



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

SEPTEMBER 2003

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Repeal LB 775 Petition Launched Initiative Would Appear on November 2004 Ballot

In an announcement that made front-page headlines all across the state, Nebraskans for Peace and the state employees union (NAPE/AFSCME) formally launched an initiative petition drive last month to repeal LB 775, the state's Big Business tax break program.

The officially named "Stop Big Business Subsidies—Repeal LB 775" initiative campaign is seeking to end this \$3 billion tax giveaway program by a vote of the people at the November 2004 election. A total of about 76,000 valid signatures must be gathered by July 2 to qualify for the ballot.

Nebraskans for Peace President Carol McShane explained at the August 27 announcement outside the State Capitol that the state's budget crisis, coupled with the Legislature's steadfast refusal to cut LB 775 benefits, left no alternative but a petition drive. "We're doing the Legislature's work for them. They started this program; they could end it. But they're forcing us to do their job." Stopping this \$100 million-a-year corporate handout, she went on to say, would significantly help relieve the state's budget crisis and spare many other vulnerable state programs from further cuts.

Bob Corner of Local 61 of the Nebraska Association of Public Employees/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (NAPE/AFSCME) was quick

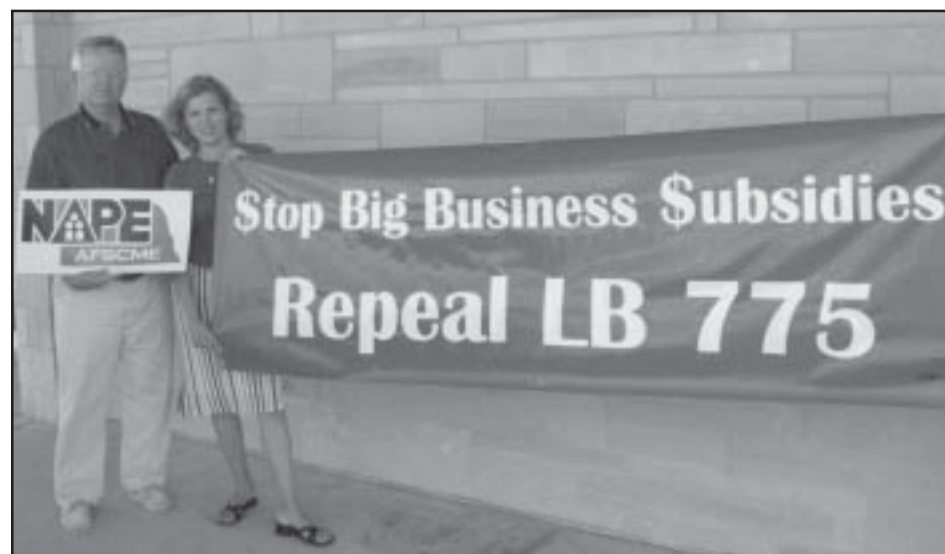
to note the hypocrisy shown by state officials during the budget crisis. Governor Johanns, he reminded the audience, had called upon everyone "to put an oar in the water. Everyone did that," he said, "except for LB 775 participants."

Although Nebraskans for Peace has been the most outspoken opponent of LB 775 in the state over the past three years, the organization lacked the resources necessary to undertake a petition drive by itself. The announcement that the 3000-member state employees union, with its ready-made, statewide network, was co-sponsoring the petition drive added immediate legitimacy to the campaign and sent shock waves across the state's political landscape.

And nowhere will this shock be felt more keenly than in the Nebraska Unicameral.

The 2004 Legislature will not only be convening in a year when a majority of the members are up for election (25 of the 49 seats will be on the ballot). Legislators will be meeting in January to cut the state budget for the fifth time in the last two-and-a-half years.

Those senators who have steadfastly refused to cut (let alone reform or repeal) LB 775—but have repeatedly taken the budget axe to virtually every other state program—are bound to be anxious about a citizens' initiative to repeal the program outright.



Bob Corner, chair of the Government Affairs Committee of NAPE/AFSCME, and Becca Kaiser, new NFP Outreach Coordinator, pose with the Repeal LB 775 banner.

For the first time in 15 years, since the officially titled "Employment and Investment Growth Act" was passed in 1987, the Nebraska Unicameral is going to be held publicly accountable for this \$100 million-a-year, wholesale giveaway of our tax dollars to Big Business. From January up through the election, pro-LB 775 legislators will have to explain to their constituents why K-12 educational funding was slashed, the University and higher education were cut, social services were

ravaged and state employees laid off just so this corporate sweetheart deal could be preserved.

It will be, as one observer put it, "the best opportunity we have had in a generation to challenge the power of Big Business in this state."

Contact the NFP State Office at 402-475-4620 or nfpstate@redjellyfish.net for petitions or more information about the campaign.

inside:

Three Reasons to Repeal LB 775 p. 3
SOS 2003: Speak Out at StratCom p. 4
What's at Stake in the Debate
Over New Nuclear Weapons p. 6
My Hiroshima A-bomb Experience p. 7

"War on Terror + Lies" p. 8
NAFTA Times Ten
The FTAA p. 9
Christy Hargeshimer Honored p. 10
From the Bottom
by Sally Herrin p. 12

Nebraskans for Peace Phone: 402-475-4620/Fax: 475-4624
941 'O' St., Ste. 1026 E-mail: nfpstate@redjellyfish.net
Lincoln, NE 68508 www.nebraskansforpeace.org

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Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraskans for Peace is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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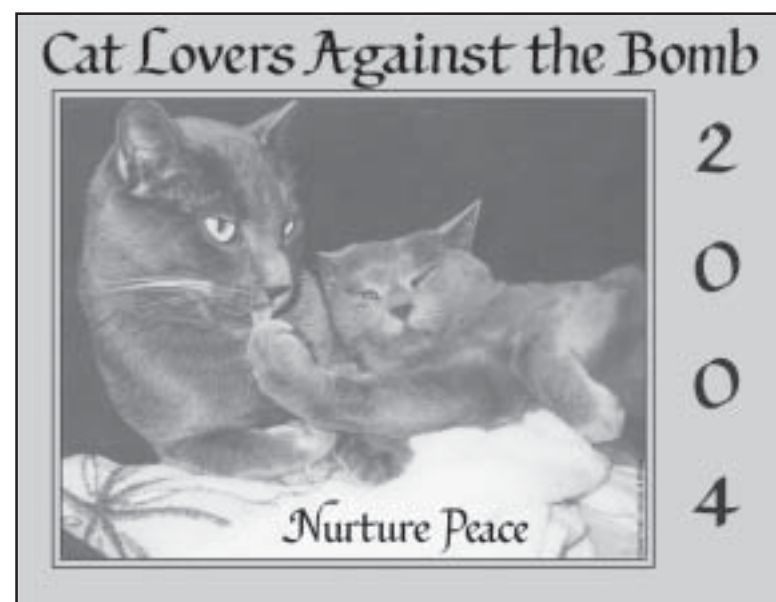
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Three Reasons to Repeal LB 775

Versions of the following article by *Stop Big Business Subsidies - Repeal LB 775* Treasurer Mark Vasina appeared in the September 4 Omaha World-Herald, the September 14 Grand Island Independent and the September 15 Lincoln Journal Star.

The initiative petition drive to repeal LB775 sponsored by Stop Big Business Subsidies is necessary for three key reasons.

First, LB775 tax incentives are ineffective. The cost of the program in tax dollars exceeds the benefits to the state economy.

Second, Nebraska taxpayers cannot afford this colossally expensive tax giveaway program any longer. Many recent cuts to essential state programs were forced by the Legislature's failure to curb LB775 entitlements.

Third, legislators have resisted repair or overhaul of the program for 15 years. Residents now need to repeal LB775 themselves through the initiative process.

The most reliable information to date shows that the LB775 tax break program is not effective. The Nebraska Department of Revenue — the only agency privileged to see the actual numbers on LB775 — says 70 percent of the jobs claimed by LB775 beneficiaries would have been created anyway.

Similarly, an interim study in 2000 by the Revenue Committee and the

Legislative Fiscal Office found that 68 percent of the job growth attributed to LB775 companies would have occurred in any event. The only study of the wider economic impact of LB775, published in 1997 by Creighton University professor Ernie Goss, concluded that LB775 had little or no positive impact on personal income growth in Nebraska. Instead of creating new wealth in the state, as intended by the Legislature, public money spent on LB775 tax incentives is used mainly to reward routine business investments. A 15-year-old program that misses the mark so widely is cause for serious concern.

Program boosters offer little of substance to counter this concern. I have searched the public remarks of LB775 proponents in vain for evidence to back up their claims that the state's economy is propped up by LB775. In place of the missing evidence, I find bluffs, anecdotes and exaggerated appeals to the insecurities felt by many Nebraskans about holding onto their jobs. Proponents claim that a recent privately funded study by two economic consultants concludes that LB775 effectively stimulated job creation in Nebraska. The authors, in fact, make no such claim, stating instead that the study does not address causation between LB775 and job creation.

The astronomical cost of this ineffective program adds to our concern.

Nebraska taxpayers are footing a bill of about \$3 billion for LB775 subsidies already agreed to. That's \$1.5 billion for tax revenues already lost, plus another \$1.5 billion for future revenues that will be lost. The net cost to Nebraska taxpayers for this corporate welfare is currently \$90 million annually even after offsetting tax revenue losses with new tax revenues generated by LB775 jobs and investment.

For every \$15 in public funds spent on LB775, we get back only \$3 in new taxes. Even considering the multiplier effect on the new spending generated by LB775, the program is simply too expensive to pay for the true new jobs created. This is a reality about tax incentive programs that development economists have warned states about for years. In fact, economic consultants hired to review the state's tax system advised our Legislature in 1988 that LB775 was a misguided program.

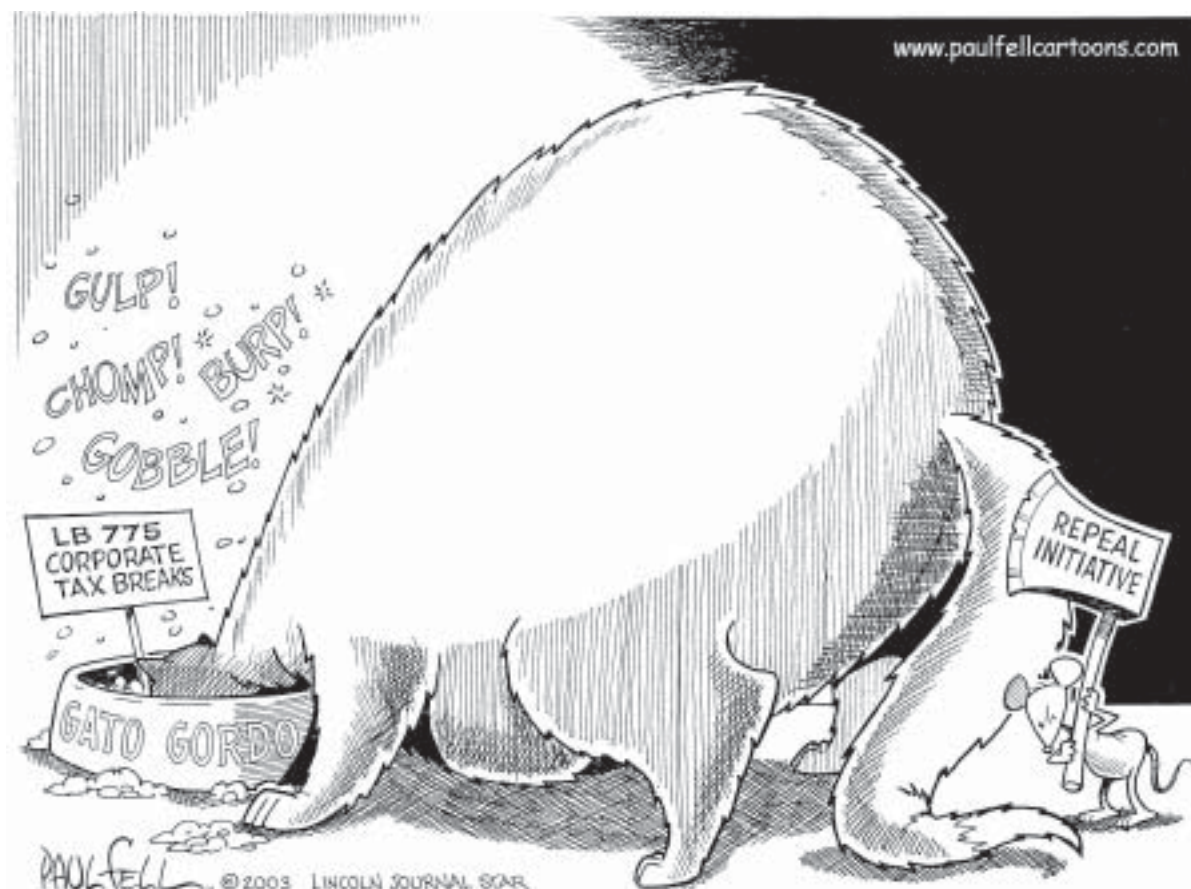
Overlay LB775's \$90-million-per-year net revenue loss with the Legislature's budget cuts since 2001. The magnitude of LB775's cost then becomes clear. Funding has been gutted for virtually every other significant state program. But the expensive LB775 subsidies have not been touched. General Fund cutbacks for agency operations and state aid to local governments for FY2001-FY2005, which total approximately \$342 million, would have been largely unnecessary if revenue

spent on LB775 tax breaks during this period had been available.

The Legislature has exerted virtually no oversight of the LB775 program during the past 15 years. Senators turned down all 13 attempts to require program evaluation. Nearly two-thirds of the over one hundred proposals to amend LB775 died in committee. Senators agreed during the 2003 legislative session that the debate on LB608, introduced by Lincoln Sen. David Landis, was the first time they had taken a serious look at LB775. But when senators gutted the bill, Landis declared serious examination of LB775 must wait for another day. Legislators then removed all provisions related to LB775 from the bill.

LB775 is crippling Nebraska. Virtually every significant state program is being cut in order to fund an expensive, failed economic development program. We have no more time to debate whether LB775 is a worthy investment. Instead, we must acknowledge reality.

Nebraska taxpayers simply cannot afford to keep LB775 on the books any longer. Neither can they wait any longer for the Legislature to take corrective action. Too much is being sacrificed by too many to pay for questionable benefits for too few. Residents deserve the right to vote through the initiative process on whether the LB775 door should finally be closed to new applicants.



INITIATIVE PETITION LANGUAGE

FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-4101, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002; to terminate the filing, acceptance, and approval of applications for benefits under the Employment and Investment Growth Act; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original section.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Sec. 1. Section 77-4101, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002, is amended to read:

77-4101. Sections 77-4101 to 77-4112 and section 2 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Employment and Investment Growth Act.

Sec. 2. Commencing on the effective date of this initiative, there shall be no further applications for benefits under the Employment and Investment Growth Act filed, accepted, or approved and there shall be no further project agreements entered into. All project agreements entered into before such date shall continue in full force and effect.

Sec. 3. Original section 77-4101, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002, is repealed.

Contact the NFP State Office for petitions.

S O S 2003

Speak Out at StratCom



Nebraska's Role in the International Peace Movement

by Joshua Cramer

"How many people do you expect to show up at Speak Out at StratCom?" asked Robin Tysver of the *Omaha World-Herald* on July 29, 2003. This simple question cut deep into the organizers' most heartfelt passions and deepest fears. Would the months of work that had been put into organizing the "Speak Out at StratCom: No New Weapons of Mass Destruction" be worth it? With SOS showing up on the first 40 hits of an online Google search, was this national network going to turn out enough people? "At least 1,000 people will show up for SOS," is how I answered Tysver's question.

We called ourselves "Citizens Against Weapons of Mass Destruction (CAWMD)" and the dynamics of the group were as complicated as the coalition's name. Our meetings were every Sunday from April to August alternating between Lincoln and Omaha locations. Many of us were also part of the Nebraska Coalition for Peace in Lincoln and the Act 2 Stop War Coalition in Omaha, so in reality we were all going to more than just one meeting a week about SOS. Motivated by a sense of obligation to draw attention to our government's plans to develop new nuclear war-fighting strategies and launch a brand new arms race right here in Nebraska, we were undaunted by the amount of time SOS was going to take to plan. When there were disagreements, we simply focused on the larger picture of Nebraska's role in the international peace movement.

Our vision was to invite the international community to an unprecedented weekend of education, entertainment and demonstration highlighting the opposition to the top-level Pentagon meeting to plan and develop a new generation of nuclear weapons scheduled to be held at U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air force Base in Bellevue, Nebraska during the first week in August. That top-secret Stockpile Stewardship Conference meeting, however, was just one of three different justifications for our ambitious weekend of events. Another aim of SOS was to expose that this meeting was scheduled during the same week that the U.S. dropped nuclear bombs on both Hiroshima and Nagasaki over 50 years ago. The final reason for SOS was that StratCom houses the military's satellite missile guidance system for our current nuclear arsenal and other weapons that utilize the Global Positioning System. In short, elements of the recent war with Iraq were orchestrated from U.S. Strategic Command right here in our own backyard.

For those of you that could not attend SOS 2003, the following is an account of the historic event. For those of you that were able to make it to some or all of the events, the following is intended to start conversation and critical self-reflection about the events themselves and perhaps even your individual role in the planning and production of SOS.

The Political Forum

Originally intended to draw the many presidential candidates roaming Iowa in

anticipation of the Iowa Caucuses, the presidential candidate forum did end up catching the attention of Democratic presidential hopeful Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio. State Democratic leaders Steve Achepol and Frank LaMere also spoke at the forum. The Kiewit Center was standing room only for the forum with more than 350 in attendance.



Rep. Dennis Kucinich

Kucinich warned the audience of the Bush administration's push for new "mini-nuclear" weapons, and also observed that: "We are at a defining moment. This is the time. And you are the ones we have been waiting for." Feeling that this opening event was a success, the compliment from Kucinich to the audience was welcome to the ears of us weary organizers and set a motivational tone for the rest of the

weekend. (For more information on the forum, please go to http://www.journalstar.com/local.php?story_id=68589.)

The Commemoration

For over 15 years, Nebraskans for Peace has been hosting a commemoration ceremony for the victims and survivors of the 1945 nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the first week of August. Since SOS was being planned for the weekend prior to the traditional commemoration dates, it made sense that NFP's Omaha chapter would spearhead this Friday evening event at Gene Leahy Mall. With estimates ranging from 400-500 in attendance, this year's commemoration ceremony was the largest in the event's history. Among a candlelight lantern float, children's songs, and artistic creativity, the stories of Hiroshima survivors Koji Ueda, Masakazu Saito, Ryuma Miyanaga, and Koji Ueda provided a first-hand human perspective of the devastation that nuclear weapons can wreak on our world.

"It was a moving and wonderful experience," said Cary Vigneri, NFP Omaha's Coordinator and coordinator of the event. "Exponentially more people showed up this year, and the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks caused many in the audience to have a personal and emotional connection with the devastating impact that can be caused by a nuclear attack. They felt the pain that was very real to the survivors." For many, this was a very intimate spiritual event. It also warranted a

front-page article in the *Lincoln Journal Star* on Saturday, August 2, 2003.

The Teach-in

With presenters from all over the U.S., the Saturday morning teach-in was designed to educate the over 300 attendees about StratCom's role in the U.S. military, the future of the nuclear arsenal, Nebraska's role in the international peace and justice movement and other related issues. Presenters came to Nebraska from both coasts and other midwestern locations.

Some of the expert presenters included: Andrew Lichterman, Program Director, Western States Legal Foundation; Greg Mello, Director and Co-founder, Los Alamos Study Group; Arjun Makhijani, Ph.D., President of the Institute of Environmental and Energy Research; John Ferrell, Office Manager, Voices in the Wilderness; Kevin Kamps, Nuclear Waste Specialist, Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS); Dr. Maureen McCue, Physicians for Social Responsibility; Beth Fitzgerald, National Organizing Director, Peace Action; Marv Davidov, Midwest Institute for Social Transformation; and Fr. Frank Cordaro (a complete list is available at www.sos2003.com). "The footwork of the organizers at different conferences across the country, coupled with NFP's name and history, made it possible to put together such a phenomenal program," said Jo Peterson, an SOS organizer.

Saturday in the Park

Predicted by many of the SOS organizers to attract the largest number of people, Saturday's zealous 12 p.m.-10 p.m. schedule of speakers, musicians and artists represented the biggest expenditure of resources. As the morning fog lifted from Memorial Park (which had not been home to a peace rally since the Vietnam War era), its ominous presence was replaced by anticipation of the SOS big day. I will admit that as we put together tents, built the stage, delegated the volunteers and directed the porta-potties and vendors, that the vision of a crowd of more than a 1,000 people from across the country was certainly on my mind. With temperatures climbing into the 90s, and a sparsely attended 12:00-1:00 p.m. concert by Paul Micich, however, questions about the accuracy of our Saturday vision began to rise. But, the show must go on and it did.

Some of the most powerful words of the day, in my opinion, came from Andrew Lichterman and Arjun Makhijani. Both cited the importance of a sustained resistance against, not only these new mini-nuclear weapons being touted by the Bush Administration, but also nuclear weapons in general, wherever they may be. Lichterman explained: "Nuclear war, the foremost nightmare of several generations, seemed to disappear for a decade. But the weapons never went away, and the

enormously powerful military and technological institutions that were the most lasting creations of the nuclear age now are resurgent, their allies and representatives now dominant in U.S. politics." The theme of Lichterman's quotation was clearly that we have a lot of work to do in order for total nuclear disarmament to become a reality.

Greg Mello called the aim to curb the development of mini-nuclear weapons "baby steps" in the larger agenda of nuclear disarmament. Dr. Gwen Dubois of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize-winning Physicians for Social Responsibility clinically detailed the medical horrors of an atomic blast, a point frequently forgotten in all the talk of nuclear strategy and high-tech gadgetry. In the final speech of the afternoon, Arjun Makhijani touched on the history of nuclear weapons, the political role they have played in international diplomacy and their



Protestors gathered in front of Kinney Gate at StratCom on Sunday.

implications for tomorrow. Sprinkled throughout all the presentation were observations about the importance of local resistance to meetings like the one that being held at StratCom. For many of the tired organizers disappointed in the afternoon's attendance, this message was refreshing.

The Concert

At 6:00 o'clock that evening, the concert began. Slated to perform was Stephan Smith (of New York), Mayday (of Nebraska), and Michelle Shocked (of California). Stephan Smith's performance held nothing back. With lyrics like: "Come tie my hands behind my back and throw me in some cell, for there is not a law in heaven to drag us down to hell for stopping all the wheels of time in the name of equality," there was no question about what his motivations were. Pete Seeger has likened Smith's style to Bob Dylan, and I agree with this analysis after watching his set. Talking with Smith backstage after his performance, he explained to me how he thought "playing

in front of this small crowd (which had grown to nearly 500 after sunset—a number that Nebraskans would call a large crowd) is more important than the big crowds on the coasts, because there is an element of community building and networking."

The next act to take the stage was Mayday. Malcom Miles, one of main organizers of the concert, explains their sound as: "An exploration of American music. Their sound is rooted in folk and country traditions but filtered through the quieter side of indie rock." Mayday played most of the songs from their recent *Bar None* release, "I Know Your Troubles Been Long."

The final act to take the stage was Michelle Shocked. Originally asking a \$10,000 performance fee, the high-profile folk rocker agreed to come play an acoustic set for the price of her airfare and a comfortable couch to sleep on. In an early

The concert provided a positive note for Saturday's events to end on. Each musician had the opportunity to share the message of nuclear disarmament and social justice with a new group of faces that had not necessarily been at either the morning teach-in or afternoon speakers.

Speak Out at StratCom

On the morning of Sunday, August 3, 2003, the most confrontational and, arguably, the most symbolic leg of SOS was set to begin. Organizers were on a heightened state of alert because of the numerous threats that this protest had generated. "Peace Marshals" had gone through a special training that morning on how to ensure that the rally was safe and legal. Permits were in place, and the attendees' spirits were as highly charged as the batteries in the bullhorns that they carried.

Sunday's activities began with an interfaith prayer service at Bellevue's Everett Park. Following the service, approximately 350 protesters lined up for the march to Offutt's Kinney Gate. Upon arriving at the entrance, protestors were greeted by military guards in full uniform with a video camera and dozens of reporters. The first item on the agenda was the presentation of a "Statement of Intent" drafted by Andrew Lichterman for the "Citizen's Weapons Inspection" of the facility as a reputed site of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Joining Lichterman was Greg Mello and Becca Kaiser of CAWMD.

Originally, due to the potentially volatile nature of the "inspection," Kaiser had decided not to join the entourage that was to request the inspection. However, on that Sunday morning, Lichterman handed her a "Citizen Weapons Inspector" T-shirt and charged her to be a recognizable face for Nebraska's continuing resistance to StratCom. The three presented the statement of intent, requested to inspect the facility for weapons of mass destruction (which was denied and the phone number for the Public Affairs Office of the U.S. Department of Defense was given instead), and then turned to denounce the Bush Administration's plans for developing new generation of WMD. Arjun Makhijani and the Hiroshima survivors also spoke at this event.

According to Kaiser, "Sunday's events were the grand finale for the weekend, and they gave people who came there the chance to put StratCom into perspective. Here we were standing face-to-face with a major artery of the military-industrial complex. We have our opinion, and they have theirs, but hopefully now more people are aware of what happens beyond Kinney Gate."

The Fallout

Immediately following Sunday's events, rumors of a *New York Times* article about

conclusion on page 10

What's at Stake in the Debate over New Nuclear Weapons

Greg Mello, who first broke the story of the secret August 7 StratCom meeting on mini-nukes, wrote this up-to-date analysis expressly for the Nebraska Report. He is the director of the Los Alamos Study Group, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

As this article is being written, the U.S. Senate is preparing to vote on whether to fund the so-called "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator" and "advanced" nuclear weapons concept research, whether to allow a shorter lead time to a nuclear test; and whether to proceed with selecting a site for a new factory for plutonium "pits," the cores of nuclear weapons.

Already this summer, the decade-old ban on development of nuclear weapons under five kilotons in yield has partially fallen. While the details won't be known until the defense authorization conference committee has concluded its work, it appears the best we can hope for is to retain the existing ban on engineering development of these so-called "mini-nukes," while allowing research, for the first time in ten years, to proceed.

No matter what happens today, or in the conference committees which follow, the budget for U.S. nuclear weapons activities will increase again next year by approximately 4 or 5 percent in real terms, more or less as it has done every year since 1995.

These funds, regardless of the votes today, will do much more than mere maintain the stockpile. They will also pay for a continual process of upgrading, modification, and adaptation of nuclear weapons to new targets, new delivery systems, and new military missions, a far more expensive proposition than merely maintaining the weapons we now have.

The votes today and in the coming weeks will help determine whether these changes are merely evolutionary, as they were in the Clinton Administration, or revolutionary, as desired by the nuclear zealots in and around the current administration.

What's not up for discussion is the idea that improving nuclear weapons is a good thing, which is why the debates are about how much additional latitude in nuclear weapon development to allow, and how much additional production capacity to build.

Neither is the size of the stockpile—now more-or-less stabilized at about 10,500 weapons, with no real dismantlements

planned or required under any treaty—up for debate, even though the size of the stockpile is the main driver for the production infrastructure being considered.

It is this infrastructure, and investment in it—both in the fiscal sense and in the broader political and societal sense—that is the underlying subject of the votes today. As one perceptive reporter put it this past May:



This 1955 test of an 8000 lb. nuclear bomb buried 67 feet deep had a 1.2 kiloton yield comparable to that of a low-yield "mini-nuke" earth penetrator. The Nevada Test Site blast, which was obviously not contained and would have produced grave "collateral damage," left a crater that was 300 feet wide and 128 feet deep.

"The dispute [about research into low-yield weapons is] not just about what warheads the United States might develop, but about what kind of nuclear weapons infrastructure the country should maintain in an era when America is the world's lone superpower, already has an immense arsenal and is battling to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in other countries.... The point, he [that's John Harvey, Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the National Nuclear Security Administration] added, is "to maintain a nuclear weapons enterprise" far into the future." (James Sterngold, "Why Congress Butted Heads on Nuke Funding; Battle about More Than New Weapons," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 25, 2003.)

That is indeed exactly the point. These new weapons, and the debate about them, are important not just in themselves, but even more so because they embody new political commitments and hence renewed social and political legitimacy for the entire "enterprise," as Mr. Harvey called it, from

the weapons labs and factories of the NNSA to the bunkers, submarines, and silos overseen by the U.S. Strategic Command.

If even one kind of new nuclear weapon is blessed by Congress as potentially desirable for U.S. security—required" will be the stronger verb used in any formal military request to follow—then nuclear weapons as a class, and all that is required to make, keep, and use them, would share in

profit most from them. In fact, Congress has no forum in which to discuss overall U.S. nuclear policy, let alone do so in any depth. Citizens must create such forums, and bring to them the vital words and clear thinking that can break through the intellectual and moral contradictions which Congress is touching upon so obliquely today.

Be clear: what is at stake is not U.S. ability to develop, say, a "robust" nuclear earth penetrator. Technically, that is easy. In this particular case, a number of existing U.S. weapons designs could be readily fabricated into an earth-penetrating weapon having any desired yield in the range of interest. Recently, retired Sandia National Laboratories Vice President Bob Peurifoy, who played a central role in development of many U.S. weapons, and who strongly opposes the new weapons, emphasized the technical paltriness of the proposed programs, remarking that if an earth penetrator were desired, and the B61, W83, W33, W79, and W82 did not for some reason prove satisfactory, the extremely rugged and simple uranium gun design tested in the 1964 "Aardvark" test could be used, which could readily give any yield desired up to 40 kilotons. (David Ruppe, 9/3/03, "U.S. Nuclear Weapons Programs Could Require Testing, Official Says," *Global Security Newswire*.) Such a weapon could be made very quickly in modest quantities, as the laboratories have proposed. (Los Alamos National Laboratory, March 1999, "The U.S. Nuclear Stockpile: Looking Ahead—Drivers of, and Limits to, Change in a Test-Constrained Nuclear Stockpile," redacted.)

What's at stake here is not just this or that nuclear weapons project, or even the fate of Mr. Bush's nuclear policy as a whole, as terribly dangerous as it is. More than these, it is our own nuclear posture that is in question, whether it will be one of passivity, or one of active engagement: intellectual, moral, social, and political. On that, everything hinges. Without our full engagement, the reins will slip from our grasp, and we'll end up as little more than spectators in the decline and fall. With engagement, on the other hand, we will discover, in our commitment to each other and to the ideals we cherish and clarify, the words that must be spoken and the deeds which must be done, and the fellowship that makes them both sweet, most creative, and adequately powerful.

that benediction and be able to appropriate it in countless creative ways throughout the "enterprise."

Within the "enterprise," this legitimacy, or prestige if you will, is greatly coveted. It is in many ways just as important as ample funding. It is the master switch which supplies the current of political and social approval to every project and activity, the ideological "juice" that makes it all work. The labs and plants, and the military commands which use their products, cannot really be managed without it.

So the debate on these little programs is at least as much symbol as substance, and the fate of these small programs, which amount to just a third of one percent of nuclear weapons funding, is understood by all parties to be a vote of confidence in the administration's overall nuclear posture.

This displaced and truncated debate is nothing if not surreal, with matters of enormous import for the future of humanity rather briefly discussed in terms that are quite foreign to all except those who will

My Hiroshima A-bomb Experience

Why Nuclear Weapons Cannot Be Allowed in Our Universe

Four survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima participated in the 58th anniversary commemoration at the Speak Out at StratCom—No New Weapons of Mass Destruction event Friday night, August 1 in Omaha. Miyanaga Ryuma, Ueda Koji, Nakanishi Eiji and Saito Masakazu all delivered moving statements recalling their personal experiences of the nuclear horror. Printed below is Miyanaga Ryuma's recollection of the tragedy. He was fifteen at the time.

Flash!... I was engulfed in an intense ray of light and felt an incredible heat. In an instant, everything around me became red, as if I had been thrust inside a fiery blaze. In the same instant, I was knocked over by a blast of hot air containing a tremendous amount of pressure. When I came to, I was sprawled on the floor and the drawing easel I had just moments before been working on was on top of me. With a rush of noise the ceiling opened up and the roof totally collapsed in, sagging down near the window. Previously solid pillars all broke in the same way, forming a shaped that looked like a sideways "V". They seemed to be hanging at an angle in mid air, capable of collapsing at any moment. The entire floor was covered in broken pieces of glass. I could hear people groaning and screaming. The floor was covered in blood and bodies lay there with pieces of glass piercing them like knives. I was covered everywhere in dust and felt fuzzyheaded, unable to stand up but finally able to crawl on my knees.

From outside, I could hear thousands of employees yelling and screaming. Workers covered in blood gathered in the open grounds near the side of the building. Among this horrendous scene was a steady stream of people pouring through the front gate who looked like they came from some horrible other world. They were people fleeing from the city center. An unending line of people came walking through, eyeballs protruding out of their sockets, hair clinging to their head, their skin burnt and dripping, still smoldering, with blisters beginning to form. Unable to

distinguish between men and women, they no longer looked human. The cries and moans of "I'm so hot! It hurts! Water, water!" began to fade away and people started dying like flies in front of me. I was so stunned by this scene that I didn't even notice my own injuries.

On August 6, 1945 at 8:15 am, I was exposed to the atomic bomb dropped by America. I was fifteen years old at the time and I was inside the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Hiroshima Shipyard four kilometers away from the hypocenter. When day broke the following morning, the shipyard had become an even more hellish field of corpses. I entered the city to help in the rescue efforts of survivors about 1 kilometer to 1.5 kilometers away from the hypocenter. Fires were breaking out all over the city. Thousands of people had jumped into the river to find relief from their burns, and the river had become choked with floating corpses. All the bridges and roads were covered with burnt, blackened bodies. There was no place to walk without stepping on arms, legs, heads or bodies stuck to the surface of the road. Bodies hung from the bridge railings like rags hung out to dry.

All that was left of a train stopped in its tracks was its frame. All of the people inside had been incinerated. In another scene, the upper body of person trapped under a collapsed houses remained intact while their legs had been completely burned away. I couldn't rescue them. I felt like I was losing my mind amid this unspeakably horrifying scene. Dead bodies and those people barely alive were left outside in the intense heat and began to rot. The stench from the city's crematoriums drifted as far away as the shipyard four kilometers from town, making it difficult to breath. More than 140,000 people died during this time.

The atomic bomb is truly horrific. That single A-bomb dropped half a century ago instantaneously wiped out 78,000 people within a 1.5-kilometer radius of the hypocenter. It decimated our culture, incinerated all vegetation

and turned the city to ashes. In addition, those A-bomb survivors that are still alive today have suffered from a lifetime of residual illness due to radiation fallout.

Immediately following the atomic bombing I was in a state of total shock and didn't help rescue a single person. However, I will never forget that scene of truly evil hell and the sadness of those robbed of life in such a tragic way. While the wounds on my forehead and limbs healed over the course of time, my body was inundated with radiation during my participation in rescue efforts near the hypocenter. Many of the people who were with me at the time died soon after and each day I was tormented by fears that I would soon die as well. Three years after the atomic bombing I left Hiroshima and moved to Iwate Prefecture. Twenty years later, I am receiving treatment for a hormonal disorder, diabetes and cataracts due to radiation fallout. Although I constantly carried with me fears of becoming sick, I was able to work for a long period of time and just retired from my teaching position a few years ago. Currently I am a member of the Iwate Prefectural Hibakusha Association. I speak about my experiences as an A-bomb survivor whenever I have the chance. While I stood by helplessly at the time, that image of the living hell of Hiroshima on "that day" has been burned into my brain. As a surviving atomic bomb victim, I believe I have a duty to speak out on the reality of the destruction wrought by nuclear weapons.

No matter how one attempts to justify nuclear weapons, they should absolutely never be used and they should never be built. If they are used again it would destroy the cultural heritage of the world, reduce every country to ashes and cause the extinction of the human race. This atrocious, horrific and inhumane event simply cannot occur again on this earth. For true peace and happiness among humankind, I strongly appeal from my heart for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Contact Congress & Capitol Contacts

The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Sen. Chuck Hagel
346 Senate Russell Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224
202-224-5213 (FAX)
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
402-758-8981 (Omaha)
308-632-6032 (Scottsbluff)

Sen. Ben Nelson
720 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551
202-228-0012 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-441-4600 (Lincoln)
senator@bennelson.senator.gov

Rep. Doug Bereuter
1st Congressional District
2184 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4806
202-225-5686 (FAX)
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)

Rep. Lee Terry
1524 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4155
202-226-5452 (FAX)
402-397-9944 (Omaha)

Rep. Tom Osborne
507 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6435
202-226-1385 (FAX)
308-381-5555 (Grand Island)

Capitol Hill Switchboard
202-224-3121

State Capitol Switchboard
402-471-2311

State Senator, District #
State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Governor Mike Johanns
PO Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
402-471-2244

“War on Terror + Lies”

Written and compiled by Charles Flowerday

There are an increasing number of voices critical of the Bush Administration's run-up to, justifications for and prosecution of the War on Iraq as a terror-fighting strategy. For example, a search on Google for “War on Terror + Lies” yields more than 650,000 hits! The conflict is still smoldering as a lower-intensity conflict, and the American people and those of the world have been asking harder and harder questions about the origins of the United States' invasions of and difficulties rebuilding Iraq.

These questions focus on the following fundamental issues:

1) Would the war and reconstruction be over quickly and would they be expensive?

The White House claim: While a timetable was never officially proposed, the administration regularly implied that the war would be over quickly, in a matter of months, and rebuilding in a year or so. The total price tag was estimated at between \$50-80 billion at the most.

What really happened: The war took about two months, but the rebuilding of Iraq will go on as long as needed, perhaps for many years, according to the president in his televised talk to the nation earlier this month. Although we were briefly hailed as liberators some places, that euphoria ended soon. We were quickly and largely seen as an occupying force.

This is no small matter because the American people are being asked to spend another \$87 billion to stabilize and rebuild Iraq, after Congress already authorized \$79 billion for the war and reconstruction. It is also worth noting that in that \$87 billion, one billion is slated for rebuilding Afghanistan. These costs are not static. They are building. Estimates are that the occupation of Iraq costs about a billion dollars a week, contributing mightily to a federal deficit once again approaching record levels of GDP and an all-time record in absolute dollars—about \$500 billion in fiscal 2003. Some estimates of the whole war and rebuilding effort run into many hundreds of billions of dollars.

2) Was the administration committed to war with Iraq from September 11, 2001, onwards?

The White House claim: The administration, by association, repeatedly linked Iraq with al-Qaeda and 9/11 from the moment the “War on Terrorism” was declared to the actual invasion last March.

Despite these public insinuations, however, the White House's stated position, up until a month before the war, was that the Iraqi government must fully cooperate with UN weapons inspections if it hoped to avert war.

What really happened: Last fall, CBS News reported from notes of U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, dating from September 11, 2001, that he was demanding the intelligence community to find the “best info fast. Judge whether good enough hit S.H. [Saddam Hussein] at same time. Not only UBL [Usama bin Laden]. . . . Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not.” Even before 9/11 however, the “Project for a New American Century,” founded in the mid-'90s by many prominent members of the current Bush Administration, had publicly called for the removal of Saddam Hussein by military means.

3) What was the nature of the war and the nature of the coalition fighting it?

The White House claim: Yielding to domestic and international pressure, last January, the administration took its case for invading Iraq with a multi-national force to the United Nations and was rebuffed. Colin Powell presented data and satellite photos (later documented to be outright lies and distortions). The U.S. then threatened many smaller nations with cutbacks of foreign aid and put together what was called “A Coalition of the Willing” that included Britain, some minor Australian support and mostly poor, small or struggling nations depending on U.S. aid.

But lately, the administration has asked for an additional \$87 billion to rebuild Iraq and has asked the United Nations and its erstwhile allies in Western Europe to help the rebuilding by contributing soldiers and as much money as they can.

What really happened: The war has been prosecuted in defiance of international law, says U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan. Pope John Paul II determined it was not a just war by Catholic doctrine. Before it began, leaders of the mainline denomination churches in this country condemned it. China, India, Russia, France, Germany, Canada, Mexico, South Africa and most of the Muslim world voiced serious opposition.

4) Was Saddam Hussein's alleged stockpile of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) the major justification for the



war? Did his regime buy enriched uranium from Niger, as was claimed, or any other countries to make nuclear weapons?

The White House claim: “The Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and gases and atomic weapons... The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program... Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons.” (President Bush in an Oct. 7, 2002 speech in Cincinnati.)

What really happened: This story was reported by the *New York Times* and has no basis in fact. U.S. Department of Energy officials, who monitor nuclear plants, say the tubes couldn't be used for enriching uranium. An analyst involved in this intelligence gathering told the *New Republic*: “You had senior American officials like Condoleezza Rice saying the only use of this aluminum really is uranium centrifuges... And that's just a lie.”

5) Was Iraq securing uranium for production of nuclear weapons?

The White House claim: “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant

quantities of uranium from Africa.” (President Bush, Jan. 28, 2003, in the State of the Union address.)

What really happened: This has been completely debunked, proved to be a forgery the White House knew about. The document was signed by an official who had left office ten years ago and referred to a constitution that was no longer in effect. “They knew the Niger story was a flat-out lie,” an ex-ambassador asked by the CIA to document the story told the *New Republic*.

Despite an impressive search by U.S. and British military and specialists, no definitive evidence of chemical or biological weapons exists. U.S. intelligence says that these weapons had deteriorated past their expiration date and were useless.

6) Is there a causal, interlocking connection between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime?

The White House claim: “[The CIA possesses] solid reporting of senior-level contacts between Iraq and al-Qaeda going back a decade.” (CIA Director George Tenet in a statement released Oct. 7, 2002, and carried forth in Bush's speech that day.)

“We've learned that Iraq has trained al-Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases.” (President Bush, Oct. 7.)

NAFTA Times Ten...

The Free Trade Area of the Americas

by Laura Krebsbach, Sierra Club
Nebraska Conservation Organizer

Who'd a thought, steel workers and tree huggers working together? But that is exactly what is happening to try and stop the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)—the latest in a line of “Free Trade” agreements that have devastated labor, family farm and environmental interests in the developing and developed world alike.

Ten years after the adoption of NAFTA (North America Free Trade Agreement) and its even bigger brother, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the forces of economic globalization are back at it again, proposing a hemisphere-wide agreement that the AFL-CIO describes as “NAFTA Times 10.” The Free Trade mythology has dominated public policy for more than a decade now. To understand how we got in this situation, though, we need to go back long before NAFTA to half a century ago.

At the end of World War II, world leaders met in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire to discuss what could be done to improve the systems that govern the world economies. The International Trade Organization (ITO) was born at this meeting as part of the newly created United Nations. The U.S. however did not sign onto the ITO and instead negotiated the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) with 22 other countries in 1947. These agreements were not made between countries, but “contracting parties,” and did not require parties to follow the agreements, but “encouraged” them to do so.

Over the intervening years, GATT continued to expand until 1995 when it was supplanted by the more broadly conceived WTO. Charged with promoting and monitoring trade between nations, the WTO has the power to actually issue penalties against those who are not following the provisions of their agreements. Member countries of the WTO that enter into agreements with the U.S., for example, may ask that a U.S. law be altered or eliminated to promote free trade. Environmentalists were alerted to the perils of GATT in 1991 when a secretive tribunal ruled against U.S. dolphin protections.

In addition to NAFTA and the WTO, the march toward economic globalization has produced several other multi-country agreements, including the EU (European Union) and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Council). It's been the infamous NAFTA, however, which Ross Perot so fittingly dubbed the “giant sucking sound going to the south,” that has given Americans the most direct experience with free trade. Since

the implementation of NAFTA by the United States, Canada and Mexico on January 1, 1994, we have seen a steady stream of jobs going south, along with some serious challenges to our environmental laws and regulations. For instance, the trade agreement empowers foreign corporations to sue taxpayers if environmental laws interfere with profits. A Canadian chemical company has sued U.S. taxpayers for \$1 billion in order to overturn a crucial California Clean Water Law involving the gasoline additive MTBE.

What has consistently greased the wheels

(Services). The Bush administration wants to use GATS to undermine environmental and safety standards for such risky industries as animal factories, mining, logging, energy production, real estate development, and, potentially, water supplies.

If our domestic policies and regulations pose an impediment to the trade of a foreign nation or company within the agreement, they can challenge our laws. This includes not only federal and state but also local zoning laws, clean air rules, water standards and more, putting communities at risk. The whole alphabet soup of agreements puts virtually all our public protections on the table. GATS aside, the big issue was agriculture. Ag is another part of the FTAA. Most of the focus in the meetings that were held in Cancun were on agricultural subsidies. Developing countries claimed that subsidies to farmers in the United States and the European Union undermine their farmers' ability to compete with U.S. and European Union products on the world market. These nations charged, for example, that large subsidies to U.S. farmers lead to what amounts to dumping cheap commodities on world markets. The talks were supposed to lead to agreements on reducing tariffs and subsidies in the international agricultural market. A lot was at stake, but the potential winners and losers could have been determined not just on the basis of developing vs. developed nations, but on whether you're a “have” or a “have-not” in your country of origin.

The talks broke down not on these issues however, but on the so-called Singapore issues. The Singapore issues proposed unbundling trade from the three other issues they were suppose to work on, investment, competition and transparency in government procurement. The inability of all the member countries to come to an agreement on the issue of unbundling trade led to the talks breaking down.

After Cancun, however, the next item up on the globalization agenda is the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. The FTAA will include all 35 countries of the Western Hemisphere except Cuba. The agreements will cover everything from Agriculture, Services, Investments, Government Procurement, Market Access, Intellectual Property Rights, Subsidies, Anti-dumping and Countervailing Duties, Competition Policy, and Dispute Settlements. The FTAA will allow corporations the greatest number of rights and freedoms with the fewest possible responsibilities. If passed by

Congress, it will usher in an all-out “race to the bottom,” in which companies seek out developing countries with the lowest labor costs and least restrictive environmental laws. We will see wholesale attacks on the laws that protect our health, environment, working conditions and food safety, just to name a few. A law like Nebraska's I-300, our anti-corporate farming ban, could be challenged as a trade barrier. Local zoning laws on where hog confinements can be located could be challenged, as well as workers' rights to a safe working place. As they say, “the possibilities are endless” (and horrifying).

The next round of talks on the FTAA is scheduled for this November 19-21 in Miami. And just who, you may be wondering, has access to the negotiators for the United States? That information is hard to come by. We do know, however, that 500 corporate representatives meet with the trade ministers and FTAA negotiators before each major renegotiating session. There are a few non-governmental organizations that have been brought in the process, but they are sworn to secrecy under criminal penalty, so they cannot even communicate with their own organizations, let alone the public. Such an arrangement, of course, sets the stage for global corporations to have the most influence and to reap the biggest benefits.

Activists and public interest coalitions, though, are already mobilizing for the Miami round. The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) are organizing a March to Miami where they will join with many other groups to focus attention on what's at stake. Here in Nebraska, we have formed the Nebraskans for Fair Trade NOT Free Trade. This new coalition has very diverse membership, from the USWA to Sierra Club, Nebraska Farmers Union, Communications Workers of America, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Nebraskans for Peace.

The coalition is having a rally this coming October 11, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. on the north steps of the State Capitol in Lincoln to draw attention to the FTAA negotiations and to kick off our participation in the March to Miami in November. Take this opportunity to get educated and become involved. We need letters to the editor. Letters and phone calls to our representatives in Washington. And, of course, we need you to plan now to attend the rally on October 11. The consequences are too huge to let these agreements go forward as they are currently being negotiated.

**STOP
THE
FTAA**

**Fair Trade
NOT
Free Trade Rally**

October 11, 2004

10:00 a.m.

**North steps of
the State Capitol**

of getting these things past our representatives in Washington, however, is “Fast Track” authority. Under Fast Track, Congress can only vote these agreements up or down. No amendments to protect our environment, jobs or even local control are permitted, ensuring that Congress have little say over these trade deals, on which lots of money was spent, in years of negotiation, oftentimes behind closed doors.

So what went on recently with the current WTO meeting in Cancun, Mexico, you ask? Cancun was a two-year check-in meeting to see where all the participating countries are on agreement assignments given to various committees in 2001. Due to be completed by 2005, the committees, it turns out, are woefully behind on the agreements. Just one of the areas that was to be discussed is GATS (General Agreements on Trade in



Nationally known recording artist Michelle Shocked performed at the public concert in Omaha's Memorial Park as part of the Speak Out at StratCom weekend.

SOS 2003, conclusion

mini-nuclear weapons, including the mention of SOS were confirmed when organizers opened the Sunday edition and discovered the full-page feature about the meeting in Nebraska and Bush's nuclear policy ambitions. In addition to the *Omaha World-Herald* and *Lincoln Journal Star* coverage of the issue, the numerous radio and television stories generated by SOS and the visits by international journalists from *The Guardian* newspaper in Britain and the French daily *Liberacion*, it was definitely good to know that on Monday morning the *New York Times* article was laid on desk of the Bush Administration. It is hard to tell what impact this will have. But one thing is for sure. This secretive gathering of 150 Pentagon, State Department, scientific and private industry personnel at StratCom to plan the development of a new nuclear arms race was no longer a secret. Thanks to our efforts, news media from Japan to Finland were publicly criticizing the August 7 Stockpile Stewardship Conference gathering before it even took place. A top-secret meeting that even members of Congress had been prohibited from attending was now public information and international protest was mounting. More of the Democratic presidential candidates were openly criticizing the plans to develop mini-nukes. And Even the *Omaha World-Herald* weighed in on the topic editorially August 12, stating that mini-nukes "are not the answer" and having the nation's military "wander into unproductive research into mini-nukes" makes no strategic sense.

Blood, sweat and tears were put into the planning of SOS and I would like to take this moment to thank all of you that put your lives on hold both physically and financially to help put together this historic event. Please email me at josh@bugeaters.net with your observations and conclusions about SOS and what it means for the larger peace movement in Nebraska, the Midwest, the nation and the world. You can also go to www.sos2003.com for an online archive of the event.

SEPTEMBER 2003 NEBRASKA REPORT, P.10

Christy Hargesheimer Honored

Christy Hargesheimer was honored as Peacemaker of the Year at a potluck supper in late July by Alternatives to the Military.

Known mostly for her tireless work for Amnesty International, public school teacher and fluent in Spanish, Christy was represented by her husband Dick who read her words to the ATM committee, former honorees and families.

She wrote: "Working with young people, educating and encouraging them as they direct their seemingly boundless energies towards creating a culture of peace in an increasingly militaristic environment, has given me some measure of hope. Peace is not for the weak; it takes greater courage and strength to wage peace than it does to wage war. The true heroes are those who speak truth to power, often being branded unpatriotic for their views; those who hang the American flag upside down as a distress signal, only to have their apartment doors battered in; those who receive death threats or who are arrested for speaking out against an unjustifiable war; and those who refuse to pay taxes that pay for bombs." Quoting Philip Ber5rigan speaking shortly before his death, Christy responded to the award by writing: "War is never justified... If we were sane and just, we'd dismantle our military today." In her own words: "The military is used against us when it consumes 51 percent of the nation's discretionary spending (2002), leaving little left for schools or for medical care . . . and when the

children of the poor are sent to war by the children of the rich who bought their way out of the military."

Alternatives to the Military provides the six Lincoln high schools and Bryan Learning Center with information about not joining the military, joining peacemaking groups and careers, and finding ways to attend college without military service. Leafletting each school every other year, ATM also provides information tables at each school every semester.

ATM is composed of: committee members Nye Bond, George Eisele, Ruth Thone, Ed Maynard, Jay Schmidt, Marge Manglitz, Bobbie Kierstead, and Dick Hargesheimer, tablers and leafletters Roy Bailey, Don Tilley, Bob Hall, Fran Kaye, and Margaret Vrana. Dan Ladely, Jaime Obrecht and Paul Olson form an ATM speakers committee.

Former Peacemaker of the Year honorees include: Betty Olson, Dwight Ganzel, Marge Manglitz, John McCall, Carol McShane, Bob Hitchcock, Leola Bullock, Don Tilley, Elizabeth Goodbrake, and Robert Epp.

Co-chair Nye Bond concluded the evening by reminding us of Clarissa Pinkola Estes stirring words: "Do not lose heart. We were made for these times. . . please do not spend your spirit dry by bewailing these difficult times. Do not lose hope... For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement."

—by Ruth Thone

War + Lies, conclusion

What really happened:

The intelligence community was aware of casual contacts between Saddam and al-Qaeda in the early 1990s, but found no documentation of an ongoing relationship. Later, intelligence groups reported testimony from hand-picked Iraq defectors that there was such a connection. Hussein is a Sunni Muslim; Bin Laden and virtually all of al-Qaeda are Shi'i Muslims. These two groups mostly resent and sometimes hate each other and would seldom cooperate. Saddam was a secular ruler of a secular regime. This would be unthinkable to al-Qaeda. Very limited contacts documented between al-Qaeda members and Iraqis took place in Shi'i-dominated northern Iraq. Most Iraqi-supported terrorism was being exported to Palestine.

7) Did the Hussein regime have aerial drones that could deliver WMD?

The White House claim: "We have also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We are concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] for missions targeting the United States." (*President Bush, Oct. 7.*)

What really happened: Drones can't fly more than 300 miles. Iraq is 6,000 miles from U.S. borders. In addition, none of the captured drones have been found to have been outfitted for such purposes.

8) Have we made progress dismantling al-Qaeda and are we safer at home?

The White House claim: The U.S. government, through

the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the military and the combined intelligence and law enforcement bodies, is doing its utmost to stop terror at home and abroad.

What really happened: A resurgent al-Qaeda has been making international news since around the time of the Saudi Arabia bombings in May. According to *Asia Times* correspondent Syed Saleem Shahzad, al-Qaeda has restructured by becoming pared-down and decentralized. It has become a coalition of local units that hit targets, some small, some larger, frequently. Since claiming responsibility for the May Riyadh bombings, alleged al-Qaeda communiqués have also claimed credit for some of the strikes at U.S. troops in Iraq.

On May 26, *Federal Computer Week*, a trade magazine, said that in the DHS's first hundred days, all this center of terrorism intelligence and defense had accomplished was to get its e-mail up and running. No money is available to use a computer network plan if they had one. The magazine reported, "Robert David Steele, an author and former intelligence officer, points out that there are at least 30 separate intelligence systems [for DHS] and no money to connect them to one another or make them interoperable. 'There is nothing in the president's homeland security program that makes America safer,' he said."

Information from: "Ten Appalling Lies We Were Told About Iraq," by Christopher Scheer, *AlterNet*, June 27, 2003; "A Chart of Bush Lies about Iraq," *Buzzflash.com*, July 22, 2003; "The Bush Administration's Top 40 Lies About War and Terrorism," *CityPages.com* (Twin Cities on-line arts and entertainment weekly), vol. 24, no. 1182, July 30, 2003,

Bill of Rights, conclusion

- Support measures that safeguard the health of rural communities and the right of farm laborers to fair wages, contracts, and safe working conditions;
- Support policies that safeguard the capacity to produce food without environmental degradation both domestically and abroad;
- Support trade agreements that honor each nation's right to establish their own food security through food sovereignty;
- Support trade agreements that recognize agriculture as a fundamentally unique industry that requires independent negotiating frameworks emphasizing global cooperation to achieve mutual goals.

To Our Trade Representative Robert Zoellick:

As a world leader, the United States has responsibility to work towards global trade agreements that reflect the basic values of fairness, independence, democracy, and social and economic justice. Therefore, as our trade representative in the global trade negotiations, we urge that you:

- Support trade policies that ensure that family farmers and ranchers around the world receive a fair price for their products;
- Support trade policies that ensure that the wages and working conditions of farm laborers in every nation meet accepted international standards;
- Support trade policies that prioritize the need for long term social, economic and environmental stability and vitality of rural communities over the desire of agribusiness corporations, many based in the United States, to dominate world food production and processing;
- End the pricing and dumping of agricultural commodities at below the cost of production, thereby preventing the displacement and destruction of farmers and rural communities in the U.S. and around the world;

- Press for public information to be made available in each country regarding the cost of production for each export crop;
- Support trade policies that address the growing problem of world-wide agricultural marketplace concentration that distorts agricultural markets and prices;
- Support trade policies that reduce the need for taxpayer subsidies by increasing the marketplace value of agricultural products, thereby raising the standards of living and contributing to the stability and economic development of rural communities world-wide;
- Support public sector funding for agriculture that enables all countries to pursue domestic goals of greater social equity, rural development, and environmental protection.

To Our Allies Around the Globe Fighting for Fair and Just Trade Agreements:

The ever-increasing globalization of communication and economic activity offers all of us the increased opportunity and obligation to work together toward a common vision for fair and just global trade that truly serves our mutual interests of a safe, secure food supply. Therefore we pledge:

- To work with you toward fair international trade agreements that secure farmers' livelihoods and promote rural economic development, environmental protection, and democratic participation in decision-making about food systems;
- To work together as American institutions to educate all Americans about the need to redesign international trade agreements to support and promote rural development, poverty reduction, sustainable agricultural development and food security for all, not only in the United States but across the globe.

Signers as of Sept 3, 2003

FARM AID
 AFL-CIO
 American Corn Growers Association
 American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO
 Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
 Center of Concern
 Citizens Trade Campaign
 Communication Workers of America
 Community Food Security Coalition
 Consumer's Choice Council
 Defenders of Wildlife
 The Episcopal Church, USA
 Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund
 Friends of the Earth
 Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
 National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
 National Catholic Rural Life Conference
 National Council of Churches of Christ
 National Family Farm Coalition
 National Farmers Union
 Oxfam America
 Presbyterian Church USA, Washington Office
 Public Citizen
 Rural Coalition/Coalicion Rural
 Soybean Producers of America
 United Auto Workers
 United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
 United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
 United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
 United Steelworkers of America
 Western Organization of Resource Councils

Death Penalty Conference

Saturday, Oct. 25th
 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

UNO Student Center

Registration: \$15 (includes coffee and rolls from 8-9 and lunch with our guest speaker, Kathleen Hawk Norman)

Workshops: • Public Education & Media Effectiveness
 • Legislative Advocacy • Grassroots Organizing
 • Non-Profit Fundraising

This conference will be used to generate fresh ideas and new strategies and to learn from experts from around the country on how to move abolition forward in Nebraska.

Please attend these two activities and help build formidable opposition to the death penalty!!

For registration and more information, please contact Kevin Bernadt at Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, 941 'O' St., Suite 725, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402-477-7787, nadp@inebraska.com

NADP Annual Dinner

Saturday, Oct. 25th
 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Notre Dame Sisters
 (3501 State St. in Omaha)

Cost (yet to be determined, probably \$25-\$30)

Guest Speaker: David Kaczynski, Director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty and brother of the infamous "Unabomber"

There will be a silent auction, music, and a social hour before and after the dinner.

Presenting the new
 Ross Media Arts Center.

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**The \$top Big Business \$ubsidies—
Repeal LB 775 campaign needs
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BULLETIN BOARD

Office Hours for the Nebraskans for Peace State Office in Lincoln, at 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., weekdays, except holidays.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| September 23 | Autumnal Equinox |
| October 6 & 9 | Monthly vigils at Kirby Gate at Offutt (StratCom) on the 6th and 9th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. These vigils protest the continued threats of nuclear war and the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. Sponsored by the Catholic Worker house of Des Moines. |
| October 25 | Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty Annual Conference and Dinner (see ad on page 11) |

*To list an event, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event. Mail to: Nebraskans for Peace—Calendar, 941 "O" Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508. E-mail: nfpweb@redjellyfish.net
Announcements published on a space available basis.*

A Family Farmers' Bill of Rights

The WTO talks at Cancun have collapsed, foundering in part on the issue of agricultural subsidies.

This collapse is not bad, but rather a good thing. However, most commentators misunderstand the issue, commonly reported as rich nations versus small nations. In reality, U.S. ag prices are used to set price worldwide, so it isn't in any ag producer's real interest anywhere to allow price to decline any further. In fact, the opposite is true—ag prices to farmers and ranchers must rise around the world to profitable levels, in order to protect the environment and ensure food security. This will not be accomplished through free trade—only through fair trade.

The truth is that so-called free trade agreements are really treaties between trading nations, treaties which promote the interest of multinational corporations and which make an end run around both the oversight and the consent of Congress, here in the U.S., and of every national and local governing body in participant nations around the world.

To understand the collapse at Cancun, please read the following document, released in September:

A Declaration for a New Direction for American Agriculture and Agricultural Trade

We stand together at the dawn of the 21st century. We stand together as farmers, workers, religious and development organizations, environmentalists and concerned citizens calling for a comprehensive re-examination of the impact of global trade policy on food security, farmers' livelihoods, and local, sustainable food production. We demand trade agreements that put the good of the people before the trade of goods; trade agreements that value social justice over private profits. The outcomes of these agreements in all participating countries must be access by all to safe, affordable food; access to the resources and technology needed to ensure domestic food security and sustainable livelihoods; an end to environmental degradation associated with food production; and democratic participation by citizens in making decisions about domestic food production.

The World Trade Organization's Ministerial in Cancun, Mexico this month helps to decide who will plant crops and who will be uprooted, and in many cases who will eat and who will starve in the global free trade of food. This is a time to

affirm that agricultural trade must support human rights and livelihoods, not overrun or destroy them. Environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture is central to each nation's ability to feed its citizens today and for generations to come.

The challenge to adequately feed the world's inhabitants ultimately depends upon recognizing the fundamental connections between food security and food sovereignty, the health and well-being of human societies, and an intact and healthy environment capable of sustaining food production. Indeed, the future of the planet itself depends on how we as a world community meet the global demands for safe, sufficient, sustainable and accessible food for all. We believe that rational and fair trade policies can move our world toward an era of social justice, environmental and economic sustainability, and a generally more peaceful and productive era.

We affirm that international trade agreements must be designed to defend and support these principles:

- Access to safe, affordable food is a universal human right; widespread hunger cannot be acceptable in a world where food is abundant.
- Food production cannot come at the degradation of soil, water, air and biodiversity.

• Family farmers and ranchers around the world must be assured economic justice through fair prices for their production.

• Farm laborers must be assured economic justice through fair wages and contracts.

• All family scale producers, and especially indigenous, minority, immigrant and other excluded farm sectors must be assured access to land and to a system of agriculture that supports, protects and sustains their culture and communities.

• Corporate profits cannot come at the expense of the livelihoods of farmers and workers in the U.S. or other countries, nor at the expense of access to and diversity of the global seed supply.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations representing U.S. farm, labor, religious, development, consumer and environmental interests issue the following call for action:

To Our Elected Officials:

We place in you a trust that you will carry out the will of the people for the common good. Therefore, we hold you accountable to:

- Support policies which secure family farmers' livelihoods by fair prices for their products and increased capacity to influence decision-making about food systems;

conclusion on page 11



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin

The real political spectrum isn't right to left... it's top to bottom.