as I know, Hitchens is the only person ever to label Mother Teresa a fraud in print. He insisted on referring to her as “M.T.”)

Ritter was direct and often bombastic, lining his points up like a good lawyer, listing the names and numbers of the laws he mentioned, what had brought them into being, and when they had been passed. Hitchens's presentation was more insinuating, serpentine (it often reminded

me, particularly in his use of inordinately fancy words, of Bill Buckley's oratorical style) and tended to circle around ideas before alighting on them. Ritter is outspoken to the point of being unsubtle; he lays it down, and it stays there. Hitchens, on the other hand, tends to sneak up on his subjects. He often starts out by stating that he doesn't want to mention/cite/debate-about something or other; then, a moment later, you'll notice he's mentioning or citing or debating about that very thing.

Another strange feature of the debate was the audience. Since the debate had been arranged by what I'll call “the Left,” I had imagined before the debate that the crowd would be overwhelmingly leftish and anti-war (as, I confess, I am). But from the amount of noise made, I'd have to guess that fully one-third and maybe more of the crowd was pro-war, and giddily rooting for Hitchens. (Post-debate curiosity led me to google the two names together, and more than half of the sites I find are right-wing blogs announcing the debate in

## FIREWORKS IN TARRYTOWN

advance and happily predicting that Hitchens would “shred” or “mop the floor with” or “run circles around” Ritter. He’s ever so much smarter than Ritter, dontcha see? I scrolled down and read many of the attached comments, and it has put me in a rather uncharitable mood, I must confess. It sucks to be reminded once again of how many human beings, including some obviously rich, “smart” and “respectable” ones, inhabit mental spaces that are best described as “Nowhere.” But I digress.)

At any rate, there was a sizable, though minority, faction of the audience that consisted of ideological right-wing intellectual types. As they started realizing how sizable a faction they were, they became more self-assured and louder, and when Ritter made his boldest and most controversial remark of the evening – that if he were an Iraqi he’d prefer living under Saddam rather than under the “American occupation” – the pro-war faction started carrying on something fierce. It was obvious they considered that Ritter was a very bad man indeed, and not the American patriot he was portraying himself to be AT ALL. I, on the other hand, was far from displeased (though totally amazed) to hear such a notion spoken right out loud. I suppose that’s the sort of ideas one gets when one is actually acquainted with a few non-embedded Iraqis.

Just as the right-wing portion of the crowd was pretty Out There, the left-wing portion didn’t seem to be your usual perkily liberal, broccoli-

eating Westchester County Mild Bunch, either. A revealing moment came during the warmup comic’s act. Activist-comedian Randy Credico, who was apparently doing somebody a favor (just off a 10-hour flight from Argentina and bone-weary, he nonetheless did a brisk 15-minute pre-debate set, mostly of mocking political impersonations, that were pretty damn good, though I imagine the righties would dispute that, since it was mostly their oxen getting gored) asked sarcastically if anyone liked Hillary Clinton. If they were any Hillary fans present, they kept their hands down and their mouths shut. Not a bad way to start a very contentious debate — it’s always a wholesome moment when a disputatious crowd finds some one thing they all can agree on.

The two sides in the debate could be compared to two military campaigns. Ritter maneuvered his forces like a general who knows he’s got the men and the position — not much finesse needed when you’ve got the evidence. He laid it all out: no Weapons of Mass Destruction, no need for the war; no need for the war, and the war contravenes treaties we have signed, so it’s illegal. As Ritter put it again and again, we are a government of laws, and our affairs are being conducted in an unlawful manner. Bam bam bam, QED.

Hitchens fought like any general who doesn’t have the troops, or materiel, or position. In other words, he fought a guerrilla war. He picked off stray remarks when he thought he

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## FIREWORKS IN TARRYTOWN

**Hitchens' tone suggests a grouchy but essentially good-hearted man who has been roused from a sleep made in order to save his neighbor's garage, and his language maintains a febrile tendentiousness as he casts about for plausible ways of demonstrating that Night is indeed Day**

could score points; he darted in from unexpected angles to cause damage whenever he could; he changed the subject. By and large he avoided direct battle. To make his job more difficult, he may indeed support the war (and that “may” is considered: I must confess that with provocateurs like Hitchens I sometimes wonder whether they don't take positions to be seen rather than to state their actual beliefs) but he makes it clear that he has not much respect for George W. Bush, except insofar as he did “what needed to be done” by ousting Saddam Hussein.

Ritter conducted a vigorous offense, swinging his arms, pointing his fingers, banging the lectern on occasion. Lots of turning to the audience and calling us “ladies and gentlemen.” Lots of good-boy rhetorical methods, the sorts of ploys which can be annoying when your opponent uses them – but are wholly forgivable when your (very well prepared) champion finds occasion to use them. He found many occasions to suggest how his unique perspective (his 12-year career as a Marine intelligence officer followed by his experience as a UN inspector checking up on compliance with the demands that Iraq destroy all its WMDs and WMD-making capacity) helped him understand how American policy had grown into the unconstitutional danger to the world that we have in our midst today.

Hitchens's approach was altogether shyer. He often began a segment of his remarks by seeming to think

deeply, and then rushing into his argument as though suddenly discovering previously unsuspected excellences in the actions of which he approves.

Since virtually all his arguments rests on two main points – that Saddam Hussein and his regime were unusually bad, and (above all) terribly dangerous to the well-being of the rest of us; and that for the most part the required forms of domestic and international law were upheld and the truth was told in the process of going to war – and since those two points are fairly easy to refute, Hitchens's job is really a very difficult one. But, of course, he does his job with style. His tone suggests a grouchy but essentially good-hearted man who has been roused from a sleep made in order to save his neighbor's garage, and his language maintains a febrile tendentiousness as he casts about for plausible ways of demonstrating that Night is indeed Day.

One notable argument occurred near the end of the evening, when the moderator pointed out that nothing had been mentioned by either debater concerning the argument that the war in Iraq had somehow been caused by Saddam's regime's involvement with al Qaeda and “9/11”. Hitchens set off on an intellectual excursion that was positively breathtaking. I know that people are saying there was no linkage, he seemed to say – and by the way, the president never said there was a linkage, though some people may have imag-

ined he said something like that, but they are wrong – yet at the same time I'm not so sure. And he launched into a list of contacts between old terrorists and Saddam and new terrorists and Saddam and Zarkawi and the Baathists whom we are now calling the Insurgency, and this one and that one, and by the time Hitchens was done you started to wonder if he had a picture tucked away somewhere of Saddam signing his al Qaeda membership card while a smiling Osama bin Laden looks on. (Ritter responded by pointing out that half the things Hitchens had said were implausible, anachronistic or better explained in a simpler manner, and the other half were true but misleading, and I'm sure that some believed the one, and some believed the other.)

As you can tell, I'm too certain that one of these debaters is right and the other is wrong to be much of a judge. If forced, I'd give all ten rounds to Ritter, though I think he made an unnec-

essary mistake when he said that thing about Iraqis maybe being safer under the horrible Saddam regime than under the American occupation that stops them at odd places along the highway and then acts weird toward them because of being unable to speak Arabic, or breaks down their door in the middle of the night looking for the some bomb-maker, and then takes Dad and Ali away.

I mean, it is true. But Ritter ought to get it through his thick skull that too much truth usually just mucks up a good debate. ●

**Lawrence Houghteling**, *who has worked as a journalist, night-club bouncer, truck driver, school administrator and carpenter, once described himself to a lukewarm admirer as a "Jack of all trades, master of several." He now teaches history and math in a New York City public high school, where he studies humility. (He is a slow learner.)*

**By the time Hitchens was done you started to wonder if he had a picture tucked away somewhere of Saddam signing his al Qaeda membership card while a smiling Osama bin Laden looks on**

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## ON STRIKE

*The transit workers' strike that paralysed New York City just before Christmas reminds Tony Karon of a woman called Maria back in the days when he was a student in South Africa, and makes him wonder when the city's mayor will drop the discourse of 9/11 and look for a just solution to the city's labour problems*

# PAYING THE PRICE OF SOLIDARITY

**Although you'd never know to listen to New York's billionaire mayor bleating about the "selfish and illegal" action of the transit workers, joining a strike means risking everything for working people, those whose livelihoods are already at best tentative.**

**D**riving my kids to school through gridlocked streets approaching New York's Brooklyn Bridge, past picket lines of dreadlocked transit workers chanting "No contract, no work!" – their action paralyzing a mass transit system that ferries seven million people to work – my mind traveled back to a student rally in Cape Town in 1984. The speaker was a garment worker whose name I remember only as Maria.

She was part of a tiny, maverick union, that had somewhat recklessly broken away from the sweetheart Garment Workers Union (a "little castle with a big flag," was how its architect described the rebel organization) and had even more recklessly launched a strike action in a factory where it didn't have a majority. The action was doomed, but I was fascinated by the effect that joining it had had on Maria, a black working class woman at the very bottom of apartheid's social pile, the most voiceless and powerless section of the population. We watched transfixed as this woman

long denied a voice suddenly stood before the microphone and a hall filled with hundreds of middle class students, her eyes glazed with pride and rage. "I drew my first ever strike wages this week," she said in Kaaps, that mix of Afrikaans, English and a smattering of Xhosa rivaled only by Yiddish as a patois for rendering the tragicomedy of the powerless. "And I feel damn proud about that."

Although you'd never know to listen to New York's billionaire mayor bleating about the "selfish and illegal" action of the transit workers, joining a strike means risking everything for working people, those whose livelihoods are already at best tentative. It's an action take only when they feel they've been pushed too far, an economic version of La Pasionara's legendary intonation to the doomed Republican defenders of Madrid as the Fascist armies massed at the city's gates, that "we can live forever on our knees, or we can die on our feet." Maria had chosen to face death – or poverty, in this instance – on her feet, and with that choice came a surge of

power – the heady recognition of one’s own subjectivity and ability to transform circumstances through collective action. The decision to strike had given Maria her dignity, and no amount of economic pain could take that from her.

And I sense the same effect for those 32,000 transit workers who downed tools in New York just before Christmas, most of them people of color facing a mostly white establishment that has treated them with palpable arrogance and disdain. I’m reminded of the old days in South Africa when I hear union leader Roger Toussaint – could there be a more fitting last name for a charismatic Trinidadian union leader who started his working life cleaning subway cars? (*Toussaint L’Overture was the leader of the Haitian slave revolt that made the tiny island the first black polity to liberate itself from European colonial rule*). Asked by a reporter to comment on the fact that his strike is illegal and could bring massive fines to the union and the strikers (and even jail time for himself), he answered in his sonorous Trini baritone, “If Rosa Parks had observed the law, most of our members would not have been transit workers.”

And I’m also reminded of the old days in South Africa when I hear Mayor Bloomberg, a rather short fellow who appears to treating the action as something between a personal affront by some cheeky subordinates and a terror attack on the city by some alien “thugs”, insisting that he won’t negotiate until the “illegal”

strike action is ended.

The right to strike is a basic right of any democracy. The fact that the law forbids it for state employees in New York is simply a reflection of the balance of power in the legislature that adopted that law. The transit workers don’t believe the law is fair to them; they know that the critical leverage they have is their ability to withhold their labor. Like Maria back in Cape Town in 1984, they’re risking everything. Her strike, also, was illegal. But she had no say in shaping those laws, and I suspect most of today’s transit workers in New York feel the same about the 1966 Taylor law in force today. Like most of us in New York, they’re living from paycheck to paycheck, and on the eve of the Christmas holidays, they’ve embarked on an action that is going to cost them two days’ wages (in fines) for every day they’re out.

Long before the strike, it was clear that the MTA is appallingly managed. I sensed that much a few weeks ago when they suddenly announced that they had a huge surplus for this year, and would be simply giving away tens of millions of dollars in subway fare discounts over the holiday season. That seemed insanely shortsighted even without knowing anything about the state of their contract talks with the union – there had to be more prudent ways of spending that money; now, in light of the fact that they’re telling the union they have no money, the MTA’s decision seems giddily reckless. Even if the substantial issue of the MTA’s long-term finance

**“Long before the strike, it was clear that the MTA is appallingly managed. I sensed that much a few weeks ago when they suddenly announced that they had a huge surplus for this year, and would be simply giving away tens of millions of dollars in subway fare discounts over the holiday season”**

## ON STRIKE

**The New York transit strike is also a symptom of a deep crisis in the American economy, which is no longer able to maintain middle-class and working-class living standards, much less offer the next generation a better quality of life than their parents**

is far more complicated, the fact is that with contract talks looming they should have had the brains to consult the union over how they're were going to spend the surplus. The bigger picture, of course, is one of the degradation of infrastructure all over America, choked of investment by a free-market ideological consensus in the corridors of power – just look at the state of AMTRAK, never mind those levees that gave way in New Orleans. And also the crippling cost of health care in a society ruled by narrow corporate special interests and an adherence to free market shibboleths with a dogmatism worthy of the Taliban. The New York transit strike is also a symptom of a deep crisis in the American economy, which is no longer able to maintain middle-class and working-class living standards, much less offer the next generation a better quality of life than their parents.

Back in New York, however, not only has the work of the transit workers become progressively more dangerous in the past five years, but the fact that one of the union's major grievances is the upward of 15,000 disciplinary proceedings each year (almost one for every second employee) signals that the management culture has to be archaically authoritarian. That, surely, was a ticking time bomb. Then you have the spectacle of the head of the MTA refusing to even join the talks until the last hour. What does it take to get Master to come the table and face his employees? The provocation is palpable. Listen to Mike Bloomberg and you hear the

words "illegal and selfish" occur more often even than the word "victory" in a Bush Iraq speech. Listen to Roger Toussaint, and the word that occurs most often is "respect." At the end of the day, that's what the union is demanding. And it's not hard to see that the authorities could have avoided this simply by getting off their high horses and changing the way they're communicating. Bloomberg would do better to drop the discourse of 9/11, a city under attack showing its fortitude, and recognize that there's a major problem going on inside the city's transit system – a problem to which, as the mayor, it is his responsibility to mediate a solution.

I don't know how this will end. But I do know that it was a decision not taken easily, an act of courage by people who felt they had been pushed too far, and were ready to make sacrifices in pursuit of redress. And as mind-numbingly infuriating as it is to be stuck for hours in gridlocked traffic, while the radio touts the billionaire mayor complaining of the "selfishness" of workers who're forgoing two days pay for every day they're out in order, partly, that the next generation of transit workers will enjoy the same deal that they have, I'll say this: If a couple of days road rage and epic inconvenience is the price of the dignity of those who ensure that I get to work safely and speedily every day, I'll pay without complaint. ●

**Tony Karon** is a senior editor at *TIME.com*. This was taken from personal web site – [tonykaron.com](http://tonykaron.com)

*This excerpt, from a new book by James Moore and Wayne Slater covers a defining moment in the making of a political opportunist. Karl Rove, now George W. Bush's leading political adviser, attempts to steal the election for chairman of the College Republican National Committee. When the Washington Post writes about the dirty tricks campaign, the Republican National Committee has to step in and pick a winner. The man charged with that decision? George Bush senior, then Chairman of the RNC. He not only awarded the post to Rove, he hired him as his assistant. It's classic Rove: dirty tricks, press leaks, and a contested election*

# KARL ROVE COMES OF AGE

In 1973, when Karl Rove was recruited to run for chair of the College Republican National Committee, a group of supporters paired him with Lee Atwater, who at the time was president of the College Republicans in South Carolina. Rove was to be the candidate and Atwater his Southern campaign chair. In March, Rove took the train from Washington, D.C., to Columbia, South Carolina (a \$25 overnight ticket) where he was met by Atwater and another young hardball Republican, John Carbaugh, later to become advisor to Jesse Helms. With a Gulf credit card, Rove and Atwater rented a mustard-brown Ford Pinto and proceeded to spend the next week campaigning together across the South, visiting state college Republican chairpersons and asking for support.

The deal went like this: Rove was to be chair and Atwater would take

Rove's old job, executive director of the College Republican National Committee. Both of them would be in Washington with an office and a phone and the run of the Republican National Committee (RNC). It was impossible not to like Atwater. He was fun loving and amiable and he was forever scheming about one thing or the other. The two of them had barely taken their jobs in Washington, Rove said, before Atwater was hustling Republican National Committee Chairman George H.W. Bush for use of his boat.

Rove was awestruck by Atwater's self-confidence.

"I introduced Lee to George Bush. Lee wanted to meet George Bush because he was chairman but also because he'd heard that the chairman had a boat that he kept on the Potomac. Lee had a big date lined up for the weekend and he thought it



**ROVE  
EXPOSED**  
**How Bush's  
Brain Fooled  
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Wayne Slater.  
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## BOOK EXCERPT

**By the time they rolled into Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks in June for the convention, Atwater and Rove had a battle plan. And in the end, according to his opponent, Rove had to steal the election to win**

would be very impressive if he could take this little Strom Thurmond intern named Sally out on the Potomac on George Bush's boat.

"So – classic Atwater – five minutes after he has met the chairman of the Republican National Committee, he was bumming the use of his boat. And the audacious guy he was, he got it." (*Source: Wayne Slater interview with Rove, July 1994*)

But to get to Washington, they had to win, and to win, they had to out-politick the other guys. The two of them – Rove and Atwater – criss-crossed the South in the spring of 1973 lining up support in advance of the summer convention where the new chairman of the College Republicans was to be chosen. Atwater knew all the fronts and fissures of campus politics in the region: who was important and who was not. By the time they rolled into Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks in June for the convention, Atwater and Rove had a battle plan. And in the end, according to his opponent, Rove had to steal the election to win.

The hotel in Lake of the Ozarks was swarming with young Republicans. There were sessions on practical politics in the little meeting rooms and politicking in the hallways, particularly for the election of the new national chair. Atwater and Rove cruised the rooms and the bar, looking to lock up votes. There were three candidates for chair: Rove; Robert Edgeworth, a Goldwater devotee who had headed up Students for Nixon at the University of Michigan; and Terry

Dolan, the future founder of the National Conservative Political Action Committee. Dolan, whose acerbic personality made it difficult to round up support, realized that he didn't have the votes to win and threw in with Edgeworth.

It was a two-man race for a majority of the votes. But which votes? Rove and Atwater's plan, supported by a faction within the College Republicans sometimes called the Chicago Boys, took as a point of pride its influence on the gears and levers of the organization. Atwater and the Chicago Boys decided the best way to win an election was to make sure the votes that counted were their votes. There was suddenly a flurry of challenges at the credentials committee, which went into the night.

"The credentials committee savagely went through and threw out, often on the flimsiest of reasons, most of my supporters," said Edgeworth, who steered his own campaign with a bullhorn and a stack of proxies, which challenged Rove and Atwater. (*Source: James Moore interview with Robert Edgeworth, July 2002.*)

Tempers flared and there were near-fistfights. Edgeworth supporters shouted at Rove's people, who shouted back. The committee was stymied. The next day, with everybody gathered in a large hall, Rove's name was entered into nomination, and as the roll was called, region-by-region, one voice shouted "Aye" and another voice yelled "No." Then, against a chorus of boos and cheers, Edgeworth was also nominated, just as Rove had

been, and the same thing happened. Each side declared victory.

“I gave a nice acceptance speech, thanking everybody for electing me. Then I sat down,” said Edgeworth. “Karl got up, gave a nice acceptance speech for everybody who had elected him. Then we both went to Washington D.C.”

The issue of who was the rightful chair was to be decided by RNC Chairman George Bush. Both sides made their cases, but Rove seemed to have an advantage, having already met Bush while working as executive director of the College Republicans. Before Bush had announced his decision, Dolan went to the media with some particularly damning material about Rove – tapes and transcripts of “dirty tricks” seminars.

“I forbade [Dolan] to do it but he did it anyway,” Edgeworth said.

The Washington Post published the story under the headline, “GOP Probes Official as Teacher of Tricks.” This was exactly the kind of publicity the Republican party did not need. The storm clouds were building over Watergate. The Senate was investigating. Nixon had announced in April the departure of John Dean, John Haldeman, and John Ehrlichman. And now George Bush, who as chairman of the party had pledged to keep the GOP free of Watergate taint, was having to deal with a published report in the Washington Post – adjacent to the day’s Watergate investigation story, for god’s sake – about tape recordings and “dirty tricks” workshops by a GOP college operative.

In fact, Dolan’s evidence had been given first to the RNC and quietly reviewed by a committee and dismissed. Only afterward did the tapes and affidavits find their way into the media. Now in the bright light of a newspaper report, Bush promised to reopen the inquiry. Three weeks later, September 6, 1973, he sent a letter to both candidates declaring Rove the winner.

Edgeworth wrote back asking on what basis Bush had made the decision – and got a blistering reply.

“He sent me back an absolutely furious letter in which he wrote me out of the party. He said he certainly would not answer such impertinent inquiries from someone who was disloyal to the party and leaked hostile information to the press, which I had never done.”

The response was odd, Edgeworth thought. Bush was angry not because a Republican had conducted seminars on campaign espionage, but because someone had gone to the press with the story. Obviously, the priority was containing the scandal, not getting to the bottom of it. This was all about loyalty and the club; no true Republican would violate the party code by going to the media. That was the message that Edgeworth heard.

A few months later, Bush hired Rove as his special assistant at the RNC.

How perfect was this? Assistant to the chairman of the Republican National Committee. Back at Olympus High, Rove had talked with his friend Randy Ludlow, about how he

**“He sent me back an absolutely furious letter in which he wrote me out of the party. He said he certainly would not answer such impertinent inquiries from someone who was disloyal to the party and leaked hostile information to the press, which I had never done”**

## BOOK EXCERPT

**Defining moments of lives are often nothing more than chance encounters. But Karl Rove was leaving nothing to providence, in this case. When it came to George W. Bush, Rove ended up taking chance out of the equation**

was going to Washington, and now he was there – in the big time. Every morning when Chairman Bush arrived at the basement parking garage and stepped into the elevator, rising to the fourth floor, Rove was there eagerly ready for the day. As a member of the personal staff, Rove had all the authority of an assistant to the RNC chair – which is to say, not much authority at all. Mostly he was a gopher. But the place was the center of the Republican universe, a place to make associations and stay current on the party's latest line.

His most important association, although he didn't know it then, was the boss' son, George W. Bush.

Defining moments of lives are often nothing more than chance encounters. But Karl Rove was leaving nothing to providence, in this case. When it came to George W. Bush, Rove ended up taking chance out of the equation. And in the process he changed – not just their lives – but also American history. ●

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**James C. Moore** is the co-author of *Bush's War for Reelection: Iraq, the White House, and the People*. A documentary film about his first book, *Bush's Brain*, was made and appeared in theatres in major U.S. cities. He is an Emmy award-winning former television news correspondent who has traveled on every presidential campaign since 1976 and was a full-time correspondent on the Bush campaign. Moore's numerous professional honors include the Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio and Television News Directors' Association.

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*The talk coming out of Washington and Baghdad's Green Zone suggest that the country is on the verge of becoming a sovereign state, ready to do business with the world and improve the lot of its people. The reality is different, says William Blum, as the international financial mafia gets ready to create more lasting misery*

# IRAQ IS OPEN AND READY FOR BUSINESS

**W**e read about things done and said by the Iraqi president, or the Ministry of this or the Ministry of that, and it's easy to get the impression that Iraq is in the process of becoming a sovereign state, albeit not particularly secular and employing torture, but still, a functioning, independent state. Then we read about the IMF and the rest of the international financial mafia – with the US playing its usual sine qua non role – making large loans to the country and forgiving debts, with the customary strings attached, in the current instance ending government subsidies for fuel and other petroleum products. And so the government starts to reduce the subsidies for these products which affect almost every important aspect of life, and the prices quickly quintuple, sparking wide discontent and protests.[1]

Who in this sovereign nation wanted to add more suffering to the already beaten-down Iraqi people? But the international financial mafia is concerned only with making coun-

tries meet certain criteria sworn to be holy in Economics 101, like a balanced budget, privatization, and deregulation and thus making themselves more appealing to international investors.

In case the presence of 130,000 American soldiers, a growing number of sprawling US military bases, and all the designed-in-Washington restrictive Coalition Provisional Authority laws still in force aren't enough to keep the Iraqi government in line, this will do it. Iraq will have to agree to allow their economy to be run by the IMF for the next decade. The same IMF that Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel prize-winning economist and dissident former chief economist at the World Bank, describes as having "brought disaster to Russia and Argentina and leaves a trail of devastated developing economies in its wake".[2]

On top of this comes the disclosure of the American occupation's massive giveaway of the sovereign nation's most valuable commodity, oil. One should read the new report, "Crude

**The international financial mafia is concerned only with making countries meet certain criteria sworn to be holy in Economics 101, like a balanced budget, privatization, and deregulation and thus making themselves more appealing to international investors**

## ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

**It should be noted that these services, including sanitation systems, were largely destroyed by US bombing – most of it rather deliberately**

Designs: The Rip-Off of Iraq's Oil Wealth" by the British NO, Platform. Among its findings:

This report reveals how an oil policy with origins in the US State Department is on course to be adopted in Iraq, soon after the December elections, with no public debate and at enormous potential cost. The policy allocates the majority of Iraq's oil fields – accounting for at least 64% of the country's oil reserves – for development by multinational oil companies.

The estimated cost to Iraq over the life of the new oil contracts is \$74 to \$194 billion, compared TO leaving oil development in public hands.

The contracts would guarantee massive profits to foreign companies, with rates of return of 42 to 162 percent. The kinds of contracts that will provide these returns are known as production sharing agreements. PSAs have been heavily promoted by the US government and oil majors and have the backing of senior figures in the Iraqi Oil Ministry. However, PSAs last for 25-40 years, are usually secret and prevent governments from later altering the terms of the contract.[3]

"Crude Designs" author and lead researcher, Greg Muttitt, says: "The form of contracts being promoted is the most expensive and undemocratic option available. Iraq's oil should be for the benefit of the Iraqi people, not foreign oil companies."[4]

Noam Chomsky recently remarked: "We're supposed to believe that the US would've invaded Iraq if it was an island in the Indian Ocean and its

main exports were pickles and lettuce. This is what we're supposed to believe."[5]

### **Reconstruction, thy name is not the United States**

The Bush administration has announced that it does not intend to seek any new funds for Iraq reconstruction in the budget request going before Congress in February. When the last of the reconstruction budget is spent, US officials in Baghdad have made clear, other foreign donors and the fledgling Iraqi government will have to take up what authorities say is tens of billions of dollars of work yet to be done merely to bring reliable electricity, water and other services to Iraq's 26 million people.[6]

It should be noted that these services, including sanitation systems, were largely destroyed by US bombing – most of it rather deliberately – beginning in the first Gulf War: 40 days and nights the bombing went on, demolishing everything that goes into the making of a modern society; followed by 12 years of merciless economic sanctions, accompanied by 12 years of often daily bombing supposedly to protect the so-called no-fly zones; finally the bombing, invasion and widespread devastation beginning in March 2003 and continuing even as you read this.

"The U.S. never intended to completely rebuild Iraq," Brig. Gen. William McCoy, the Army Corps of Engineers commander overseeing the work, told reporters at a recent news conference. In a RECENT interview,

McCoy said: “This was just supposed to be a jump-start.”[7]

It’s a remarkable pattern. The United States has a long record of bombing nations, reducing entire neighborhoods, and much of cities, to rubble, wrecking the infrastructure, ruining the lives of those the bombs didn’t kill. And afterward doing shockingly little or literally nothing to repair the damage.

On January 27, 1973, in Paris, the United States signed the “Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam”. Among the principles to which the United States agreed was that stated in Article 21: “In pursuance of its traditional [sic] policy, the United States will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to postwar reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [North Vietnam] and throughout Indochina.”

Five days later, President Nixon sent a message to the Prime Minister of North Vietnam in which he stipulated the following:

(1) The Government of the United States of America will contribute to postwar reconstruction in North Vietnam without any political conditions.

(2) Preliminary United States studies indicate that the appropriate programs for the United States contribution to postwar reconstruction will fall in the range of \$3.25 billion of grant aid over 5 years.

Nothing of the promised reconstruction aid was ever paid. Or ever will be. During the same period, Laos and Cambodia were wasted by US

bombing as relentlessly as was Vietnam. After the Indochina wars were over, these nations, too, qualified to become beneficiaries of America’s “traditional policy” of zero reconstruction.

Then came the American bombings of Grenada and Panama in the 1980s. There goes our neighborhood. Hundreds of Panamanians petitioned the Washington-controlled Organization of American States as well as American courts, all the way up to the US Supreme Court, for “just compensation” for the damage caused by Operation Just Cause (this being the not-tongue-in-cheek name given to the American invasion and bombing). They got just nothing, the same amount the people of Grenada received.

In 1998, Washington, in its grand wisdom, fired more than a dozen cruise missiles into a building in Sudan which it claimed was producing chemical and biological weapons. The completely pulverized building was actually a major pharmaceutical plant, vital to the Sudanese people. The United States effectively admitted its mistake by releasing the assets of the plant’s owner it had frozen. Surely now it was compensation time. It appears that nothing has ever been paid to the owner, who filed suit, or to those injured in the bombing.[8]

The following year we had the case of Yugoslavia; 78 days of round-the-clock bombing, transforming an advanced state into virtually a pre-industrial one; the reconstruction

**Nothing of the promised reconstruction aid was ever paid. Or ever will be. During the same period, Laos and Cambodia were wasted by US bombing as relentlessly as was Vietnam**

## ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

**Presumably it doesn't bother the good colonel that a large majority of the informed people of the world think the United States is a murderous imperialist power – he's probably proud of that – but a "quitter"?**

needs were breathtaking. It's been 6 1/2 years since Yugoslavian bridges fell into the Danube, the country's factories and homes leveled, its roads made unusable, transportation torn apart. Yet the country has not received any funds for reconstruction from the architect and leading perpetrator of the bombing campaign, the United States.

The day after the above announcement about the US ending its reconstruction efforts in Iraq, it was reported that the United States is phasing out its commitment to reconstruction in Afghanistan as well.[9] This after several years of the usual launching of bombs and missiles on towns and villages, resulting in the usual wreckage and ruin.

### **Oh those quaint tribal customs**

On December 7, the "All things considered" feature of National Public Radio had a report about the "honor" killing of a young woman in Iraq who had been kidnaped. She had to be killed by her family because of the mere possibility of her having been raped by her captors; the family had to protect its honor; a much loved and admired daughter she was, but still, her cousin shot her dead. It had nothing to do with Islam, the story said, it was a "tribal custom".

This report was followed immediately by Col. Gary Anderson, US Marines retired, arguing that the United States has to stay the course in Iraq. He's concerned that bin Laden et al. will think the United States is "a quitter". He says that leaving now

would "dishonor" the Iraqis and he's apparently prepared to continue killing any number of the very same Iraqi people to preserve their honor. Anthropologists report that this seems to be some kind of "tribal custom" in Anderson's country.

Presumably it doesn't bother the good colonel that a large majority of the informed people of the world think the United States is a murderous imperialist power – he's probably proud of that – but a "quitter"? Over his dead body. Or someone's dead body.

### **Yankee karma**

The questions concerning immigration into the United States from south of the border go on year after year, with the same issues argued back and forth: How to/should we block the flow into the country? granting amnesty, a guest-worker program, whether the immigrants help the economy, immigrants collecting welfare, policing employers who hire immigrants ... on and on, round and round it goes, for decades. Once in a while someone opposed to immigration will question whether the United States has any moral obligation to take in these Latino immigrants.

Here's one answer to that question: Yes, the United States has a moral obligation because so many of the immigrants are escaping situations in their homelands made hopeless by American interventions. In Guatemala and Nicaragua Washington overthrew progressive governments

which were sincerely committed to fighting poverty. In El Salvador the US played a major role in suppressing a movement striving to install such a government, and to a lesser extent played such a role in Honduras.

The end result of these policies has been an army of desperate people heading north in search of a better life, in the process of which they have added to Mexico's poverty burden, inducing many Mexicans to join the trek to Yanquiland.

Although Washington has not intervened militarily in Mexico since 1919, over the years the US has been providing training, arms, and surveillance technology to Mexico's police and armed forces to better their ability to suppress their own people's aspirations, as in Chiapas, and this has added to the influx of the impoverished to the United States. Moreover, Washington's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), has brought a flood of cheap, subsidized US corn into Mexico and driven many Mexican farmers off the land and into the immigration stream north.

**Hmmm, perhaps we really are in danger of a biological attack ... but not from al Qaeda**

A week after the massive anti-war demonstration in Washington on September 24, it was revealed that deadly bacteria had been detected at several sites in the city, including by the Lincoln Memorial, situated very close to the demonstration. Biohazard monitors installed at various sites gave positive readings on the 24th and

25th for the bacterium *francisella tularensis*, which causes the infectious disease tularemia, a pneumonia-like ailment that can be acquired by inhaling airborne bacteria and can be fatal. This biological agent is on the "A list" of the Department of Homeland Security's biohazards, along with anthrax, plague and smallpox.[10]

My first thought upon reading about this was: Those bastards, they'd love to punish people who protest against the war. There's nothing I would put past them.

My second thought was: Oh stop being so paranoid. The news report cited federal health officials saying that the tularemia bacterium can occur naturally in soil and small animals.

My third thought came more than a month later, when I happened to be reading about a US Army program of the 1960s which carried out numerous exercises involving aircraft spraying of American warships with thousands of servicemen aboard. A wide variety of chemical and biological warfare agents were used to learn the vulnerabilities of these ships and personnel to such attacks and to develop procedures to respond to them. Amongst the CBW agents used were *pasteurella tularensis* (another name for *francisella tularensis*), which, said the Department of Defense later, causes tularemia, can produce very serious symptoms, and has a mortality rate of about six percent.[11]

These tests in effect used members of the armed forces as guinea pigs, without their informed consent and

**A wide variety of chemical and biological warfare agents were used to learn the vulnerabilities of these ships and personnel to such attacks and to develop procedures to respond to them**

## ANTI-EMPIRE REPORT

**How can we be surprised if they don't care about the health and welfare of those of us standing in opposition to the empire?**

without proper medical follow-up. This was a scenario enacted on numerous occasions during the Cold War, and subsequently as well, involving literally millions of service members, with frequent harmful effects, including at least several deaths, military and civilian. It's a good bet that on some future date we'll learn that similar tests are still going on as part of the war on terrorism. I conclude from all this that if our glorious leaders are not particularly concerned about the health and welfare of their own soldiers, the wretched warriors they enlist to fight the empire's wars, how can we be surprised if they don't care about the health and welfare of those of us standing in opposition to the empire? ●

### NOTES

[1] Los Angeles Times, December 28, 2005, p.1; Agence France Presse, December 23, 2005

[2] Johann Hari, "Why Are We Inflicting This Discredited Market Fundamentalism on Iraq?" The Independent (UK), December 22, 2004; yes, 2004, this has been a work carefully in progress for some time.

[3] <http://www.crudedesigns.org/>

[4] Interview with Institute for Public

Accuracy (Washington, DC), November 22, 2005

[5] Interview by Andy Clark, Amsterdam Forum, December 18, 2005, audio and text at: <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article11330.htm>

[6] Washington Post, January 2, 2006, p.1

[7] Ibid

[8] William Blum, "Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire", p.134-8

[9] Washington Post, January 3, 2006, p.1

[10] Washington Post, October 2, 2005, p.C13

[11] Part of Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD), Department of Defense "Fact Sheets" released in 2001-2, "Shady Grove" test;

[http://www.deploymentlink.osd.mil/current\\_issues/shad/shad\\_intro.shtml](http://www.deploymentlink.osd.mil/current_issues/shad/shad_intro.shtml)

See also Associated Press, October 9, 2002, The New York Times May 24, 2002, p.1

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