



Willamette Freethinker



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Corvallis Secular Society (CSS) is a Humanist and Freethought society for all nontheists of good will.

CSS is affiliated with the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH).

Announcements

I am sorry to announce that founding Corvallis Secular Society member Jerry Andrus has been diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer.

In his honor, the Mayor of Albany is issuing a Proclamation that Sunday, March 18, 2007 (the day after our CSS meeting) is JERRY ANDRUS DAY in Albany.

On that day, the International Brotherhood of Magicians will hold a special meeting at the Venetian Theater in downtown Albany, to celebrate his life and magic — and they have invited all of Jerry's nonmagical friends to attend as well.

John and I ask that all CSS members try to attend this special event. There will be ice cream sundaes, cake and other treats, and a stage where Jerry's magician friends will be performing their versions of some of his best tricks.

Here's the info:

International Brotherhood of Magicians presents:

A Celebration of the Life of Jerry Andrus

Sunday March 18th, 2pm

Venetian Theater

241 First Avenue W

Albany, OR 97321

541-791-8585

[Note from John: *Please, if you possibly can, attend this tribute to Jerry. A world-renowned magician or illusionist, he is also a great Humanist, and yet a down-to-earth guy. He is a founding member of Corvallis Secular Society, and has frequently entertained us with his magic and shared with us his poetry, his prose, his wit and his wisdom.*

In other news, John Dearing has decided he'd like to resume his old position of Treasurer (in addition to being President), taking over from Angela Byers, who has held the position for over 6 years.

Angela's ongoing health issues made it impossible for her to continue her duties (and we apologize to those of you whose checks to CSS went uncashed for several months).

Thanks, John! [The contact info on the back page of this newsletter has been updated accordingly.]

From the Editor

Scooter Scuttled

The Bush empire continues to crumble.

Dick Cheney's right-hand man Scooter Libby is now a convicted felon. Congressional Democrats are talking with Libby prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald to see if they can get him to testify about the REST of what he's learned about Bush, Cheney and Rove. The erupting Walter Reed scandal proves once again how little the Republicans ACTUALLY care about the troops. And on, and on, and on.

After six years of getting away with destroying everything our country stands for (see, well, every other article in this issue of the newsletter!), it is GOOD to see these guys finally start to get what's coming to them...

Reed Byers

Editor, *Willamette Freethinker*

CSS Meetings and Events

Calendar:

Saturday, Mar 17th 1:00-4:00 CSS potluck

Sunday, Mar 18th 2:00-???:? SPECIAL EVENT

A Celebration of the Life of Jerry Andrus

Venetian Theater, 241 1st Ave W, Albany

Saturday, Apr 21st 2:00-4:00 CSS regular meeting

Saturday, May 19th 2:00-4:00 CSS regular meeting

Regular meeting time:

Third Saturday of each month, from 2:00-4:00 pm.

Regular meeting location:

Corl House (3975 NW Witham Hill Dr, Corvallis).

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From the President

“Be Fruitful and Multiply”: The Crisis in Human Overpopulation

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth”

— Genesis 1:27-28

The message is clear. We humans are to reproduce with a vengeance (and other species be damned). And we have. Especially in modern times.

It took the time from the appearance of our species until 1804 for the world human population to reach 1 billion. In only 123 more years (1927), it reached 2 billion. In 33 more years (1960), it reached 3 billion. Fifteen years after that (1975), it reached 4 billion. Five billion was reached in about 1987 (in about 12 years). In about 12 additional years (1999), human population reached 6 billion. Presently it is about 6.5 billion. By mid-century, it is likely to be about 8 or 9 billion. (Source: *About: Geography* [1].) And there’s no reason to expect this growth to suddenly stop at that point.

In his article, “Population size ‘green priority’” (January 6, 2006), Richard Black, Environment Correspondent for the BBC News website [2], wrote that:

“solving the earth’s environmental problems means addressing the size of its human population, says the head of the UK’s Antarctic Research Agency.”

“Professor Chris Rapley argues that the current global population of six billion is unsustainably high. Writing for the BBC News Website, he says population is the ‘Cinderella’ issue of the environmental movement. But unless it is addressed, the welfare and quality of life of future generations will suffer, he adds. ‘If we believe that the size of the human [ecological] “footprint” is a serious problem, and there is much evidence for this,’ he writes, ‘then a rational view would be that along with a raft of measures to reduce the footprint per person, the issue of population management must be addressed.’

“A number of studies suggest that humankind is consuming the earth’s resources at an unsustainably fast rate. Even so, the issue of population is hardly ever discussed at environmental summits or raised by green lobby groups. Professor Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, acknowledges it is a thorny question, invoking the spectre of forced population control and even eugenics. He does not make suggestions about how the current upward trend, from the current six billion towards eight or nine billion by 2050, can be reversed. but, he says population is one of a number of issues leading to

environmental degradation of various forms, and needs a higher priority than it currently receives.

“‘Unless and until this changes,’ he writes, ‘summits such as [the recent climate change meeting] in Montreal which address only part of the problem will be limited to at best very modest success, with the welfare and quality of life of future generations the ineluctable casualty.’”

Professor Rapley has written [3]:

“Let us assume (reasonably) that an optimum human population level exists, which would provide the physical and intellectual capacity to ensure a rich and fulfilling life for all, but would represent a call upon the services of the planet which would be benign and hence sustainable over the long term. A scientific analysis can tell us what that optimum number is (perhaps 2-3 billion?). With that number and a timescale as targets, a path to reach ‘utopia’ from where we are now is, in principle, a straightforward matter of identifying options, choosing the approach and then planning and navigating the route from source to destination.

“In practice, of course, it is a bombshell of a topic, with profound and emotive issues of ethics, morality, equity and practicability. As found in China, practicability and acceptability can be particularly elusive. So controversial is the subject that it has become the ‘Cinderella’ of the great sustainability debate – rarely visible in public, or even in private. In interdisciplinary meetings addressing how the planet functions as an integrated whole, demographers and population specialists are usually notable by their absence.

“Rare indeed are the opportunities for religious leaders, philosophers, moralists, policymakers, politicians and indeed the ‘global public’ to debate the trajectory of the world’s human population in the context of its stress on the earth system, and to decide what might be done.”

In a more recent article (December 8, 2006), “Birth rate ‘harms poverty goals’” [4], Mr. Black reported that the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are:

“difficult or impossible to meet” without curbing population growth, a UK parliamentary group says.

“It concludes that a high birth rate in poor nations contributes to poor health and education and environmental damage. The global population is forecast to reach about nine billion by 2050. *The All*

Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health will publish its report later this month. It has spent six months taking evidence from expert witnesses for the report, *Population Growth — Its Impact on the MDGs*. ‘No country has ever raised itself out of poverty without stabilising population growth,’ said the group’s vice-chairman, Richard Ottaway MP, at a seminar on population issues this week. ‘And the MDGs are going to be difficult or impossible to attain without a leveling out of population growth in developing countries.’

On the Somalia News & Information website [5] is an article by Melaku Demissie, “Consequences of population explosion, global warming” (March 3, 2007). The article reports that:

“Last week the Biological Society of Ethiopia, at the opening of its 17th annual conference, picked a central theme: ‘Population Explosion and Global Warming: Local and Global Context.’” Dr. Solomon Yirga, president of the Society, reported that the problem of rapid population growth has assumed critical stage in the least developed countries like Ethiopia. He noted that experience over the last couple of decades in Ethiopia has shown that as human population increases, the carrying capacity of the environment decreases. A high population growth rate induces environmental degradation, increase in demand for resources and the rate at which these resources are exploited.

“Jason O. Onsembe from the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) in his presentation indicated that Ethiopia has an estimated total population of 79.3 million which is expected to be 170.2 million by 2050. ‘High growth rate of population affects the future size of population, the age structure, labor force supply, rural and urban distribution, regional densities, all of which have implications on development.’ Regarding fertility rate, the presenter said that the total fertility rate in Ethiopia is 5.9 which is high by any standard. Only 17 percent of women favor having fewer than four children, and women consider 5.3 children as the average ideal family size. The Ethiopian government considers high rate of population as a great challenge to its objectives of meeting the demands for social services and facilities, particularly in such areas as health, education employment, housing, environmental security and general well-being.

“He added that nine counties, one of which is Ethiopia, are expected to account for half of the world’s projected population increase during the period 2005-2007; global life expectancy is expected to rise; and the net international migration to more developed regions is projected to reach 98 million during the period 2005-2050. “In Ethiopia, high population growth will impede all efforts aimed at reducing poverty, as the recent analysis of the trends in economic growth, poverty and population

dynamics indicate.” He suggested that it now remains the responsibility of policymakers to put in place appropriate policies and strategies to change the direction of population growth. In poor countries, massive efforts are required to ensure non-deterioration of social and economic conditions.”

My View

Human population is higher than the Earth can sustain. We owe the generations of humans to come an acceptable quality of life; we owe the other species that share our planet the right to not be driven to extinction. Human population is presently growing by about seventy or eighty million a year. The issue of population management *must* be addressed.

The effects of such huge and growing numbers of people on Earth are clear and dire. They include pollution of our oceans, lakes, and rivers, our air, and our land. They include habitat destruction, deforestation, and the loss of countless species of plants and animals. They include global warming, with the resultant flooding of low-lying lands, increased desertification, more violent storms, and massive, uncontrolled human migration on a scale unimaginable a generation ago. Warfare and human misery are likely to increase. Disease, malnutrition, and starvation will likely grow.

The major religions tend to encourage large families, and some oppose effective methods of birth control. The Humanist alternative (population management, universal education, universal medical care, the settling of differences by peaceful means, and of course freedom from all forms of superstition, including religion) has never been more needed.

The issue of population management *must* be addressed.

John Dearing
President of CSS

[1] <http://geography.about.com/od/obtainpopulationdata/a/worldpopulation.html>

[2] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/4585920.stml>

[3] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/4584572.stml>

[4] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6219922.stml>

[5] <http://www.saylac.com/news/articleid2mar0307.html>



Oregon Report Informs Assisted-Suicide Debate

by Nancy Vogel, *LA Times*, 3/8/2007

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Backers of a proposal to allow terminally ill Californians to hasten their deaths with lethal drugs pointed Thursday to legalized assisted suicide in Oregon, where a new report shows it is used sparingly.

Forty-six Oregon residents, most of them cancer patients, used the law to end their lives in 2006, according to the Oregon Department of Human Services' ninth annual report on the "Death with Dignity Act" that voters there passed in 1994.

That law is unique in the United States. Two Democratic lawmakers in California are making their third attempt in three years to enact a similar law.

Since the Oregon law took effect in 1998, 292 of the roughly 86,000 likely eligible residents have used the lethal prescription to end their lives. To be eligible, people must be Oregon residents, have a prognosis of less than six months to live and be deemed mentally capable of making medical decisions.

"I think the experience in Oregon should reassure Californians that end-of-life choice greatly benefits patients and their families," said Keith Graham, a doctor in rural eastern Oregon who helped one patient use the prescription last year.

His patient, an 80-year-old with cancer, wanted to die at home rather than in a nursing home, he said.

"She was able to choose the time and place," Graham said. "She died in the bedroom that she and her husband had shared in the house they had built, surrounded by her five children and many, many grandchildren. The house was just full. It was a very smooth transition. It was very peaceful. The family was very grateful."

The California bill is opposed by the Catholic Church, which considers life sacred from conception to natural death. It also is opposed by some activists for the disabled, who say they fear people with chronic medical troubles might be pressured by a cost-conscious medical system into ending their lives.

Tim Rosales, spokesman for opponents of the California bill, said the limited use of the Oregon law called its value into question.

"You don't make public policy in this way just to affect a narrow swath of Californians," he said, "especially when you have issues related to health insurance, the uninsured, the poor, completely different demographics in California than you have in Oregon.

"We're in the middle of a health-insurance crisis," he said. "When you have a profit-driven health-management system like occurs in California, there are significant dangers."

As in previous years, the latest report from Oregon shows that those who choose to hasten their deaths are as likely to be men as women, tend to be better educated than the rest of the population and list their top concerns as loss of autonomy, decreasing ability to engage in activities that make life enjoyable and loss of dignity.

The median age of those who used the lethal drugs in 2006 was 74, and 87 percent had cancer. Nearly all died at home, and all but one patient had health insurance. Most became unconscious within several minutes of taking the drugs, typically barbiturates.

It takes several weeks and multiple requests to obtain a prescription. Not everyone who seeks one uses it.

"I ... am not even sure I will use the medication," said Glenn Elfman, a Southern California native who lives in Pistol River, Oregon. He is dying of prostate cancer and has obtained a prescription.

"All I know is that ... it has been an enormous comfort knowing that I could spare my family and myself the indignity of an end I would not want," he said.

The latest report included one semantic change hailed by proponents as significant: The Oregon Department of Human Services stopped referring to the act as "physician-assisted suicide."

"The state has used that term and it has been much to the dismay of dying patients, who have felt it has insulted their exhaustive battles with cancer and other terminal illnesses," said Barbara Coombs Lee, president of Compassion & Choices, a nonprofit group that helps people get and use the life-ending prescriptions.

The Oregon law "clearly stated that the practice it sets out is not suicide, not assisted suicide," Lee said. She uses the term "aid in dying."

Oregon state epidemiologist Mel Kohn said he "had to agree" with Lee. He said the death certificates of people who take the lethal prescription list the underlying terminal illness.

"It's very difficult to come up with any kind of terminology that is really neutral," Kohn said.

The US Psychological Torture System is Finally on Trial

America has deliberately driven hundreds, perhaps thousands, of prisoners insane. Now it is being held to account in a Miami court.

by Naomi Klein, *The Guardian*, 2/23/2007

Something remarkable is going on in a Miami courtroom. The cruel methods US interrogators have used since September 11 to “break” prisoners are finally being put on trial. This was not supposed to happen. The Bush administration’s plan was to put José Padilla on trial for allegedly being part of a network linked to international terrorists. But Padilla’s lawyers are arguing that he is not fit to stand trial because he has been driven insane by the government.

Arrested in May 2002 at Chicago’s O’Hare airport, Padilla, a Brooklyn-born former gang member, was classified as an “enemy combatant” and taken to a navy prison in Charleston, South Carolina. He was kept in a cell 9ft by 7ft, with no natural light, no clock and no calendar. Whenever Padilla left the cell, he was shackled and suited in heavy goggles and headphones. Padilla was kept under these conditions for 1,307 days. He was forbidden contact with anyone but his interrogators, who punctured the extreme sensory deprivation with sensory overload, blasting him with harsh lights and pounding sounds. Padilla also says he was injected with a “truth serum”, a substance his lawyers believe was LSD or PCP.

According to his lawyers and two mental health specialists who examined him, Padilla has been so shattered that he lacks the ability to assist in his own defence. He is convinced that his lawyers are “part of a continuing interrogation program” and sees his captors as protectors. In order to prove that “the extended torture visited upon Mr. Padilla has left him damaged”, his lawyers want to tell the court what happened during those years in the navy brig. The prosecution strenuously objects, maintaining that “Padilla is competent” and that his treatment is irrelevant.

The US district judge Marcia Cooke disagrees. “It’s not like Mr. Padilla was living in a box. He was at a place. Things happened to him at that place.” The judge has ordered several prison employees to testify on Padilla’s mental state at the hearings, which began yesterday. They will be asked how a man who is alleged to have engaged in elaborate anti-government plots now acts, in the words of brig staff, “like a piece of furniture”.

It’s difficult to overstate the significance of these hearings. The techniques used to break Padilla have been standard operating procedure at Guantánamo Bay since the first prisoners arrived five years ago. They wore blackout goggles and sound-blocking headphones and were placed

in extended isolation, interrupted by strobe lights and heavy metal music. These same practices have been documented in dozens of cases of “extraordinary rendition” carried out by the CIA, as well as in prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many have suffered the same symptoms as Padilla. According to James Yee, a former army Muslim chaplain at Guantánamo, there is an entire section of the prison called Delta Block for detainees who have been reduced to a delusional state. “They would respond to me in a childlike voice, talking complete nonsense. Many of them would loudly sing childish songs, repeating the song over and over.” All the inmates of Delta Block were on 24-hour suicide watch.

Human Rights Watch has exposed a US-run detention facility near Kabul known as the “prison of darkness” — tiny pitch-black cells, strange blaring sounds. “Plenty lost their minds,” one former inmate recalled. “I could hear people knocking their heads against the walls and the doors.”

These standard mind-breaking techniques have never faced scrutiny in an American court because the prisoners in the jails are foreigners and have been stripped of the right of habeas corpus — a denial that, scandalously, was just upheld by a federal appeals court in Washington DC. There is only one reason Padilla’s case is different — he is a US citizen. The administration did not originally intend to bring Padilla to trial, but when his status as an enemy combatant faced a supreme court challenge, the administration abruptly changed course, charging Padilla and transferring him to civilian custody. That makes Padilla’s case unique — he is the only victim of the post-9/11 legal netherworld to face an ordinary US trial.

Now that Padilla’s mental state is the central issue in the case, the government prosecutors are presented with a problem. The CIA and the military have known since the early 1960s that extreme sensory deprivation and sensory overload cause personality disintegration — that’s the whole point. “The deprivation of stimuli induces regression by depriving the subject’s mind of contact with an outer world and thus forcing it in upon itself. At the same time, the calculated provision of stimuli during

(continued on page 7)

Why Libby's Pardon Is a Slam Dunk

by Frank Rich, *New York Times*, 3/11/2007

Even by Washington's standards, few debates have been more fatuous or wasted more energy than the frenzied speculation over whether President Bush will or will not pardon Scooter Libby. Of course he will.

A president who tries to void laws he doesn't like by encumbering them with "signing statements" and who regards the Geneva Conventions as a nonbinding technicality isn't going to start playing by the rules now. His assertion last week that he is "pretty much going to stay out of" the Libby case is as credible as his pre-election vote of confidence in Donald Rumsfeld. The only real question about the pardon is whether Mr. Bush cares enough about his fellow Republicans' political fortunes to delay it until after Election Day 2008.

Either way, the pardon is a must for Mr. Bush. He needs Mr. Libby to keep his mouth shut. Cheney's Cheney knows too much about covert administration schemes far darker than the smearing of Joseph Wilson. Though Mr. Libby wrote a novel that sank without a trace a decade ago, he now has the makings of an explosive Washington tell-all that could be stranger than most fiction and far more salable.

Mr. Libby's novel was called "The Apprentice." His memoir could be titled "The Accomplice." Its first chapter would open in August 2002, when he and a small cadre of administration officials including Karl Rove formed the White House Iraq Group (WHIG), a secret task force to sell the Iraq war to the American people. The climactic chapter of the Libby saga unfolded last week when the guilty verdict in his trial coincided, all too fittingly, with the Congressional appearance of two Iraq veterans, one without an ear and one without an eye, to recount their subhuman treatment at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

It was WHIG's secret machinations more than four years ago that led directly to those shredded lives. WHIG had been tasked, as *The Washington Post* would later uncover, to portray Iraq's supposedly imminent threat to America with "gripping images and stories not available in the hedged and austere language of intelligence." In other words, WHIG was to cook up the sexiest recipe for promoting the war, facts be damned. So it did, by hyping the scariest possible scenario: nuclear apocalypse. As Michael Isikoff and David Corn report in "Hubris," it was WHIG (equipped with the slick phrase-making of the White House speechwriter Michael Gerson) that gave the administration its Orwellian bumper sticker, the constantly reiterated warning that Saddam's "smoking gun" could be "a mushroom cloud."

Ever since all the W.M.D. claims proved false, the administration has pleaded that it was duped by the same bad intelligence everyone else saw. But the nuclear card, the most persistent and gripping weapon in the prewar propaganda arsenal, was this White House's own special contrivance. Mr. Libby was present at its creation. He knows what Mr. Bush and Dick Cheney knew about the manufacture of this fiction and when they knew it.

Clearly they knew it early on. The administration's guilt (or at least embarrassment) about its lies in fomenting the war quickly drove it to hide the human price being paid for those lies. (It also tried to hide the financial cost of the war by keeping it out of the regular defense budget, but that's another, if related, story.) The steps the White House took to keep casualties out of view were extraordinary, even as it deployed troops to decorate every

presidential victory rally and gave the Pentagon free rein to exploit the sacrifices of Jessica Lynch and Pat Tillman in mendacious P.R. stunts.

The administration's enforcement of a prohibition on photographs of coffins returning from Iraq was the first policy manifestation of the hide-the-carnage strategy. It was complemented by the president's decision to break with precedent, set by Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter among others, and refuse to attend military funerals, lest he lend them a media spotlight. But Mark Benjamin, who has chronicled the mistreatment of Iraq war veterans since 2003, discovered an equally concerted effort to keep injured troops off camera. Mr. Benjamin wrote in *Salon* in 2005 that "flights carrying the wounded arrive in the United States only at night" and that both Walter Reed and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda barred the press "from seeing or photographing incoming patients."

A particularly vivid example of the extreme measures taken by the White House to cover up the war's devastation turned up in *The Washington Post's* Walter Reed exposé. Sgt. David Thomas, a Tennessee National Guard gunner with a Purple Heart and an amputated leg, found himself left off the guest list for a summer presidential ceremony honoring a fellow amputee after he said he would be wearing shorts, not pants, when occupying a front-row seat in camera range. Now we can fully appreciate that bizarre incident on C-Span in October 2003, when an anguished Cher, of all unlikely callers, phoned in to ask why administration officials, from the president down, were not being photographed with patients like those she had visited at Walter Reed. "I don't understand why these guys are so hidden," she said.

A president who tries to void laws he doesn't like by encumbering them with "signing statements" and who regards the Geneva Conventions as a nonbinding technicality isn't going to start playing by the rules now.

The answer is simple: Out of sight, out of mind was the game plan, and it has been enforced down to the tiniest instances. When HBO produced an acclaimed (and apolitical) documentary last year about military medics' remarkable efforts to save lives in Iraq, "Baghdad ER," Army brass at the last minute boycotted planned promotional screenings in Washington and at Fort Campbell, Ky. In a memo, Lt. Gen. Kevin Kiley warned that the film, though made with Army cooperation, could endanger veterans' health by provoking symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The General Kiley who was so busy policing an HBO movie for its potential health hazards is the same one who did not correct the horrific real-life conditions on his watch at Walter Reed. After the *Post* exposé was published, he tried to spin it by boasting that most of the medical center's rooms "were actually perfectly O.K." and scapegoating "soldiers leaving food in their rooms" for the mice and cockroach infestations. That this guy is still surgeon general of the Army — or was as of Friday — makes you wonder what he, like Mr. Libby, has on his superiors.

Now that the country has seen the Congressional testimony of Specialist Jeremy Duncan, who has melted flesh where his ear once was, or watched the ABC newsman Bob Woodruff's report on other neglected patients in military medical facilities far beyond Walter Reed, the White House cover-up of veterans' care has collapsed, like so many other cover-ups necessitated by its conduct of this war. But the administration and its surrogates still won't face up to their moral culpability.

Mary Matalin, the former Cheney flack who served with Mr. Libby on WHIG and is now on the board of his legal defense fund (its full list of donors is unknown), has been especially vocal. "Scooter didn't do anything," she said. "And his personal record and service are impeccable." What Mr. Libby did — fabricating nuclear threats at WHIG and then lying under oath when he feared that sordid Pandora's box might be pried open by the Wilson case — was despicable. Had there been no WHIG or other White House operation for drumming up fictional rationales for war, there would have been no bogus uranium from Africa in a presidential speech, no leak to commit perjury about, no amputees to shut away in filthy rooms at Walter Reed.

Listening to Ms. Matalin and her fellow apparatchiks emote publicly about the punishment being inflicted on poor Mr. Libby and his family, you wonder what world they live in. They seem clueless about how ugly their sympathy for a conniving courtier sounds against the testimony of those wounded troops and their families who bear the most searing burdens of the unnecessary war WHIG sped to market.

As is often noted, any parallels between Iraq and Vietnam do not extend to America's treatment of its troops. No one spits at those serving in Iraq. But our "support" for the troops has often been as hypocritical as that of an administration that still fails to provide them with sufficient armor. Health care indignities, among other

betrayals of returning veterans, have been reported by countless news organizations since the war began, not just this year. Many in Congress did nothing, and we as a people have often looked the other way, supporting the troops with car decals and donated phone cards while the same history repeats itself again and again.

Now the "surge" that was supposed to show results by summer is creeping inexorably into an open-ended escalation, even as Moktada al-Sadr's militia ominously melts away, just as Iraq's army did after the invasion in 2003, lying in wait to spring a Tet-like surprise. And still, despite Thursday's breakthrough announcement of a credible Iraq exit blueprint by the House leadership, Congress threatens to dither. While Mr. Bush will no doubt pardon Scooter Libby without so much as a second thought, anyone else in Washington who continues to further this debacle may find it less easy to escape scot-free.

Torture System On Trial...

(cont from page 5)

interrogation tends to make the regressed subject view the interrogator as a father-figure." That comes from Kubark Counter-intelligence Interrogation, a declassified 1963 CIA manual for interrogating "resistant sources".

The manual was based on the findings of the agency's notorious MK-ULTRA programme, which in the 1950s funnelled about \$25m to scientists to carry out research into "unusual techniques of interrogation". One of the psychiatrists who received CIA funding was the infamous Ewen Cameron, of Montreal's McGill University. Cameron subjected hundreds of psychiatric patients to large doses of electroshock and total sensory isolation, and drugged them with LSD and PCP. In 1960 Cameron gave a lecture at the Brooks air force base in Texas, in which he stated that sensory deprivation "produces the primary symptoms of schizophrenia".

There is no need to go so far back to prove that the US military knew full well that it was driving Padilla mad. The army's field manual, reissued just last year, states: "Sensory deprivation may result in extreme anxiety, hallucinations, bizarre thoughts, depression, and antisocial behaviour" — as well as "significant psychological distress".

If these techniques drove Padilla insane, that means the US government has been deliberately driving hundreds, possibly thousands, of prisoners insane around the world. What is on trial in Florida is not one man's mental state. It is the whole system of US psychological torture.

Naomi Klein's book on disaster capitalism will be published this spring; a version of this article appears in *The Nation*
www.nologo.org

Establishing Martial Law in the United States

<http://www.sourcewatch.org/>

[index.php?title=Establishing_martial_law_in_the_United_States](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Establishing_martial_law_in_the_United_States)

The John W. Warner Defense Authorization Act of 2006 (PL 109-364), "named for the longtime Armed Services Committee chairman from Virginia," was signed October 17, 2006, by President George W. Bush. The Act "has a provocative provision called 'Use of the Armed Forces in Major Public Emergencies'," the thrust of which "seems to be about giving the federal government a far stronger hand in coordinating responses to [Hurricane] Katrina-like disasters," Jeff Stein, *Congressional Quarterly* National Security Editor wrote December 1, 2006.

"But on closer inspection, its language also alters the two-centuries-old Insurrection Act, which Congress passed in 1807 to limit the president's power to deploy troops within the United States ... 'to suppress, in a State, any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy'," Stein wrote.

"But the amended law takes the cuffs off" and "critics say it's a formula for executive branch mischief," Stein wrote, as "the new language adds 'natural disaster, epidemic, or other serious public health emergency, terrorist attack or incident' to the list of conditions permitting the President to take over local authority — particularly 'if domestic violence has occurred to such an extent that the constituted authorities of the State or possession are incapable of maintaining public order.'"

"One of the few to complain, Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., warned that the measure virtually invites the White House to declare federal martial law. ... It 'subverts solid, longstanding posse comitatus statutes that limit the military's involvement in law enforcement, thereby making it easier for the President to declare martial law,' he said in remarks submitted to the Congressional Record on Sept. 29."



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- Newsletter subscription: \$18/year (\$1.50/month)
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Contacting Us:

President / Treasurer John S. Dearing
President@CorvallisSecular.org

Use this address for:
• Questions about CSS.
• Membership or subscription payments.
126 NW 21st St.
Corvallis, OR. 97330
(541) 754-2557

Vice President / Editor Reed H. Byers
Editor@CorvallisSecular.org
Webmaster / Asst Editor Angela C. Byers
Webmaster@CorvallisSecular.org

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• Newsletter submissions.
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Albany, OR. 97322
(541) 924-9128

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