

men, women and children of Iraq." The way I look at it, every dollar I take from the government is one less dollar spent paving roads, damming rivers or killing people.

I don't like the current socio-politico-economic system, and I want to participate in it as little as possible. That means I don't work much — at least not in the sense that most people think. And when I do "work," I prefer jobs that are under the table and off the radar.

Sure, a bed would be nice, a desk, some chairs, a few plates, maybe a couch. But I'm not going to spend money on them. One fewer desk bought is one fewer tree chopped down in the Amazon. One fewer couch is one fewer batch of toxic foam rubber polluting the skies of Thailand.

Maybe I will buy something — a mirror. The next time someone judges me based on my lifestyle, thinks I'm lazy, cheap, selfish, unhappy or just plain crazy, I can hold a mirror up to their face. If you want to judge someone's actions based on the common good, maybe you should look at your own.

*Wes Ecowright  
Eugene*

**PEACE DIVIDEND**

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates the ratio of cost of violence to cost of prevention to be 7-1. By my calculations, a U.S. economy based on violence prevention and peace-building could eventually realize an annual "peace dividend" of \$1.2 trillion.

The Illinois Center for Violence Prevention estimates direct and indirect costs of interpersonal violence in the U.S. at \$425 billion per year. The president's budget proposal (FY08) includes \$666 billion in current military spending. \$425 + \$666 billion = \$1.1 trillion. Using one eighth of that for prevention (\$136 billion) could save the U.S. economy \$955 billion. We would still have \$530 billion for defense, over three times the combined military spending of Russia, China and the six "rogue" states.

The need for a huge military machine would decline rapidly as world desperation, the root cause of violent conflict, is regarded seriously. An annual investment for 10 years of \$59 billion would provide shelter, health care, AIDS control and the elimination of starvation and malnutrition for *everyone* on the planet.

As the need for a military declines over

many years, the interest on the national debt attributable to military spending and the costs of veteran benefits (\$300 billion) can be added to the peace dividend, totalling \$1.2 trillion annually.

It makes "cents" to establish a cabinet-level Department of Peace (HR 808). If Americans can risk complete incineration of the planet with thousands of nuclear weapons on hair trigger alert, certainly we can find the courage, and perhaps the sanity, to open our fist.

*David Hazen  
Eugene*

**WORK OF COLD HANDS**

To sum up Jennifer Levin's nice long letter (3/8) dissing anti-"Savage Love" letter writers: PRUDERY is even worse than RUDERY. It is unfortunate that so many of our laws, secular and religious, are written and passed by the bony hands of prudes instead of by the warm hands of decent folk enlightened by natural and scientific reality. Sex is simply Nature's prime force for living progress, but it cannot work well with so many greedy folks destroying the natural and social environments.

*Bob Saxton  
Eugene*

**RING THEM BELLS**

If nothing else is ever taught in our public school system, two particular subjects should come before anything else: democracy and fascism!

Having lived next to a neighbor who grew up in fascist Germany, I was impressed by his comparison of America today to Hitler's Germany during the 1930-40s. Before he died a few years ago, he told me he was alarmed by the movement from democracy to fascism that was taking place under the Bush administration.

If our public schools were to concentrate on democracy and fascism before anything else, perhaps our younger generation would be able to politically understand our nation is now teetering on brink of the same disaster that ultimately destroyed Germany in 1945! The alarm bells are ringing with little time to spare!

*John Fluent  
Eugene*

**CONTROL FREAKS**

To all the readers who have written in to disparage Dan Savage and his nationally

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