

OPINION

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Running our Nation into the Ground

The bloated military-industrial complex

BY SHERWOOD ROSS

One issue the American people likely are not going to hear about in this presidential campaign is arguments for slashing a bloated Pentagon down to size.

No matter that each passing day brings some new revelation of gross mismanagement, cronyism, waste, and extra-legal activity, it is a topic no candidate for the White House dares to broach lest he or she be deemed "naïve" or "soft" on the subject of defense.

Yet, the military-industrial complex is here and it is running this nation into the ground, sucking trillions of dollars out of taxpayers' wallets and, by starving other human services, laying waste to civilian sectors in urgent need of repair and regeneration.

When the Pentagon was under construction, members of the Roosevelt cabinet questioned the wisdom of bringing together under one roof the numerous military offices scattered around Washing-

ton, D.C. They feared the impending consolidation of awesome martial powers into one of the greatest structures on earth; they worried, too, that the war machine might take on a life of its own. Tragically, their fears have been realized.

Today, the military is a beast without a heart, without compassion. It will wage war anywhere in the world, on any lie or pretext, sending thousands or millions to their deaths. It is devoid of morality; it has learned nothing from religious teachings except lip-service; and its civilian employees go to their jobs each day manufacturing nuclear weapons and aircraft carriers as though they were planting apple orchards or raising flowers.

As James Carroll writes in "House of War," by 1965 nearly 6 million Americans were employed in Pentagon-run enterprises. After all, in the 20 years following World War II, "the Pentagon spent nearly \$100 billion, 10 times the federal expenditures devoted to all aspects of health, education, and welfare in the same period."

By 1997, Father Philip Berrigan, humanitarian and anti-war activist, could tell the judge who would shortly sentence him to two years in prison for spilling blood on a U.S. warship: "The United States has spent \$14 trillion on arms since 1946. Our government has intervened in

the affairs of 50 nations and has violated the laws of God and humanity by designing, deploying, using, and threatening to use atomic weapons."

Carroll sees it in much the same light: "The Pentagon is now the dead center of an open-ended martial enterprise that no longer pretends to be defense... The Pentagon has, more than ever, become a place to fear."

"What the Bush administration has done," Carroll writes, "is to lay bare the real character of the 'disastrous rise' of Pentagon power of which Eisenhower warned in 1961. In Iraq, despite America's overwhelming military might, there will be no winning ever."

Carroll's words sound more prophetic each time another general testifies the Pentagon is "making progress" but the situation remains "fragile" and so we must stay on and on.

Two years ago Carroll literally predicted Sen. John McCain's comment about staying in Iraq for a 100 years if need be, writing, "there will be no winning ever. Whether the U.S. occupation is terminated abruptly or is maintained for years, violence and mayhem will define Iraq indefinitely, while the rest of the Middle East copes with Iraq-spawned waves of chaos."

McCain says, if elected, he will

The Bush regime is in Iraq to steal oil, to swindle taxpayers, and to give lucrative defense contracts to its friends.

People all over the World Starving to Death

Globalized economy is not helping

BY WALLY RYAN KUROIWA

Since the beginning of 2008, there have been dramatic increases in food shortages globally. According to one estimate, approximately one billion people are living with and dying from chronic hunger.

In more stark terms, they are starving to death.

This crisis is just the most recent manifestation of an ongoing crisis, brought on in great part because of a sharp increase in global food prices.

Fred Magdoff of the University of Vermont estimates that the number of food insecure and malnourished people in the world approaches 3 billion people, with 18,000 children dying daily as a direct or indirect result of malnu-

trition. Bringing it closer to home, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that in 2006, 35 million people in the U.S. lived in food-insecure households. In some countries where the problem has reached critical proportions, riots have occurred as people



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desperately seek food. These statistics indicate at least three important realities. First, this is not a problem that just came upon us. It has been with us for a while. Second, it is not a problem that exists exclusively in heavily impoverished countries. Third, this is not a problem caused by the lack of food. The U.S. alone could provide

enough food to feed the world. Certain factors have accelerated the most recent intensification of hunger and malnutrition. The recent spate of natural disasters in food-producing regions of the U.S., such as the floods in Iowa, has drastically reduced production. Other factors are a result of human decisions, such as the decision to

duce food locally were encouraged and sometimes coerced into an export-based agriculture. As a consequence, these countries became more vulnerable to the volatility of the global food trading system.

The right to nourishing food has long been accepted universally as a human right. In contrast, in the globalized economy, food is simply treated as another commodity, like cars, shoes, and other things to be purchased. No money: no food.

In such an understanding, poor people are shut out and denied. As food prices soar, those living in poverty become more and more vulnerable to hunger.

For people of faith and good will, such a systemic problem is morally unacceptable. In the Abrahamic faith traditions, society has an obligation to provide for the basic needs of the poor. For example, farmers are commanded in the Mosaic code to leave the outer boundaries of their farms unharvested, so that the poor and aliens may use that food for their needs.

In light of the catastrophic nature of the food crisis today, people of faith are urged to call attention to this human problem and to urge major shifts in the way we consider food. For more information on this mobilization and how your faith group can participate, go to www.tradeweek.org.

Food is a human right! Wally Ryan Kuroiwa is a minister and team leader with Justice and Witness Ministries in the United Church of Christ.

diversity in Print

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Return your ballot by mail or drop it off at any designated voter dropsite. Call 1-866-673-9633 to find a location near you.

The Portland Observer

City of Seaside

Published in 1970

www.portlandobserver.com

Volume XXXII • Number 197

Constituted by Cultural Diversity

10th Edition • October 13, 2004

Week in The Review

Tenacious Intervention
A 17-year-old Seattle girl who returned eight days after her car crashed and hospitalized 2008. She drove a yellow taxi that was involved in a fatal crash. Her intervention, which prevented the expansion of a school, led to her being honored with the 2008 National Award for Heroism. She was the first female to receive this honor.

Many Americans Qualify as Working Poor
The U.S. Census Bureau's new report shows that a growing number of Americans are living in poverty. In 2007, 37 million Americans, or 12.5 percent of the population, were living in poverty. This is a record high for the United States.

Disenfranchisement
Disenfranchisement was used to strip the vote from African Americans. It was a key part of the Jim Crow system that kept African Americans from exercising their rights as citizens.

Election Ballots On Way

People of color find a political fit

By James R. Egan

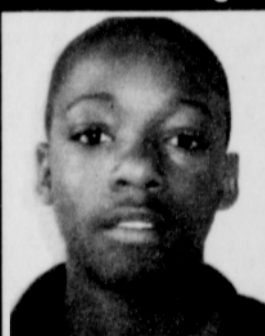

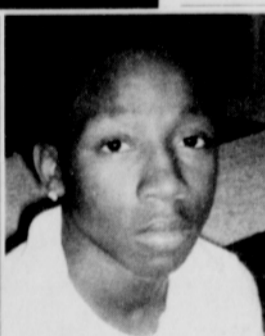
The Portland Observer

Ballots in the November General Election will be mailed to voters and ready for pickup on Tuesday.

As voters in counties for precinct, county and covered by ballot delivery, including transportation for schools and social

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Have you seen me? Endangered Missing

 <p>Joshua Bland Age: 14 Missing: June 2, 2008 From: Dolton, IL Josh was last seen at his home.</p>	 <p>Tanya Chicas Age: 14 Missing: June 16, 2008 From: Alexandria, VA Last seen wearing blue jeans and a t-shirt.</p>	 <p>Raheim Johnson Age: 14 Missing: June 4, 2008 From: Lakeland, FL Raheim and Robert are brothers; they were last seen at their home.</p>	 <p>Robert Johnson Age: 15</p>
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1-800-THE-LOST

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The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

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