



From The Wilderness

A Nonpartisan Non-sectarian MAP for the Here That Is, Into the Tomorrow of Our Own Making

Vol. IV No. 2

May 31, 2006

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THE TILLMAN FILES

Part One

An Offering of Our Fear

by

Stan Goff

Military/Veterans' Affairs Editor

[Pat Tillman was no red-necked, unthinking friend of the Neocons. Pat Tillman was a football star and a scholar. He was chillingly handsome; his oversized square jaw and Herculean physique made him look like GI Joe come to life. He had been openly criticizing the Bush Administration's war on terror while serving as an active-duty US Army Ranger in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He knew the war was wrong, but continued to do his duty faithfully and energetically. He complained to Navy SEALs, fellow rangers, Special Forces; anyone who would listen. He was keeping a diary and he was looking forward to the day when he might return home to retake his position as a defensive safety for the Phoenix Cardinals.]

Can you imagine what the fallout would have been if, on every sports show in the country, followed by every mainstream media outlet, the archetypal American hero had pulled the propaganda carpet fully and completely out from under Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld?

Pat Tillman's diary never came home either.

Pat Tillman was killed by friendly fire in what the best-case indicates was a surreal blend of bad judgment, homicidal madness, panic, grotesque mismanagement, lies, and a cover up that is proving to have so many layers that FTW has decided to make this case a major, long-term investigative project. In part that is because we have already uncovered crimes, falsification of records, lies and—as Stan Goff will show you—disingenuousness of cosmic proportions. “Don’t piss on my leg and tell me it’s raining,” Stan will tell you is an old saying. It seems like everyone’s been pissed on here—especially the American people.

Just before FTW published Part I of this series I drove to Mary Tillman's residence in Northern California and spent an entire night hand-copying more than 2,000 pages of the Army's investigation into Tillman's death. All I will say is that Mary Tillman is a tough, bright, and unspeakably decent human being who does not want to be in the spotlight. She wants justice.

Except perhaps for the Kean Commission report on 9-11, in my 30 years of studying and writing criminal investigative reports, government inquiries, and court records I have never seen a more cooked and doctored piece of work than the US Army's investigation into Tillman's death.

There are crimes here. We will show you those crimes. Some of those crimes, we believe, lead directly to an already beleaguered Donald Rumsfeld. As just one example, Tillman's posthumous Silver Star award was in the works even before the After-Action Report had been written. This is a complete violation of Army procedure. Who issued the orders to do that?

(cont'd on page 3)

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From The Wilderness is published eleven times annually.
Subscriptions are \$75 (US) for 11 hardcopy issues.

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PEAK TRAFFIC:

Planning NAFTA Superhighways at the End of the Age of Oil Part One

by

Mark Robinowitz

(permatopia.com)

May 10, 2006 1100 PST – (FTW) - **T**ransportation planning in the United States—the epicenter of oil combustion—has been remarkably impervious to rising gasoline prices and growing awareness of climate change and the geological reality of finite fossil fuel supplies. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been committed for massive expansions of the interstate highway system. The plans for these "NAFTA superhighways" and Outer Beltways assume limitless cheap oil, a trillion dollar mistake that must be corrected if there is hope for a renewable energy society after petroleum. This article examines transportation planning in the United States and offers a tool that concerned citizens could use to force governments to shift long-term plans to prepare to mitigate Peak Oil.

Peak Oil: Personal Impact and Public Policies

Three-dollar-a-gallon gasoline has increased public concern about energy supplies, but this awareness has not translated into changes in public policies. Widespread outrage about astronomical oil company profits has not fueled political pressure to tax excessive profits to fund a European style inter-city rail network, put solar panels on millions of homes or other initiatives designed for a Post-Peak Oil world.

The arrival of Peak Oil and climate change onto the world political stage has not deterred governments from further investments in suburban sprawl, more highways, and other overdevelopment dependent on endless supplies of dollar a gallon petrol.

A large part of the public discussion about Peak Oil is about personal transportation issues, since most people's consciousness of industrial energy systems is focused on purchasing petroleum at the pump. There are many excellent strategies for reducing one's energy consumption: driving less, carpooling, [car sharing](#), using public transportation (if available), bicycling, walking, living closer to your job (if possible) and [buying locally made products](#) to reduce transportation demands. However, an effective response to Peak Oil will require efforts at all levels—family, neighborhood, city, state, nation and planet—to be useful in the post-Peak era.

[From The Wilderness](#), [Life After the Oil Crash](#), [Energy Bulletin](#), and many other news sources have documented that the most important issues of Peak Oil are about [food supplies](#) (especially for metropolitan areas far removed from farms), [civil liberties](#), economic instabilities, and global conflicts.

A shift in transportation policy that admits to Peak Oil and climate change is needed to spark widespread discussions of needed changes to retool civilization for a post-carbon future.

(continued on page 9)

Many will suspect and want to know if Pat Tillman was deliberately murdered to prevent his coming home to guest spots on ESPN, CNN, and all the networks. There is no doubt that he intended to speak out. FTW can't answer that definitively yet because Stan Goff and I have not finished going through the records. I can tell you that what we have found is enough to thoroughly discredit the Department of Defense and show multiple violations (some criminal) on the part of many officers and their civilian leadership.

We will take as long as we need to with this one. It may run into ten or more parts. It may take months. We will publish as we get each part completed.

And I can tell you that when Donald Rumsfeld decided to piss on Mary Tillman's leg, on retired US Army Special Forces Master Sergeant Stan Goff's leg, and on former LAPD detective Mike Ruppert's leg, he pissed in the wrong place. We are representatives of and for the American people.

Pat Tillman was an honorable, brave, intelligent and strong-willed American. He did not support tyranny and he recognized it and name-called it when he saw it. His ultimate mistake was in believing that his fame would save him just before three American bullets blew his head off.

"I'm Pat fucking Tillman!" he screamed. These were his last words. – MCR]

May 4, 2006 1530 PST – (FTW) - **C**aptain Scott felt the mixture of anxiety and resentment rising in his throat like the onions from a bad sandwich.

He'd known somewhere backstage in his brain all along that he would cross that portal and run smack-dab into the reality behind the rah-rah about Army Values: Integrity, my ass. This one was always too big for integrity. It had spin written all over it; and it went high, very high. But he'd had to test it, had to do it by the book, make it real, ask all the questions...state his true conclusions.

No way he wanted to go into that room, face that flat-eyed phalanx of careers and agendas. He had known, somewhere before the little voice could even say it aloud in his head, this is one where you are supposed to read between the lines. This is one that is so big, heads are going to roll, and pawns are going to be sacrificed in a bureaucratic gambit of "protect the king."

Integrity was no longer about Army Values. It was about making a choice he'd have to live with for life; and he had known that his quiet conscience was going to be purchased at great risk.

Colonel Kazlorich had told him, when he assigned him this fucking investigation...it was fratricide. One day after it happened. Hell, minutes after it happened, they knew. Pat Tillman—Pat fucking Tillman!—was killed by his own men.

Those had been among his last words before he stood up during the lull in fire, thinking they'd figured it out, only to be gunned down in a resurgent hail of automatic weapons fire.

"Stop shooting! I'm Pat fucking Tillman, goddamnit!"

But when the public statements had come out, Captain Scott reflected anxiously—waiting to be called into the room—even before he'd assembled his materials to conduct the investigation, whoa Nelly! He remembered thinking then, this can't possibly end well...do they really think they can get away with this? They can't hide this.

Now he was walking into a room full of them, officers with their career-obsessed asses on the line, a very dangerous crew. This is so fucked up, he found himself thinking, so big...and I'm just a squirrel here, trying to cross an eight-lane highway. Two little fucking words, and now I have to face the whole fucking chain of command after they cut some kind of deal and changed those statements. Two words: ROE and negligence.

In April, I wrote an FTW commentary about [the fratricidal killing of Pat Tillman](#) and the subsequent attempt by the US government to first spin it, and then to bury it.

The commentary came to the attention of Pat's mother, Mary. After an email introduction, Mary Tillman and I have had a series of conversations. I have also spoken with Pat's brother, Kevin, assigned to the same platoon with Pat and who was on the road to Manah, Afghanistan with Pat when these fatal events unfolded, and was then separated from his brother by 15 minutes after the fateful directive was passed down from Khost to split the platoon.

In what I am about to write—an investigative series about not only Tillman's death, but more significantly about a felonious conspiracy to cover up the lies that followed his death—I am in no way claiming to represent the remarks of either of these family members. I have attempted to clarify a number of details with them, but I have relied on documentation to establish most of the pertinent facts and statements. What the Tillmans have had to say on this matter is public record; and what they choose to say in the future is not for me to direct or amend in any way. They are quite capable of speaking for themselves, as I am sure they will.

There are plenty of people remaining to be called to account for what happened during and after the events that ended the life of Pat Tillman: some for stupidity, some for naked ambition, some for criminality, and some for a basic lack of common decency. I'll address the last, first. The others will be addressed in due course.

When the death of Pat Tillman became public, there was a feeding frenzy of commentary. I expect the right-wing media to put out simple-minded demagoguery, so the fact that they did so is of little concern to me. But I also stand alongside a lot of people in my opposition to the Energy War in Southwest Asia—Iraq and Afghanistan are the same war, in my opinion—and when our putative allies cross the line of common decency, we have to take them to the woodshed.

Indymedia of Portland, as one example, published a reprehensible

headline that read: "Dumb Jock Killed in Afghanistan," which provoked a pile-up of similarly insensitive and outlandishly celebratory posturing—escalating their tantrums to one-up each other for cyber-anarchist bona fides. Some apologized once they learned that Pat was becoming a critic of the war; but that does not let them off the hook. My abrupt advice to all of these commentators is to get the hell out of politics. Find a nice, quiet, nine-to-five job where you can't break anything until you can gain at least as much integrity and maturity as Pat Tillman had. I don't want you anywhere near me, until you have enough experience with the real complexities of life to divest yourselves of your sanctimoniously bad manners.

Pat Tillman was a person, not a symbol. He understood this better than anyone, from what I can glean.

As different as we were in many respects, the more I have learned about Pat, the more I find myself identifying with him. Obviously, I never had his physical gifts. But at some level, closer to the hard-wiring wherever personality traits are rooted in the cerebral cortex, my reading and conversations have highlighted a restless inquisitiveness about Pat Tillman—one that didn't accord well with authority all the time, even as he craved the discipline and challenge that reveals not just external reality, but something about what we are inside our own phenomenological experience.

Pat Tillman played football—undersized by most accounts—with a kind of ballet-dancer's sixth-sense, sometimes angering his coaches by ignoring their directions, almost as merriment in the existence of his own body. He also ruminated on the writings of Henry David Thoreau. His GPA was 3.85. He asked questions like, how far? How high? How hard? How true?

This is where I feel the most powerful identification with Pat, and even though I never knew him, I feel sure that over time he would have inevitably ended up as I did...on the other side of everything he knew. It is that restlessness and inquisitiveness that takes one there...along with a compulsion to turn those questions in on oneself in an incessant auto-interrogation.

Many believed that Pat Tillman abandoned a lucrative football contract to join the Army because he was out for revenge against the perpetrators of 9-11. That's what I thought. But, in his own words, he said that while football had been very good to him, he'd never really "put it on the line" as his great grandfather, a survivor of Pearl Harbor, had.

Many who are now familiar with my writing on gender will be surprised by my valorization of this. But the same people often ask me, how did a career soldier become a radical, a feminist? It wasn't from reading. It was from a restless inquisition of both my circumstances and myself. I can't even take credit for it. It is how I am wired. I wish I could shut it off sometimes.

I am not idealizing Pat's masculine exploits in the military. I did the same thing, and I am on record that at the end of that particular path, there is nothing. *Neant. Nada.* Nothingness. But I was restless as a ferret, so when there was nothing there, I kept nosing around until I found something. I don't celebrate the path. I celebrate Pat Tillman's nature. He kept asking questions. He kept boring in on life. He offered life a lot of himself, but he would not offer it his fear. That's why I know, had he stayed longer, Pat Tillman would have abandoned old paths and found new ones. That's why I am confident that there would have been a place where we could have come directly together, instead of along this meandering umbilicus of history and memory.

This series on Pat Tillman's death and the government cover-up in its wake is dedicated to Pat Tillman, both what he was and what he would have been. In the current struggle to break the power of the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld clique that Pat Tillman had unmasked for himself and learned to despise, I feel confident that he would have approved how his own story—the story of a human being—might become one among many successive waves of attack against an immense edifice of malignant power. He would have understood that whether we succeed or not—while important—is not the measure of what we are. The measure of what we are is that we try, and that we don't supplicate ourselves before that malignant power and make an offering of our fear.

THE TILLMAN FILES

Part Two

The Disingenuous Boss

by

Stan Goff

Military/ Veterans' Affairs Editor

May 18, 2006 1300 PST – (FTW)

"Don't piss on my leg, and tell me it's raining."

- An old expression from the military when someone insulted your intelligence with a cheap con.

[Redacted]: Okay. Did you tell the family that saving the vehicle had to do with propaganda?

[Redacted]: Yes sir.

[Redacted]: And what did you mean by that?

[Redacted]: Corporal Tillman's mother said, "Why did you have my sons fucking dragging around this broken vehicle?" He said, "It's \$50,000. Y'all spend that all the time. Why didn't you just run it off the side of a mountain and let it go?"

Pat Tillman was killed in three wars, and falsified in two. There was the Energy War in Southwest Asia, where he was employed as a soldier on both fronts, Iraq and Afghanistan. There was a bureaucratic war of careers, and there was a political war of legitimacy. Fratricide happens in warfare, far more often than any non-combatant can ever know. So fratricide remains part of the shooting war—in this case, the Energy War. You can be killed by it, but not falsified—that is, misrepresented—by it.

In the halls of bureaucracy, however, especially with the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS)—a cannibalistic culture—there is a constant and covert Hobbesian war of all against all for advancement up the narrowing career-pyramid. It rivals an Elizabethan drama. And in the stratosphere of high politics, there is that most ruthless of post-modern combats, the ceaseless

struggle for legitimacy. The weapons in the latter two wars are innuendo, fraud, evasion, contingent conspiracies, spin, and plausible denial.

Disingenuous is a term that describes an act of phony innocence, of pretending we don't know any better, of playing at being naïve.

About a decade and a half ago, the predecessors of the present-day neo-conservatives in the culture wars dusted off an old term and gave it new meaning: *politically correct*. This term (popularized with Dinesh D'Souza's book *Illiberal Education*, 1991) was derisively employed to imply that the ideas of anti-racism, anti-sexism, multi-culturalism, and so forth were really part of a new left-wing conspiracy to organize an academic orthodoxy of "social engineering." They framed this "political correctness movement" so effectively as a weapon of de-legitimation that the term itself became a kind of orthodoxy, and even gained such popular currency that it was initialized as simply "PC."

I want to argue here that (1) two can play at this game, and (2) that there really is a common strategy of power that we should identify and popularize to the point that the powerful can no longer get away with it. I call it the *Disingenuous Boss Syndrome*, or DBS. It refers to those times when bosses—suddenly cornered by their own malfeasance—feign ignorance or selective memory as a defense, in such glaringly apparent ways that it is tantamount to pissing on the public's leg and telling us that it is raining.

Let's think about it for a moment.

Everyone who works for pay in this society knows that there is both a formal and informal relationship between you and your boss. The formal relationship is embodied in either a written or unwritten contract—including a job description: that publicly acknowledged set of expectations about what you will do and produce. If a third party, outside your work environment were to ask what do you do, then either you or your boss would answer that question in approximately the same way. That answer would take as its point of reference some result external to the actual personal relationship you have with your boss. You maintain the organization of an office; you cold-call strangers on the telephone to sell them something; you load, unload, and display frozen food; you cut the legs off of dead chickens; you rivet wheel mounts...

That is the formal, "productive" relationship; but there is a relationship between your boss, the person, and you, the person, if you want to keep that paycheck coming, too. It is informal, and many times even more immediately felt than the formal relationship. It involves smiling at him when you don't feel like it, laughing at his stupid fucking jokes, accepting his condescension without complaint, biting back your resentment, surrendering your will and your dignity...even your integrity.

Union organizers will tell you that the most militant labor struggles often begin not about wages and benefits, but over questions of dignity and humiliation. Exploitation is almost bearable; domination is the tough part. But you can't have one without the other.

The toughest part of many jobs in the so-called "new economy"—"white collar" jobs—as Barbara Ehrenreich's book, *Bait and Switch: The Futile Pursuit of the American Dream* points out, is that people are reduced to such fear and insecurity they feel compelled to get "personality makeovers" to render themselves more marketable. It is an utter surrender of their personhood.

Part of every job, in fact, especially among so-called professionals (like military officers), has always been this informal aspect of the job. It has been water-witching the boss's unspoken desires, reading between his (or her) lines. We know that job evaluations are full of ambiguities like "judgment" and "professionalism" that give the boss a subjective Damoclean sword to enforce a properly clairvoyant and servile attitude. This is the source of that beta-primate smile that swallows the bile of resentment.

This domination is magnified among those professionals who are placed in competition with one another in "up or out" systems of advancement: advancement versus expulsion. Behind all the displays of collegiality is a jungle of diplomatic tooth and claw. This enforces a kind of decades-long hyper-obedience, where one internalizes the institutional-unspoken to such a degree that it becomes a sixth sense. One quits thinking about the boss and ahead of the boss, learning to think instead *like* the boss. What are *his* ambitions, *his* anxieties, *his* routes past the dangers and obstacles of upward mobility in the narrowing pyramid?

Everyone is familiar with this. Which of us has never been forced by circumstances to eat shit for some boss?

This informal but exceedingly powerful system not only reproduces power in times of relative stability; it preserves and protects it—yes, like a police force—in times of institutional crisis. It does this through *formal* disingenuousness.

When something has gone terribly wrong at a very bad time, something that threatens the legitimacy of the system, this overwhelming informal power is shielded behind legalistic formality, the strict scholasticism of *formal* power. In the up-or-out hierarchies, this often demands the ritual sacrifice of someone comparatively close to the bottom of the pyramid. These sacrifices are excommunicated, and thereby asked to carry the burden of sin outside the body of the institution.

Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Kauzlarich was the "Cross-Commander" at Khost (the base was named Salerno), Afghanistan overseeing the operation of which the fated Blacksheep Platoon of Company A, 2nd Ranger Battalion was a part on April 22, 2004, when Pat Tillman was killed by his own men. Kauzlarich was given the responsibility to re-do the Article 15-6 investigation of the killing after Captain Scott, the first investigator, concluded there were violations of the Rules of Engagement (ROE) and criminal negligence. This result would have created a firestorm of curiosity, and Pat Tillman's death had already been spun—disingenuously—even adding a posthumous Silver Star award to flesh out the attempted myth. Kauzlarich is likely the person who ordered the two "Serials" to split in order to babysit a broken Hummer, which led directly to the fratricide later that very day. In any case, he was ultimately responsible for the conduct of this operation—and any sense of urgency he expressed to meet mission timelines was transmitted to subordinates through that subordinate-to-superior telepathy they develop.

Only when confronted—five weeks later—with the fact that 600 Rangers, who were about to redeploy back stateside had already learned through the grapevine that Tillman was killed by friendly fire, did the whole chain of command come to confront the grim sketchy business of letting the family and the press know that Pat Tillman was cut down by his own platoon's automatic weapons. The legal disingenuity, however, was already prepared. The Silver Star write-up dissimulated; it was carefully written to support the initial spin of a heroic death in mortal combat with the enemy, but to deny lying when the truth would inevitably come out.

SWORN STATEMENT:

I was Corporal Tillman's Company Commander at the time of his death. I was the one who was providing all the information...needed to write CPL Tillman's Silver Star recommendation. Prior to completing that award submission, we became aware that his death was a possible fratricide. [In fact, in other statements, Captain Saunders indicated that everyone was sure of it within hours. We have copies of those statements too. -SG] ... We did, however, only say that he died in the incident and not include that he died by enemy fire..."

Saunders' commander was Kauzlarich, who conducted the second investigation, in which he also investigated himself. News articles show Kauzlarich as a Major (on the Lieutenant Colonel promotion list)—a MAJ(P)—in January 2004, a Lieutenant Colonel in Afghanistan (April 2004), a MAJ(P) again later in 2004, and a Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) again by 2006. Was Kauzlarich quietly reduced to Major, put on the promotable list, and given command of another infantry battalion since then, and subsequently re-promoted?

When the questions are asked more pointedly, was it standard operating procedure to split units and travel in daylight (which *someone* obliged them to do in the face of vigorous objection from Platoon Leader David Uthlaut), and who passed this Silver Star recommendation to the USASOC commander (it requires a General to formally recommend this award), then the answer will almost certainly be—Kauzlarich (though not as the person giving the actual directive—who appears to have been the A Company Executive Officer; but Kauzlarich was in command of the overall mission)...and he's been punished. The average person won't realize that busting an officer and leaving him or her on active duty is an exception to the rule...one also applied to Janis Karpinski at Abu Ghraib, another woman with dangerous stories to tell.

Lieutenant General Philip Kensinger, the first in the chain of command with the requisite rank to actually recommend the Silver Star award, now has one degree of plausible deniability. Anyone with a shred of sense knows damn well that everyone right up to the Commander in Chief knew that Pat Tillman—the most famous enlisted man in theater—was killed by friendly fire. But Kensinger can now equivocate, perhaps even lie, and say he didn't know. He can legally piss on our leg and tell us that it's raining.

Pat Tillman was a brave man and a good soldier. No one will deny that. But he was not killed in a terrific firefight, as the word "ambush" often suggests. He was killed at the end of a sporadic contact that lasted over 20 minutes, in which not one soldier was wounded by enemy fire, and not even one bullet hole was discovered in anyone's vehicle. Serial 2, the lead vehicle of which killed Pat Tillman, had emerged from a contact with a handful of lightly armed assailants, firing from beyond the maximum effective range of their own weapons, on terrain that was high, but not conducive to placing effective fire on anyone.

The write-up of his Silver Star award was intentionally designed to conceal the fact of fratricide and create the impression of fierce combat. It was, in a word, a lie. Carefully worded; but a lie nonetheless, and an intentional one:

Through the firing, Tillman's voice was heard issuing fire commands to take the fight to the enemy on the dominating high ground.

Only after his team engaged the well-armed enemy did it appear their fires diminished.

While Tillman focused his efforts, and those of his team members without regard to his personal safety, he was shot and killed.

We will cover these events in much detail further along. But the enemy was not well-armed, nor effective. There was no enemy fire when Pat Tillman was killed. The efforts he made were focused on trying to stop his own men while they killed him and one Afghan attachment. The commands he issued were actually Pat yelling at Staff Sergeant Greg Baker's gun-vehicle to cease-fire.

Law is deeply religious—a potent combination of mythology, faith, and ritual. It is a religion of the powerful, imposed on us all—like missionaries converting natives at the point of a bayonet.

In those rare instances when the powerful who wield the law stumble, and the law falls into our hands, and they themselves are then exposed to the blade, formality becomes their shield and the "presumption of good will and good faith" becomes their armor. This latter is a journalistic standard—informal—that is exercised with respect to powerful political figures (that are not *informally* official foreign enemies). The American press presumes that American political leaders are exercising good will and good faith until proven otherwise. Given the preponderance of precedent, I haven't a clue why this would be—aside from plain class loyalty, that is.

That presumption will not operate here. Bad faith has been amply demonstrated in the case of the death of Pat Tillman, and the only questions remaining are the depth of that bad faith, and the height of the responsibility for it.

The Energy War in Southwest Asia is a real, ball-and-powder, shooting war. But Operation Mountain Storm, in which Pat Tillman was participating on April 22nd, the last day of his life, was also part of the war to defend the falling political legitimacy of the Bush administration, and from there it was translated into the war for career.

On May 6, 2004, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was called before a Senate investigative committee over the revelations at Abu Ghraib. He did not show up alone. At his side were General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Les Brownlee, Acting Secretary of the Army, General Peter J. Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, Lieutenant General Lance L. Smith, Deputy Commander of the United States Central Command (Centcom), and Dr. Steve Cambone, Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. What may have looked like a good faith effort to the non-skeptical to give the committee access to as many perspectives as possible turned out to be anything but that. It was a stunningly cynical exercise of Disingenuous Boss Syndrome (DBS).

Rumsfeld led his so-called testimony with this disclaimer:

I want to inform you of the measures under way to improve our performance in the future. Before I do that, let me say that each of us at this table is either in the chain of command or has senior responsibilities in the Department of Defense. This means that anything we say publicly could have an impact on the legal proceedings against those

accused of wrongdoing in this matter. So please understand that if some of our responses to questions are measured, it is to assure that pending cases are not jeopardized by seeming to exert command influence and that the rights of any accused are protected.

So then he showed his disingenuous face. Donald Rumsfeld's urine was beginning to trickle down our legs, as his whole phalanx of subordinates stood by to confirm that this hot liquid precipitated from the clouds.

There were exchanges like this between Senator Carl Levin and Rumsfeld:

LEVIN: Secretary Rumsfeld, would you agree that people who authorized or suggested or prompted the conduct depicted in the pictures that we've seen as well as those who carried out those abuses, must be held accountable? That anybody who authorized, knew about, prompted, suggested in the intelligence community or otherwise, that conduct must be held accountable? That's my very direct question to you.

RUMSFELD: The pictures I've seen depict conduct, behavior that is so brutal and so cruel and so inhumane that anyone engaged in it or involved in it would have to be brought to justice. ["Engaged or involved"...note the latter term's ambiguity. - SG]

LEVIN: [Levin attempts to hold Rumsfeld's feet a bit closer to the fire. -SG] Would that include anybody who suggested it, prompted it, hinted at it, directly or indirectly? I just want to know how far up this chain you're going to go. Are you going to limit this to people who perpetrated it? Or are we going to get to the people who may have suggested it or...

RUMSFELD: That [To what does "that" refer? - SG] is exactly why the investigation was initiated, that is why it's being brought forward, and we'll find what their conclusions are. And I'm sure they will make recommendations with respect to prosecutions. [This, of course, has nothing to do with what Levin just asked. -SG]

LEVIN: But in terms of the standard, does anybody who recommended or suggested, directly or indirectly, that conduct in order to extract information, are they also in your judgment, if that occurred, violative of our laws and standards?

RUMSFELD: Certainly anyone who recommended the kind of behavior that I have seen depicted in those photos needs to be brought to justice. [Admits only that action will be taken in extremely specific instances..."depicted in those photos." -SG]

And *that*, dear readers, is how it is done. Now let's look further into Rumsfeld's penchant to duck and dodge.

Here's a sample of the really tricky bit, when Senator McCain questioned Rumsfeld about the chain of command (something we will be asking about the Pat Tillman case, by the way):

MCCAIN: Now, Mr. Secretary, I'd like to know—I'd like you to give the committee the chain of command from the guards to you, all the way up the chain of command. I'd like to know.

RUMSFELD: I think General Myers brought an indication of it, and we'll show it.

MCCAIN: Thank you.

I'd like to know who was in charge of the—what agencies or private contractors were in charge of interrogations? Did they have authority over the guards? And what were their instructions to the guards?

RUMSFELD: First, with respect to the...

SMITH: We did not bring it.

RUMSFELD: Oh, my.

SMITH: Yes, oh my is right.

RUMSFELD: It was all prepared.

SMITH: Yes, it was, indeed.

RUMSFELD: Do you want to walk through it?

MCCAIN: Anyway, who was in charge? What agency or private contractor was in charge of the interrogations? Did they have authority over the guards? And what were the instructions that they gave to the guards?

SMITH: I'll walk through the chain of command and...

MCCAIN: No. Let's just—you can submit the chain of command, please.

WARNER: General Smith, do you want to respond?

MCCAIN: No. Secretary Rumsfeld, in all due respect, you've got to answer this question. And it could be satisfied with a phone call. This is a pretty simple, straightforward question: Who was in charge of the interrogations? What agencies or private contractors were in charge of the interrogations? Did they have authority over the guards? And what were the instructions to the guards?

This goes to the heart of this matter.

RUMSFELD: It does indeed.

As I understand it, there were two contractor organizations. They supplied interrogators and linguists. And I was advised by General Smith that there were maybe a total of 40.

MCCAIN: Now, were they in charge of the interrogations?

SMITH: Thirty-seven interrogators, and...

WARNER: The witnesses' voices are not being recorded. You'll have to speak into your microphone.

Would you repeat the conversation in response to the senator's question?

SMITH: Yes, sir. There were 37 interrogators that were...

MCCAIN: I'm asking who was in charge of the interrogations.

SMITH: They were not in charge. They were interrogators.

MCCAIN: My question is who was in charge of the interrogations?

SMITH: The brigade commander for the military intelligence brigade.

MCCAIN: And were they—did he also have authority over the guards?

SMITH: Sir, he was—he had tactical control over the guards, so he was...

MCCAIN: Mr. Secretary, you can't answer these questions?

RUMSFELD: I can. I'd be—I thought the purpose of the question was to make sure we got an accurate presentation, and we have the expert here who was in the chain of command.

Aside from the grim mirth we might all experience at all these "Oh my's, the essence of this excerpt, emblematic of the whole inquiry, is that when Rumsfeld is being asked a question for which he might be legally held accountable at a later date, he develops selective amnesia, and punts to one of the pre-selected others in his retinue. This is a masterful exercise of Disingenuous Boss Syndrome. And the subject of it—Donald Rumsfeld—figures directly into this account of the death of Pat Tillman and the subsequent cover-up.

Here are a few comments about Herr Rumsfeld:

- *Since the day he took command of the Pentagon, Rumsfeld has been using his famous "8,000-mile screwdriver" to tilt the civil-military balance his way. According to his critics, he is Robert McNamara reborn—an arrogant micromanager, con-*

temptuous of soldierly expertise and certain of his own infallibility. (Andrew Bacevich, Los Angeles Times)

- *To counter critics' description of Rumsfeld as a micromanager who did not listen to military leaders, the Pentagon circulated a one-page memo late last week detailing the defense secretary's frequent contacts with numerous uniformed and civilian advisers. (Associated Press)*
- *If a civilian such as Donald Rumsfeld seeks to exercise from Washington functions that were traditionally those of soldiers, he should take the customary consequences. (Max Hastings, Washington Post, entitled "To the Micromanager Goes the Blame")*
- *It says Mr. Rumsfeld has held 139 meetings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff since the beginning of 2005, and 208 meetings with the senior field commanders. The retired generals complained that Mr. Rumsfeld was a "micromanager" who often ignored the advice of senior commanders. (Mark Mazzetti and Jim Rutenberg, Sydney Morning Herald)*
- *Was Donald Rumsfeld a micromanager? Yes. Did he want to be involved in all of the decisions? Yes. (Michael DeLong, New York Times)*
- *DoD lawyers deny the allegation, but Rumsfeld's management style, the infamous micromanagement, lends credibility to it. It's logical that a micromanager would utilize the tools of technology available to him to direct interrogations from a distance. (Daily Kos)*
- *Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Michael DeLong, former deputy commander of the U.S. Central Command during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, said Monday he suspected Rumsfeld's critics simply didn't like Rumsfeld's management style and personality. "His management style is a tough management style," DeLong said on NBC's "Today" show. "He's tough to work with. He is a micromanager, but he's very effective. He's very competent but very dogmatic and tough when he deals with people." (Albuquerque Tribune)*

A Google search with the terms "Donald," "Rumsfeld," and "micromanager" yields 10,600 results. The point being... Rumsfeld, a world-class micromanager, does not have the reputation of someone who is incapable of remembering the chain of command from himself to a high-profile, scandal-ridden military prison in Iraq.

This is not a generic demonstration of DBS, because Rumsfeld was certainly not hands-off in the case of Pat Tillman. And if Rumsfeld was interested—given the career interests of every officer below him, and the legitimacy crisis of the administration of which he is a part—everyone was interested.

The very idea that there was not involvement in the aftermath of Pat Tillman's death that went all the way to the top of this hierarchy, including the office of the Commander-in-Chief, is absolutely ludicrous.

We can get as legalistic as we like, playing shithouse lawyer for those who consistently enjoy that journalistic "presumption of good will and good faith," but we are trying to unearth the truth. Truth does not confine itself to the law; and these people have sacrificed—by their actions over the last three-and-a-half years—any entitlement to presumptions of good faith or good will. Exactly the contrary.

Pat Tillman was killed in three wars, and falsified in two. There was the Energy War in Southwest Asia, where he was employed

as a soldier on both fronts, Iraq and Afghanistan. There was a bureaucratic war of careers, and there was a political war of legitimacy. Fratricide happens in warfare, far more often than any non-combatant can ever know. So fratricide remains part of the shooting war—in this case, the Energy War. You can be killed by it, but not falsified—that is, misrepresented—by it.

Readers have now been duly inoculated against legalism, the presumption of good will and good faith, and the Disingenuous Boss Syndrome as it applies to Donald Rumsfeld and his subordinates.

In the next edition of this investigative series, we will look at one pivotal falsification: “game planning” the crisis.

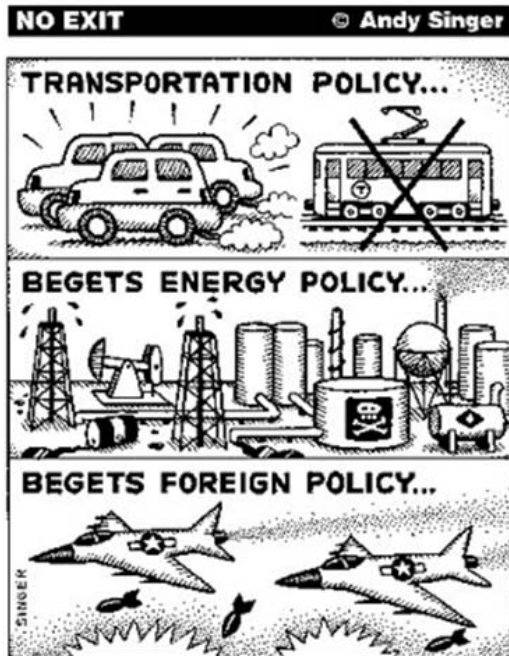
(“Peak Traffic, Part 1” cont’d from page 2)

The Highway Industrial Complex

"Above all, it is the young who succumb to this magic. They experience the triumph of the motorcar with the full temperament of their impressionable hearts. It must be seen as a sign of the invigorating power of our people that they give themselves with such fanatic devotion to this invention, an invention which provides the basis and structure of our modern traffic."
- Adolf Hitler

American way of life (AWOL): a method of consuming non-renewable resources that Vice President Dick Cheney says is "not negotiable."
- [Permatopia Dictionary](#)

Since World War II, car culture has transformed the literal and political maps of North America. The many impacts of identical sprawlvilles from coast to coast are well documented in countless reports, books, and documentaries, and the spread of these homogenous exurbs is a core part of the spiritual crisis our society faces at the end of the era of cheap oil.



Highway construction is a key part of the wealth-transfer scheme called “the economy.” Road expansion unites powerful interests, including real estate speculators, developers, road construction, sand and gravel mining, and lending institutions. In most communities in North America, these elites are the financial sponsors of local politicians who make zoning and planning decisions to build new highways and the associated development.

In the U.S, nearly all large highways are built with federal transportation funds, and are usually supported by a coalition of federal, state and local governments. However, controversial federal aid highways can be approved over local government objections, and there are cases where the federal government is split about a proposal (usually if there are major environmental or legal problems).

If a highway violates too many federal laws, the Federal Highway Administration may decide not to approve a road project even if local governments are vocal supporters (since the FHWA is the agency that gets sued, not local governments who contribute very little toward construction but gain all of the benefits).

Multiple Bypass Surgery

The interstate highway system was created in the 1950s, part of a “National Defense” network promoted by President Eisenhower as a military necessity for moving troops and equipment (similar to the Autobahn network built in Nazi Germany).

This massive construction was a consequence of the conspiracy between General Motors, Firestone Tire, and Standard Oil to destroy public transit systems in over 100 cities (partly a result of these companies using their war profits to transform the civilian economy). A websearch on “streetcar conspiracy” will retrieve numerous articles that document this part of American history.

Ironically, the United States is now spending billions to build new light rail and street car networks in cities from coast to coast—if the rails had been left intact, American cities would not be as car dependent, a tragic mistake that will make coping with Peak Oil much more difficult.

The interstates quickly became fuel for generating vast areas of car-dependent suburbs that created a “donut” form of development, turning some inner cities into semi-abandoned areas.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of many who decried the inherent racism of these road schemes. In his speech “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,” delivered on March 31, 1968, King said, “These forty million [poor] people are invisible because America is so affluent, so rich; because our expressways carry us away from the ghetto, we don’t see the poor.” It is surreal that numerous highways are now named after someone who criticized the “white flight” fueled by freeways.

During the peak of the civil rights struggle in Washington, D.C., a rallying cry of opponents who spent a decade to stop Interstate 95 from tearing through the inner city was “No White Men’s Roads Through Black Men’s Homes.” An article that explores this history is [“Interview with a Freeway Fighter.”](#)

Cities that had public campaigns to stop the building of highways include: Boston, San Francisco, Memphis, Toronto (Canada), Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, Portland (OR), Eugene (OR), and Pasadena (CA).

In the wake of the 1960s explosion of freeway fighting, few new major highways were proposed. The focus of many transportation agencies was to complete projects proposed in the 1950s, which were delayed by the rise of citizen activism and increasing construction costs (especially after the 1973 Saudi oil embargo).

In the 1990s, there was a resurgence of plans for new freeways. Several major upgrades to the interstate system were unveiled to help implement the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), building new and expanded north-south trucking routes between Canada and Mexico. Metastasizing metropolitan areas also made new plans for megaroads, since outer suburbs require more asphalt per capita and are more car dependent than urban cores or inner suburbs built during the street car era (early 1900s).

NAFTA Superhighways: Bush, Clinton, Bush

The NAFTA superhighway concept was first included in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA). ISTEA was enacted two years before the NAFTA treaty was passed by a Democratic controlled Congress. ISTEA included numerous new and expanded north-south interstate highways to facilitate increased truck traffic between Canada and Mexico, plus dozens of other projects to benefit the highway lobby, national distributors such as Wal-Mart, and spreading suburban sprawl. This was George H. W. Bush's highway law.

ISTEA's expansion of the highway network was followed by the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which funneled even more pork dollars for bypasses and NAFTA superhighways. Bill Clinton signed TEA-21 into law.

George W. Bush's turn at the public trough was Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), an even larger expansion than ISTEA or TEA-21.

The full extent of these expansions has received very little public scrutiny, even from most groups that do not want more roads. It is odd that [amateur enthusiasts](#) who like freeways and want more of them have done a better job of tracking the expansion of the national highway network than the environmental groups. For example, the [Sierra Club's transportation web-site](#) is an excellent resource of the social and environmental impacts from highways' "induced demand" (building more roads creates more traffic jams), and why public transit is beneficial—but the Sierra Club and their allies do not highlight the new superhighway network that is the largest part of these transportation appropriations.

This map from the Federal Highway Administration shows new and expanded highways proposed in ISTEA and TEA-21. Corridor

18 is the proposed extension of Interstate 69, perhaps the most prominent "NAFTA superhighway" project. Highway boosters in Indiana campaigning to extend I-69 from Indianapolis to Kentucky convinced their allies in other states to band together to make an integrated NAFTA superhighway proposal a national priority to ensure federal funding for their segment. The 2005 SAFETEA-LU law has 80 priority corridors—a massive highway expansion on the cusp of Peak Oil.

Limited Hang Out: "Inter-modal" Transportation

ISTEA was sold to the national environmental groups as a multi-modal transportation bill, funding not just new and wider roads but also public transit systems and bicycle/pedestrian improvements. ISTEA did appropriate billions for subways, light rail, buses and required that each State Department of Transportation had to include pedestrian and bicycle issues. Much of the literature from these groups made ISTEA seem like an effort to ensure that every community would have bicycle lanes and effective public transit, while ignoring the fact that most of the money went toward roads.

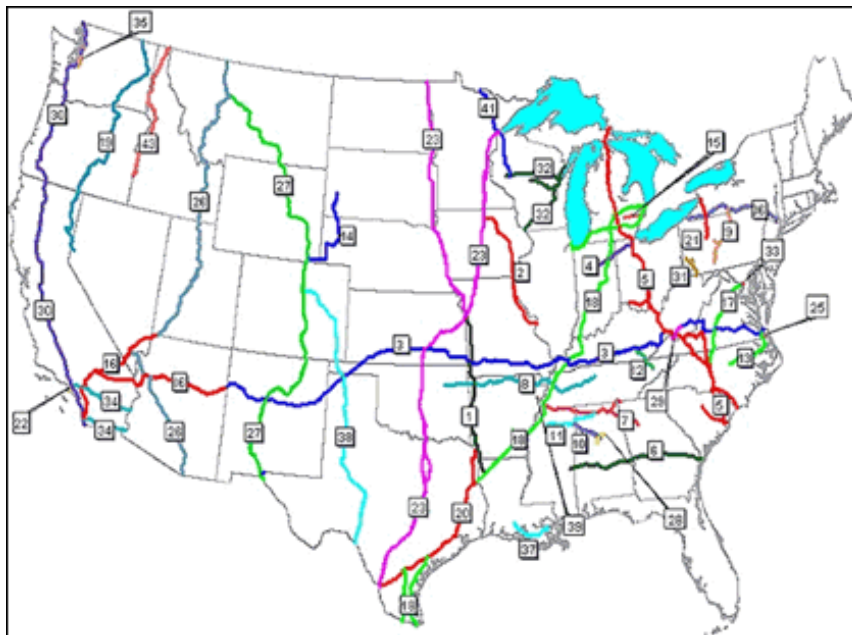
TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act, was also marketed as an environmental improvement by most environmental groups. However, the "Equity" did not refer to choice between transportation modes, but to funding levels between the States.

Despite these lopsided funding levels (roads vs. transit), most national environmental groups rallied behind the meager improvements in ISTEA and TEA-21 and ignored the embedded NAFTA superhighway proposals. Many of these organizations are dependent on grants from foundations invested in destructive industries. This dynamic is similar to the ["left gatekeepers" phenomenon](#) that has kept the liberal "alternative" media from examining issues such as the coup against President Kennedy and the [war games](#) on 9/11 that confused the air defenses over Washington and New York.

The "inter-modal" emphasis was effective at splitting environmentalists between those who are appeased by inclusion of a bike path along a new highway and those with a holistic perspective who want a paradigm shift.

An example of the compromising approach is a recent action alert from the [Washington Area Bicyclist Association](#) urging its members to demand inclusion of a bicycle path along the proposed \$3 billion Inter County Connector superhighway in Maryland. This campaign did not express solidarity with the many environmental and community groups who have spent years

(and decades) in opposition to this enormously destructive project, but focused solely on the side-issue of whether this new segment of the Washington Outer Beltway would have a token parallel bike route or not.





Interstate 84 in Portland, Oregon: six lanes of freeway traffic plus the MAX Light Rail line. The traffic on I-84 is helping to melt the polar ice caps, but at least commuters in this area have a choice of transportation options. (The electricity to run the train is generated by a blend of hydropower, coal, natural gas, nuclear power and wind.)

Environmentalism Myopia

The environmental movement has largely ignored the ecological implications of Peak Oil, despite the fact the solutions to finite fossil fuels and climate change are intertwined and nearly identical.

An example of environmentalist refusal to incorporate Peak Oil into their analyses is the "Region 2040" program in Portland, Oregon. This long-term-planning effort grew out of the "[Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality \(LUTRAQ\)](#)" initiative, one of the more famous examples of "progressive" land use planning. LUTRAQ was an effort that successfully stopped a proposed freeway bypass by showing that a new rail line, combined with land-use shifts to encourage transit-oriented development, was superior to the highway for traffic mitigation and air quality levels. Region 2040 and LUTRAQ are improvements over the traditional suburbia development model, but their omission of Peak Oil suggest they are going to be irrelevant long before the year 2040.

Environmental perspectives are desperately needed to challenge centralized energy conglomerates' proposals for a revival of nuclear power, so-called "clean coal," oil drilling in wilderness regions, and conversion of farmland and forests to biofuel production. These destructive practices are unlikely to be stopped as long we cling to the assumption that we can continue to have endless growth.

Smart Growth Versus Sustainability

"You will change nothing until you change the way that money works."

-- M. King Hubbert, author of the mathematical model to predict Peak Oil

Sustainability refers to practices that can be continued generation after generation. This word has been co-opted by polluters trying to confuse the public to ensure continued unsustainable

extraction, the basis of the modern industrial economic paradigm.

Sustainability does not mean nice words or good intentions—it refers to practices that your great-great-great-grandchildren will still be able to do once the oil is gone. By that standard, virtually no one in North America is living "sustainably," with the exception of Amish and some Native American/First Nations communities.

Most of the best practices marketed as "sustainable" are merely efficiency. A 100 mile-per-gallon car is an efficient use of non-renewable petroleum, but it is not sustainable. Most forms of renewable energy are a means of using non-renewable resources (oil for plastics and transport, minerals) to capture sunlight, wind, etc. It is hard to envision a successful transition from our current industrial paradigm to true sustainability, but honesty is critical for designing any successful outcomes.

"Smart Growth," sometimes called "Sustainable Growth," is another mantra of pseudo-environmentalism. This oxymoronic slogan ignores the realities of overpopulation and overconsumption.

The first politician to use the term "Smart Growth" was Maryland Governor Parris Glendening (1994-2002), a Democrat. In 1997, he embraced the term at the height of his campaign to promote construction of the Inter County Connector (ICC) superhighway, part of the long-planned Outer Beltway around Washington. This policy claimed to refocus public subsidies away from sprawling outer suburbs to reinvest in urban areas, but it also allowed connector roads between designated growth areas—a loophole large enough for the entire Outer Beltway. "Smart Growth" was embraced by the foundation-funded environmental groups but scorned by grassroots organizers who saw it as a distraction from the Governor's superhighway plans. This "greenwash" (the false claim of environmentalism) did not succeed in approving the project, since in 1998 the FHWA quietly concluded that the ICC would not withstand a legal challenge, and the approval process stalled.

"Smart Growth" is an example of how highway funds are used for social engineering. The Glendening plan directed public subsidies toward the most urban parts of the State which are the most Democratic constituencies. In contrast, outer suburb-edge cities and rural areas are more Republican and use more gasoline per capita than Democratic. Oil consumption is a variable that shows whether a community is more likely to vote for the D's or for the R's.

In 2006, former Governor Glendening is now president of the [Smart Growth Leadership Institute](#) and a board member of [Smart Growth America](#), a national coalition of organizations advocating alternatives to urban sprawl. If the Democrats are allowed to take over the White House in 2008, look for Glendening to take a key post promoting "Smart Growth."

The current Republican governor of Maryland revived the ICC, and the Bush administration made it a national priority (since it would connect military and intelligence contractors throughout the Washington area with key federal facilities, especially Fort Meade, home to the National Security Agency). As of April 2006, the FHWA is about to approve the ICC and environmental group's plan to sue in order to block construction through parks and neighborhoods.

New Land Use and Economic Paradigms Needed

Most who promote "Smart Growth" have good intentions, but this paradigm is an inadequate examination, since it only looks at personal transportation issues and ignores many of the other ecological impacts of cities. Whether people live in apartment buildings served by public transit or dispersed edge cities, they use the same amount of energy to grow and transport the food they eat. Dense urban areas have an ecological "footprint" that is many times larger than the size of its metropolitan region, and require the extraction of raw materials needed to keep the City fed, lit, heated and economically vibrant.

"Smart Growth" won't do much to keep metropolitan areas fed after the peak of petroleum is past. It might keep some farmland near cities from being paved—but urban agriculture will be needed to address food shortages in the future—which is in contradiction to "Smart Growth's" insistence on greater density in cities. It's hard to have community gardens when cities get too dense, although rooftop gardens are a practical way to supplement urban diets.

A new form of urban planning is needed to integrate transportation and land-use planning with ecological footprint analyses. Most ecological efforts to reduce car use and create more livable cities have stressed density as a solution to the transportation crisis, but overbuilt neighborhoods still require lots of delivery trucks bringing in food from distant farms. A genuine solution would balance neighborhood density, intelligent urban design, converting lawns and parking lots to gardens and other efforts to make cities become more locally oriented in their consumption.

Steady state economics are a prerequisite for any sensible strategy to achieve a harmonious balance with the natural world to plan beyond the era of cheap oil. M. King Hubbert pointed out that the solutions required abandoning the economic paradigm of growth and shifting toward steady state economics. Several articles about this are [linked to permatopia.com](http://linked.to/permatopia.com).

One analogy for a steady state economy is an old-growth forest ecosystem. A definition of a mature forest is a system where growth and decay are in balance. The total tonnage of biomass may remain consistent in a given area, but life continues to be dynamic for individual species. A forest in balance is still a dynamic place for the mouse being eaten by an owl, or for a sapling feeding on the soil created by trees that fell over decades ago.

"Smart Growth" cannot solve exponential growth, overshoot, Peak Oil, and other resource depletions. "Smart Growth" is riding First Class on the Titanic, ecological destruction with good taste.

In nature, endless growth is the ideology of the cancer cell. A truly sustainable society would mimic natural processes, since we live on a finite planet and must change our politics, economics, and psychology to adjust to this reality.

LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO THE ENERGY DILEMMA

**April 27, 28, 29, 2006
New York City**

by
**Jamey Hecht, Ph.D.
Senior Staff Writer**

May 10, 2006 0800 – PST – (FTW) - NEW YORK CITY - Three days of brilliance and data are too much for one writer to summarize, but I'll survey some highlights of the recent "Local Solutions" conference with special emphasis on relocalization.

The program included several heavy-hitters: James Howard Kunstler critiqued America's obese complacency; Derrick Jensen railed against the rape of the planet; David Pimentel performed his devastating review of the ethanol boondoggle; Matt Savinar ventured into psychohistory and sociobiology with remarks on instinct and group cohesion; and Catherine Austin Fitts showed the way our economic system drains people and neighborhoods (i.e., by allowing predatory elites to flush wealth out of the community and into offshore accounts through a system of narcotrafic and massive global money-laundering, government fraud, and dirty tricks). She offered a solution in the form of the www.solari.com model of community investment, along with sound advice on precious metals, banking, and local stock issuance.

[Philip Botwinick](http://Philip.Botwinick) organized this conference, and it's particularly heartening to FTW that he came to Peak Oil awareness from Crossing the Rubicon. Indeed, the first day of the conference unfolded at the Community Church on 35th and Madison, a Unitarian Universalist venue that had been the site of some of the 9/11 Truth movement's major events in years past. New York City is one of the more Peak Oil-aware locations in the country, partly because the attacks spurred people to look for the real reasons for false-flag terror and flag-waving war, and partly because of the efforts of conference emcee Dan Miner. Dan leads the www.peakoilnyc.com meetup group, where he leads discussions on scarcity, crash, and sustainability.



7 members of the FTW staff attended the NY Local Solutions Conference. L to R: Jamey Hecht, Monica Psomas, Jenna Orkin, Carolyn Baker, Michael Kane, Dmitry Orlov. Mike's the guy on his knee (as it should be!).

New York was not only the venue, it was also the subject of a three-person panel on the relocalization of the whole State. Jon Bosak had to follow the literary fireworks of James Howard Kunstler, to whom he acknowledged an intellectual debt. But he carried it off with aplomb: Bosak is the leader of a major relocalization

[effort in the Tompkins County area](#) around Ithaca, New York that is host to 100,000 people. He urged that the *county* is the ideal level for sustainability planning, far smaller than the State but large enough to include the relationships among cooperating towns. Relocalization is *local* in that every place has its unique challenges and strengths. Bosak gave excellent advice for the persuasion of county officials and local businesspeople:

- Use the [Hirsch Report](#)—that crucial SAIC document [which has been so strangely absent from public discourse](#) in these days of \$3.50 per-gallon gasoline. It is official, quantitative, and essentially uncontroversial; and it predicts a Great Depression over the next twenty years, without venturing into the uncertain territory beyond the crash itself.
- Include some description of climate change effects.
- Present the oncoming crash in terms of prices, rather than directly warning of a breakdown in essential services. Few people can readily contemplate empty supermarket shelves, but everyone can imagine prohibitive prices.
- Don't use the word "relocalization" in your group's name, or people will misread it as "relocation."
- Present the enormity of fossil fuel inputs in the green revolution, but don't go on to point out the implications for mass starvation. Those who make the logical connection on their own are usually the few who can tolerate it.
- In general, present the new world as a plethora of business opportunities for productive and commercial activity at the local level, emphasizing local strengths (such as the canal waterways of upstate New York).
- In developing documents and software tools, arrange for responsible crediting of intellectual property and licensing. Bosak closed with a plea for clearly focused charts and graphics about Peak Oil and natural gas with a clear permissions policy.

Melissa Everett, author of [Making a Living While Making a Difference](#), added crucial pieces to the New York State picture. She represents [Sustainable Hudson Valley](#), which services a vast area currently home to 2.2 million people. The Valley's labor situation is grim, with major layoffs by IBM and other big employers whose industrial spaces were vacated and left idle. Economic development policy was dedicated to gratifying such corporations for so long that when they left, nobody knew what to do:

They were cutting down the area's last significant urban forest to create an industrial park on a hill-top in the middle of the city, for one tenant. And ten years later, most of that industrial park is still vacant, and the surrounding remnants of forest are still threatened with development. We simply did not know how to have the discussion about the forest as an asset, and about tens of thousands of square feet of industrial capacity being vacated by IBM, while the local government could legally and with impunity be building new [industrial] space. How can we have this conversation with the responsible agencies at the county level? We're not trying to just create employment or purchasing power; we're trying to meet basic human needs regarding economic activity, like food security and energy security. Those are things that economic planners are just not used to planning, and that's why these models are so important. Make them see that a forest is not a resource to be consumed, but an asset to be preserved.

This was the theme of Derrick Jensen's talk near the confer-

ence's close; from his perspective, the very word "resource" implies consumption, waste, and destruction. Jensen's material hasn't changed much in three years, and everything he said was familiar to me from his previous speeches and writings. But his work has such emotional power that it was worth the ticket to see it live. I found his message rather frustrating, since his excruciating focus on the pain of eco-devastation leads straight to warrior activism that he can't possibly be doing without landing in prison. Jensen's radicalism makes it impossible to honor his eloquence on its own terms, since it's ultimately all talk. This is talk that all but exhorts us to go out and bomb the ecologically disastrous system of river dams that have decimated wild salmon populations and kept the Colorado from reaching the sea. "Whatever it takes" is the motto. If you want an emotionally raw appreciation of the depth and scale of the ecological harm we do, you can't go wrong with Jensen. But he had little of the humble pragmatism I heard from the relocalization panel. His job is not so much to help build lifeboats as to help people think about the dark truth without feeling alone or crazy. He does that job well.

Returning to the New York State panel—it closed with a bracing talk on climate change from the legendary eco-pioneer [Albert Bates](#), author of ten books and a plethora of articles on sustainable design, permaculture, climate change, and other subjects. His first graphic showed three warming scenarios from the [IPCC](#) with an alarming mark showing the current levels of atmospheric CO₂. We're in even worse shape than the worst scenario predicted. Sea levels tend to rise abruptly, not gradually; the ice shelves don't have to melt, they need only break off into the water and the coastal areas will be flooded. There followed a series of terrifying charts with Calcutta, Shanghai, London, New York, and Florida inundated by the waters that made them such attractive locations for human settlement in the first place.

Bates explained that relocalization of services will not only offset fuel depletion, it will radically reduce the annual carbon load added to the ecosystem. A graphic showed the Dutch city of Delft, circa 1660, with its 1:1:1 ratio of green-space to water to buildings. That kind of public planning may be a nearly impossible dream in many areas, but we can still take small steps forward:

Taking a survival course is a way of building up your spirits. You become prepared for meeting your own food and water needs, health and shelter and energy needs for a few days. One ought to have a three day survival kit. We've learned from Katrina and Rita that civilization as we know it is illusory; that social structures can disappear; that people have become very dependent on those social structures external to their own personal preparations. They need to store food and prepare medical kits and meet their neighbors.

Bates comes from [The Farm](#), a four-generation ecovillage where paved land was reclaimed (much in the manner now advocated by Jan Lundberg and the [depaving movement](#)). "It takes a while to learn how to make soil," Bates explained, "but once you learn how to make soil you can make food." He recommended soy in particular, because its natural ability to fix nitrogen eliminates the need for natural gas-derived nitrogen fertilizers. He ended with encouraging statistics on the growth of the intentional community movement in the U.S. and worldwide.

Listeners to the wit and wisdom of Dmitry Orlov need all the encouragement they can get, as his depiction of the American predicament is very dark indeed. It's also a highly structured

argument about America's susceptibility to a rapid, cascading breakdown of social and economic services. His presentation's main points were articulated for *FTW* subscribers a year ago in three brilliant installments:

- [Post-Soviet Lessons for a Post-American Century, Part One](#)
- [Post-Soviet Lessons for a Post-American Century, Part Two](#)
- [Post-Soviet Lessons for a Post-American Century, Part Three](#)



Russian writer and analyst Dmitry Orlov delivers a haunting analysis comparing the collapse of the Soviet Empire with the pending collapse of the American Empire.

Dmitry has also posted [the slides from his presentation](#). The slides have a brutal truth-telling character that makes them almost artistic. For example:

Closing the Collapse Gap

Post-collapse environment – what comes next?

- New subsistence/barter economy emerges almost immediately.
- Old capital – stocks, bonds, capital equipment, cash – all worthless. Connections, favors, access to supplies – prove to be of abiding value.
- Asset stripping: assets dismantled and reused, stockpiled, or sold as scrap. Many items of value exported (especially art objects, antiques, scientific and industrial equipment)
- Elements of organized crime, former military, and former law enforcement meld into new power structures (very messy).

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Julian Darley described the origins of [www.globalpublicmedia.com](#) and the [Post Carbon Institute](#), then reminded us of their terrible importance: “We need something to integrate and coordinate, which is the job government should do but generally doesn’t do...Civilizations are built on surplus (of food, energy, and so forth). We’re finding out what happens when surplus disappears and how things like democracy can continue without it.” Darley wisely urged the audience to read one of the great (if underrated) texts of the last hundred years, William Catton’s 1982 book [Overshoot](#). That book includes the haunting parable of the [reindeer herd on St. Matthew’s Island](#). Jay Hanson’s

seminal, [www.dieoff.com](#), built on Catton’s work, as does the whole sustainability movement, since the concept of “carrying capacity” took on its full significance with *Overshoot*. Without using haunting words like “dieoff,” the cool dignity of Darley’s presentation kept his listeners focused on the big troubles ahead while remaining connected to the PCI’s hopeful mission. He distinguished between “plans,” whose fragility has been aptly pointed out by Mike Ruppert, and “planning,” an ongoing fluid process of adaptation like the tacking of a sailboat in unpredictable winds. Relocalization is a planning-driven process that includes: production near housing, small businesses with short supply chains, community interdependence with cooperative resource sharing, and local renewable energy production.

After the geopolitical drama of [Michael Klare’s](#) presentation, I spoke with [William Clark](#), author of *Petrodollar Warfare*:

JAH: When the Unocal crisis was going, we had the impression at *FTW* that the reason the Chinese were so motivated to buy that company was because acquiring hard assets—like US corporations and real estate—is a way of dumping dollars while getting something concrete in return.

WC: Yes, getting some goods and services in return on IOU’s. The Chinese are trying to build up their strategic petroleum reserve, which is about 1 billion barrels. Multiply that by \$70 / bbl, and that’s 70 billion dollars they can get rid of by buying a bunch of oil. So they’re stockpiling stuff, investing in tar sands and gold mines in Canada, concrete and copper and so on. And most of those Chinese transactions are being done in dollars, not in yuan. But they have to pay Iran in euros.

JAH: And Japan? Because of their strategic relationship to the US, or their political bondage to the US, they seem stuck with their dollar reserves.

WC: If we go down, they’re gonna go down. They were the largest purchaser of US Treasury bills until China surpassed them last year. Japan and the US are strongly linked; if either economy goes down, the other comes down too.

JAH: When do you think Britain will adopt the euro?

WC: At the last possible opportunity, when a crisis drives them to it.

JAH: It seems the dollar has lost 95% of its value since 1913. If the remaining 5% is locked in only by the petrodollar, is there reason to expect that oil exporting countries—including Russia—might convert to the euro in a concerted effort to cause a run on the dollar?

WC: They don’t want to upset the apple cart. But they might be willing to overturn the apple cart if Bush invades Iran, or bombs Iran. That may be enough to piss off the Chinese and the Russians to such a degree that they say, “You guys are unsafe and unstable; you’ve got a ridiculous military; we each signed a hundred million dollar deal with

the Iranians..." How would we like it if the Chinese bombed Canada, or Mexico? They allowed us to do it to their investments in Iraq, but they didn't join us and they're watching us die by a thousand cuts. They're waiting us out.

JAH: Hoping to buy up the assets of a fallen US for pennies on the dollar.

WC: Right. And the dollar is falling against gold, and against oil, and against other major currencies—against everything, really.

JAH: Is there anything the US government can do about it, other than endless rate hikes?

WC: They could repeal the tax cuts of 2001. If we wanted to restore the dollar's value we would repeal the tax cuts, curb our military spending, balance the budget—and foreign investors know that. A currency is only as good as the ability of its government to collect taxes from its citizens. Foreign investors say, "Well, they don't care about fiscal discipline anymore, so this currency has to go down because they can't possibly repay this stuff." We passed tax cuts in the middle of the Iraq War. I've looked through history and I can't find a single incident in which a country reduced its tribute revenues or its taxation in time of war.

JAH: Well, like many things this administration and its allies have done, that practice—of reducing taxes in the middle of a war—is so irrational on its face that it makes you wonder if it is rational in the pursuit of a very different aim. It may be that they're deliberately destroying America.

WC: I don't subscribe to that; I think it's purely ideological and political. I think they believe it will get them elected and keep them in power with tax cuts. Reagan did it and he got away with it.

JAH: I have to ask you about the Iranian oil bourse. You mentioned a figure of 29% of world oil production moving through that bourse.

WC: That's their long-term ceiling, they said. It should take years for them to reach that level. It's supposed to open up in the middle of 2006, but they're not putting a date down. They're finding trouble getting enough resources. All the infrastructure's there, the buildings are there, the IT's there, the legal system's there, you have French Total set up on [Kish Island](#); [Shell set up there, which is Anglo-Dutch](#); [Italy's AGIP](#); [BP set up there](#); and a whole lot of international [European banks](#). So all this groundwork is being laid, but it doesn't seem that there are enough resources yet to make it work.

JAH: By "resources" you mean money?

WC: I don't think it's the money, because the Parliament completely backs it, and the President of Iran supposedly backs it, too. They need people

who are highly trained in how to construct futures deals and oil contracts. And most of the people who are trained in that work in New York, or they work in London. I think it's a resource issue. A human resource issue.

JAH: Perhaps the Central Intelligence Agency is interested in the human resource issue at the always-imminent Iranian Oil Bourse.

On April 24th Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri Hamaneh said the IOB would be opening "[next week](#)." On May 5th the Iranian President said it would open "[within the next two months](#)." While Iran's own feasibility study has greenlighted the project, critics—like Ann Berg, in [this compelling review of the challenges besetting the proposed bourse](#)—argue that futures trading has its own unique fiscal and legal requirements which Iran will be hard-pressed to meet. Time will tell.

Geopolitical fireworks are the stock-in-trade of our Editor-in-Chief, and there were plenty of fireworks in Mike Ruppert's speech, "[THE PARADIGM IS THE ENEMY: The State of the Peak Oil Movement at the Cusp of Collapse](#)." The speech has three sections, dealing with energy, economics, and the movement, though elements of each are seeded throughout. We learn that the dollar is in deep trouble, and that the slope and timing of its collapse depend largely on the goodwill of the creditors America routinely insults. We learn that Peak Oil has definitely come and gone, with the gap between supply and demand opening its jaws wider every day. And we're advised that we should use all the tools at our disposal to help prepare those who wish to prepare. No effort need be wasted convincing skeptics or lobbying for large scale changes from a government owned and operated by doomed petroleum companies. From its independent media to the outposts of the Post Carbon Institute, the movement's response to Peak Oil must remain proactive, local, and thoroughly pragmatic.

I haven't mentioned great presentations by Dale Allen Pfeiffer, John Ikerd, John Howe, Steve Andrews, and many others. I haven't evoked the thrill of the new documentary from Community Solution, "[The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil](#)," or the new trailer for "[Escape From Suburbia](#)," a sequel to the hit "End of Suburbia" from Greg Greene, Barry Silverthorn, and Dara Rowland. But I hope I have conveyed some of the intellectual excitement, emotional sustenance, communal goodwill, and cultural fortitude that made this conference great. Apologies to those whose fine work I neglected, and thanks to all for an informative three days.

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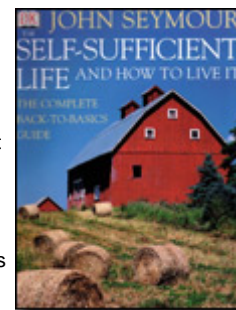
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YELLOW STARS and RED FLAGS

by
Scott McGuire

'Twas in another lifetime, one of toil and blood
when blackness was a virtue, the road was made of mud
I came in from the wilderness, a creature void of form
Come in, she said, I'll give you shelter from the storm.
-Bob Dylan

April 25, 2006 0900 PST – (FTW) - **T**rying to convince family members to take action regarding Peak Oil is like telling Jews they had better leave Germany while they had time before Hitler hit his psycho goose-stepping stride. I'm sure there were visionaries in those communities who could paint the picture of where all those little yellow stars were headed. They were able to see the writing on the wall and were able to rally their resources and place their families out of harm's way.

Maybe they only made it to Poland, not quite far enough. Maybe they made it across some allied border, or by plane or by boat or by foot, somehow got away. Of course, many were so poor they could not, but my point is for those who *would* not. Ripping up roots is a radical choice to make; how many more would have chosen to flee if they knew Buchenwald was their next option?

Either way, it took an extreme level of awareness to perceive that threat accurately, and then it took a profound level of courage to act on that perception in a way that counted. When we look back on that dark chapter of history, we tend to focus on the Holocaust, the horrors that happened to those left behind. Yet we must also learn from the stories of those who dodged that bullet, the ones who got away.

Right now, we are all in a similar situation regarding our energy addictions. All the signs are there and are even easier to see, some would say; after all, the writing is now on websites instead of walls. We have a window of opportunity right now to take such drastic actions as if our lives depended on it, and they do. But we can't see out the window if we refuse to pull the blinders; we'll keep pretending there is no window, and we can see just fine by these new energy-efficient light bulbs, thank you anyway.

I just recently returned from San Diego where I helped my wife's family bury her sister's husband who died suddenly at 48. All her brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and parents live within an hour of each other. She and I are the only ones of the clan who have chosen to live more than one county away, way up north in another state.

We also live in another state of mind; long ago we rejected the burgeoning millions surrounding my wife's "home town," including the crime, pollution, and the lack of any realistic context for self-sufficiency, which is something we value now and forever as a condition for a life worth living. We're not outcasts—we remain beloved by all—but we are outsiders to family members who feel personally rejected because we choose not to raise our kids with theirs in environments we judge to be insane. They'd rather imagine we think *they* are insane.

Do they ever come right out and say so? No, it oozes out in weird ways. And in my recent experience of death in the family, there is nothing weirder than grief. The ways people grieve are all over the map—let's just say there's lots of subconscious acting out; the social graces are the first to wear thin under crazy stress. Unspoken family dynamics find a voice; hoarse, choked and bitter, at times even without words, but the sound is unmistakable.

Underneath the grief are the pressing practicalities. Now that Buddy's gone, can we keep the house? Who will take care of little Lulu while mommy's at work? Can we even afford our life anymore? What kind of life can there be anyway without our Papa? At the worst of emotional times come profound questions of upheaval and change: What the hell are we going to do now?

You might think it would be simpler or more prudent to contemplate these questions *before* we experience a wrenching dislocation of the bones—fractures compounded by grief and loss. Certainly it would be easier to accomplish profound changes in our lives before such drastic motivations present themselves.

Talking to these relatives about Peak Oil has about the same effect as trying to get Uncle Buddy to quit smoking. Instead of warmth, embrace, and bonding, there's more distance, alienation, rejection, and a wider gap between love and acceptance. Why is it we catch so much of the latter while we're living, and only find the former at the funeral?

On one level, we all know we're going to die, yet how many of us make friends with death and use that awareness to mold the way we live each day? Must we experience the death of a loved one to re-frame our love for the living?

The topic of Peak Oil is a death sentence. Death to our addicted way of life, death to our food supply, death to the summer road trip, death to the carpool, the recycling center and fitness gym. At the very least, it is death to the immediate conversation. Hmm, how 'bout them Padres?

The whole subject gets misinterpreted as a personal judgment made against those in the "mainstream" by those who adopt "alternative lifestyles." To those whose glasses are red and blue, the world they see is NOT purple, but more us and them. You're either with us or against us, and there's not a whole lot of ground to cover in-between.

When we're all under "normal" amounts of stress, most of us maintain at least a veneer of civility, which means we bury controversial stuff and talk about the weather and sports. Yet when the stressors spike, the cracks begin to show, the truth comes out, rocky and raw and ready to snap at the first perceived threat. And perceptions through the lens of grief, even without the red and blue shades, are foggy at best.

Telling my family in San Diego that they live in the belly of the beast (no matter how it's phrased) and ought to get the hell out and not just think about it, is a condemnation of all they hold dear. I can easily come across as a condescending, paranoid whacko, "liberal," and worse.

I want to spare them the deep grief of getting caught in the cross-hairs of ignorant energy policies made by people they trust. But they hear it as grief-lite, as if I was giving them grief for littering. No matter how kind or delicate or articulate I attempt to be, they hear me calling them idiots—fools for trusting their government

any longer, and stooges for expecting their grocery store to be in business when their kids are teenagers (oh puleeze). Osama is the real threat, and oil addiction is the phantom, instead of vice versa.

Denial is a powerful force within an addiction. In a nation of oil addicts, the force of Kunstler's "consensus trance" reaches the realms of the surreal. Maybe it's even weirder than grief. Maybe it takes some deep grief to shatter the denial packages that keep us from hearing the inevitable jackboot march of history into our lives.

Peak Oil means death to the idea of the red, white, and blue; death to the illusion that "our" government works the way civics classes used to claim. There's more than enough credible evidence that "our" government has become the tool of a very rich and powerful mafia. Yet most of us pretend to be Carmella while Tony calls the shots from a bunker under the Oval office.

It means death to all our life support systems. It means dealing with the fact that the modern American way of life is dead already while we refuse to even notice its shortness of breath, the sweat on its wrinkled brow, the trembling voice. But what about my career, my college education? Poke somebody's hopes and dreams with a stick and you'll wake up some resentment, at the very least.

Telling people about Peak Oil amounts to telling them they are already dead—their identities have been made null and void—their jobs, their sports teams, their pensions. How do we effectively communicate a notion that implies their whole world? Whether pimps or Protestants, crackheads or Christians, it's all dust; pack it up and head for the hills—whatever hills may remain without condos.

"The end is near" was a cliché long ago. Someone has always preached doom-and-gloom, and it's usually a bearded guy with a sign. It's easier to dismiss the messenger out-of-hand than to take his message to heart and to find out if he's a prophet or a freak. Who in their right mind contemplates the fulfillment of a cartoon?

Nobody wants to grieve loss-of-life in the fast-lane before it dies, before they read the conclusive obituary. We'd rather pretend the body (of people) will wake up from its coma ("what coma," they say?) and peace and prosperity will return as if by magic to God's Promised Land. Sorry, but it's time to bury the body, pick up the pieces, and move on. America IS Terri Schiavo, yet how many people still don't have a living will, and Schiavo's story was in the news for weeks.

If you keep smoking, you'll die before your time. This is widely known, yet smokers keep dying early. So now here comes Peak Oil, a point of view easily pigeon-holed as wildly apocalyptic, and without the under-pinning hope of a savior figure. It's a tough and bitter nut to chew—you want me to swallow and digest it too? Fuggetaboutit.

It's not that people wouldn't want to know this most-logical analysis of where all our juice really comes from. It's that if they knew, really knew, then it would require them to completely abandon the life they have worked so hard to build. And from a threat so vague and under-reported, we might as well quit our jobs because of "terrorists."

Give it up or have it taken away. Maybe the only way we'll give it up is to become convinced that it *will* be taken away. And that will take some convincing with all of the powers of articulation we can muster. For some it still won't be enough. It won't ever get *that* bad, will it?

And if I pass this way again, you can rest assured
I'll always do my best for her, on that I give my word
In a world of steel-eyed death and men fighting to be warm
Come in, she said, I'll give you shelter from the storm
-Bob Dylan

"At a certain point for each of us, talk evaporates and words cannot bring love into the open. Only the soul's presence coming from us can attract the soul's presence in others."
-Steven Mankle

Scott McGuire is a plantsman and gardener, as well as a writer and speaker on Peak Oil and sustainability issues. He teaches classes and coaches emergent re-inhabitants on sustainable life skills at his backyard ranch in Ashland, Oregon, and can be reached at www.whitesagegardens.com.

MY GOVERNMENT, MY FAMILY: The Political IS Personal And Painful

by
Carolyn Baker, Ph.D.

April 4, 2006 1300 PST (FTW) - It seems to me that Americans for at least the past six years have been stricken with a collective trance such as I have never witnessed in this country in my lifetime. Psychologist, Paul Levy, in his superb article [Spiritually Informed Political Activism](#) speaks to the necessity of waking up from the spell and speaking the truth about the criminal insanity that is running our nation and our world. He takes this "waking up" many steps further by the end of his article, but for now, I'd like to address the questions: "Why such seemingly impenetrable denial in the American psyche these days? Why are some people almost incapable of awakening?"

On the one hand, we can argue that the economic system is arranged in such a manner that people are required to work two or more jobs in order to survive and are overwhelmed with work, family, and keeping their heads above water. In this case, who has time to read alternative media, research current events, or even read a book? We can also attribute the societal stupor to the remarkable job of dumbing-down that American, so-called education has done in the past two decades so that the current generation can barely read, let alone concentrate long enough to engage with even the most basic works on current issues.

But what if there were something even more fundamental and more human at the root of the collective coma that inflicts American society? What if "my government" in some part of my psyche, has come to represent "my family"? What if it's easier to walk around in glassy-eyed roboticism than feel the pain resulting from comprehending at the deepest level what my government has

become? What if recognizing that I live in an empire that is making war on me as well as my neighbors and the rest of the world is too reminiscent of the family I come from?

Dysfunctional Government/Dysfunctional Family

So what might be some similarities between my dysfunctional government and my dysfunctional family?

First, a family's job is to protect the kid. Maybe it doesn't always pay enough attention to the kid and isn't always there for him when he needs it, but the family doesn't target him as an enemy. When the chips were down, they are the kid's ultimate ally. If I look at what my government is actually doing, I will have to own that it has become my enemy, and that I am its enemy as well—that my safety is the last of its concerns, and that Homeland Security isn't about protecting me but about waiting in the wings to implement martial law or confine me to a forced labor camp [for not paying my debts](#). Furthermore, a healthy family provides basic necessities for a child and doesn't take food out of her mouth. Yet, what we have witnessed in the last six years is all-out warfare not only on the indigent, which really has not changed since the Great Depression, but a concerted effort to obliterate the middle class in America. Peak Oil is about to make all of that much worse.

As agribusiness is allowed to genetically modify foods and ultimately [patent all forms of life](#), as Congressmen introduce legislation to gut all state safety laws that conflict with toothless federal safety laws, as pollution is in the process of annihilating the human race and the ecosystems, as nearly 50 million Americans endure illness without health insurance, as big pharma insists on medicating everything that moves, as every semblance of privacy and individual civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution are shredded—your government, my government, is indeed [eating the chosen people](#). Its sole intent at this point in history is to devour its citizens and anything that threatens to obstruct its voracious expansion of empire.

Well, Okay, but even if my government/family isn't my ally, at least there is the rule of law which keeps things from decompen-sating into utter chaos, right? The best answer to this question comes from former insiders—people who have worked within the centralized systems of law enforcement, finance, the media, and intelligence for example. Mike Ruppert and [Celerino Castillo](#) will tell you that the United States government has gone and continues to go to extraordinary extremes to bring illegal drugs into the country. Former *San Jose Mercury* journalist, [Gary Webb](#), told us in great detail how such operations worked during Iran-Contra. Catherine Austin Fitts has written extensively about her experience in finance and government and has specifically addressed [the myth of the rule of law](#) in relation to some \$4 trillion dollars currently missing from the U.S. government and how [narco dollars](#) are laundered through the U.S. stock market.

America's Love Affair with the Mob

Curious, isn't it, how fascinated Americans seems to have become with organized crime? They live for their weekly "Sopranos" fix, cluelessly unaware of how life imitates the Department of Housing and Urban Development or how [HUD imitates the Sopranos](#). It's "safe" and somewhat titillating to watch "Godfather" re-runs as a series of mafia hits unfold while Michael Corleone (Al Pacino), who ordered them, piously presides over the baptism of his son. "Gee, I don't know anyone like that. It's so 'far' from my world," says the wide-eyed viewer, sucking up the sop of corpo-

rate media which has become just one tentacle of the globalist leviathan whose rapacious extremities comprise the other major institutions of our society: education, government, the intelligence community, the military, centralized financial systems, and organized crime. How fortunate for the criminal enterprise that this government has become that its citizens are mesmerized by fictitious mob bosses rather than the murderous racketeers that that actually run the world—the world of most Americans—the one they imagine is hermetically sealed by the "rule of law."

Recently, it seems that network and cable TV channels have become marinated in prison voyeurism. On one night, MSNBC's "Lockup" airs three solid hours of life behind bars in various state prisons. In ghastly reminiscence of Rome's "Bread and Circuses," we eyeball the antics of human beings whose incarceration insures that the [stocks](#) of Wackenhut and Corrections Corporations of America remain bullish.

Healthy caretakers set limits and model fairness. To open one's eyes to the reality that the United States government is one of the most corrupt on earth is to risk the anguish of feeling unimaginably violated and used by a government/family (crime family?) which holds only contempt for its citizen/offspring.

You're as Sick as Your Secrets

One hallmark of a dysfunctional system is secrecy. The Bush administration has been labeled by some members of the media as the most secretive in the nation's history. The mind reels at what information it holds on a plethora of issues that it is not disclosing, but in my opinion, the most egregious is the reality of Peak Oil—an issue of which it has been extremely aware of for a [very long time](#). To be [intimately familiar](#) with the disastrous consequences of the end of the age of hydrocarbon energy, and to do nothing, is heinous criminal negligence. While much alternative media clamors for impeachment, which would be nothing more than a managerial makeover, the sanest and most ethical response *would* be another Nuremberg trial—the arrest and conviction of government officials within and prior to the current administration who have colluded in shrouding the realities of Peak Oil from public awareness, but no institution on earth has the military might, as was the case in Nuremberg, 1946, to force the United States to submit to painfully-overdue international justice. The atrocities ultimately resulting from failure to inform the world of the reality of Peak Oil is unquestionably an international war crime, the casualties of which may well pale by comparison the carnage and sadism we are seeing perpetrated by the U.S. in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in American military gulags throughout the world. *Holocaust* is the only suitable word for such a scenario.

History will indeed record that in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a small group of ruling elite in the most powerful nation on earth, which consumed the largest amount of hydrocarbon energy on the planet, were well aware of a natural phenomenon called Peak Oil, and knowing full well the catastrophic consequences of that phenomenon, they bunkered their own homes with solar panels and infinite quantities of food and water, yet failed to disclose information vital to the health and safety of all life forms worldwide and the ecosystems themselves.

Any caring parent, aware that a tornado was approaching and about to obliterate his/her home and family, would inform the children as quickly as possible, gather them immediately, and take them to a safe location. To move oneself to safety and leave one's children fending for themselves is nothing less than criminal neglect, indeed manslaughter. But the "children" (citizens) of

America who may have some inkling of energy depletion and its consequences, blithely assume that the election of a new “mommy” or “daddy” president in 2008 will make everything “all better.” Like so many neglected children placed in foster homes, those citizens may get a new “parent” in 2008, but it will be another neglectful one, equally invested in guarding the secret that an energy holocaust is rapidly approaching—equally committed to his or her own political and economic well-being at the expense of the innocents.

Don't Go There

I am convinced that one's personal family history plays heavily in how deeply one can look into the black maw of evil that now runs this nation. As I have stated in earlier writings, during the last four years, I have repeatedly encountered hundreds of individuals who simply cannot assimilate, let alone investigate, the voluminous research regarding September 11, 2001. Frequently, they confess that they simply do not want to know that their government [orchestrated the attacks](#) that murdered 3,000 people in one day. They freely admit that they cannot bear the possibility that their government annihilated its own citizens, nor can they tolerate the sense of powerlessness they feel in relation to that possibility. Some individuals will never be able to dig deeper than the official story; others will be able to do so, but slowly, gradually, as the layers of their psyche absorb the anomalies that not only linger, but grow more blatantly incongruous with every passing day.

Some individuals may be able to open up to U.S. government orchestration of 9-11 by way of the Hollywood personalities who are currently raising unanswered questions about the event, but the hoopla is not likely to be more than a blip on the radar screen of America's institutionalized *National Enquirer* journalism, and the issues being raised are more apt to be rationalized and magically “explained” away like so much of the hard evidence around the JFK assassination was. I would like to be wrong about that, but history suggests otherwise.

Mommy and Daddy and the National Melodrama

True to his scathing cynicism, James Howard Kuntsler in, [Mommy And Daddy](#), says that “Politics is the way we work out our collective national psychology,” and that “American politics have fallen into a gothic family melodrama, and the theme is the same one being played out on the micro level all over the country: failed parenting.” Kuntsler asserts that the Republicans have made themselves into the Daddy Party, while the Democrats have become the Mommy Party. The Daddy Party is a stern, rigid taskmaster, while the Mommy Party wants everyone to feel good and wants all outcomes to be fair.

While I don't agree with everything in his article, I do agree with Kuntsler's projection that as the Daddy Party becomes more of a terminal failure, more eyes focus on the Mommy Party and its dazzling “supermom,” Hillary Clinton, who will most certainly persist in keeping the family secrets and as Kuntsler says, “keep the corporate flywheels spinning, and even look after the family's security from the thugs coming into the ‘hood’.”

Allowing oneself to enter the deeper layers of history and current events is to open oneself to transformation in the depths of one's own psyche. I believe that on some level, we all know this, and our readiness to engage or not engage with realities in the external world, which may alter the internal, calibrates our individual degrees of denial.

Carl Jung once said that human beings cannot bear too much reality. We prefer to assume that our government is incompetent, inept, and wasteful because it is not as excruciating as the reality that we are its next meal. Each day upon awakening, we have the option of continuing to perpetuate this delusion, or dig deeper. While the incompetent/inept/wasteful fantasy “feels” better, it is ultimately more dis-empowering, for as Larry Clow writes in his fabulous [System Breakdown](#) article, “...the thought of a malicious government that's actively out to manipulate us is an enemy we can fight, which is somewhat more comforting than the alternative—a series of bungling, incompetent institutions that have failed us, and will fail us again, just when we need them the most.” In other words, denial is more soothing, but so is heroin.

Still another way of putting it might be: Ignorance is bliss—until it kills you.

THE NIGHT OF THE GENERALS

by

Stan Goff

Military/ Veterans Affairs Editor

Achilles is given a clear choice. He is told that he carries two destinies:

“If I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,/my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;/but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,/the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be long life/left for me, and my end in death will not come quickly.”

The primacy of honor is memorialized in Achilles' choice to stay and fight. The conflict between what the hero must do for honor as opposed to even life itself is replicated in other ways in the hero's situation.

In the role of the hero, one finds the prelude to the tensions and conflicts that structure the polis at later centuries. The political community as a community exists only on the battlefield, where the collective good of the community can be the primary concern of the hero. The community both sustains and provides for the warrior-hero and sends him to possible death...the warrior-hero experienced the conflict between the collective good as an end in itself, and as an instrument of his own glory and honor. The highest good for the warrior-hero is not, as Socrates/Diotoma point out in the Symposium, a quiet conscience, but the enjoyment of public esteem, and through this esteem, immortality.

-from *Money, Sex, and Power – Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism*, by Nancy C. M. Hartsock (Northeastern University Press, 1985)

April 25, 2006 1000 PST – (FTW) – **O**verdetermination:

It means that one should never seek only one, linear cause-and-effect that produces any phenomenon. There are multiple forces working in multiple directions that fold into every moment – even historical ones, like weather patterns that result in storms.

Exempting the weird and slippery Wesley Clark, whose presidential pretensions long ago led him to “critique” the Bush administration, and Eric Shinseki—who was Rumsfeld's first object lesson

on dissent—there is now a new conspiracy of generals who are circling around Rumsfeld, and through him, to Caesar Texanious himself. They include retiring Generals Zinni, Newbold, Swan-nack, Riggs, Batiste, and Eaton.

The Generals' rebellion is unprecedented, precisely because the rapidity of the collapse of the Bush administration is unprecedented. The walls are tumbling down.

Even Oberstgruppenführer Peter Pace, when ostensibly defending the embattled Sec-Def, couldn't resist backhanding Rummy for his treatment of General Eric Shinseki in the early hours of the war.

The commentary about this is so omnipresent it has created a chattering vortex. Alas, I am being sucked irresistibly in, because a point has been missed.

Is it the clannishness of the Generals? Are they still pissed off at how Archduke Donald dissed them at every meeting, at how he treated their fraternity-brother, Shinseki—when Sir Eric told Rumsfeld (in his roundabout, diplomatic way) that his network-centric warfare doctrine was a half-baked lunacy?

Is it the progress of the Fitzgerald investigations, methodically trenching their way toward the White House like Giap's foot-soldiers digging their way into the perimeter of Dien Bien Phu? Do they see that when this edifice falls, the investigations into Abu Ghraib and Bucca and Haditha and Fallujah will suddenly cast the nets much more widely than one demoted (female!) General and a handful of enlisted people? Are the Generals preparing to tie Rumsfeld, and perhaps even Gonzalez with him, to a sacrificial stake?

Is it because they are seeking allies among the Democrats as that other shithouse burns? Do they need someone to watch their collective political back? At least some of the Democrats have been sufficiently frightened—committed imperialists that they are—that the lunatic fringe of the administration might decide on the diplomatic-suicide-bombing of an attack against Iran.

It is all these things. It is overdetermined. But there is one overarching reason, and that reason itself has a dual character. The US is losing the war.

No doubt many of them, including General John Vines (the gadfly still working at CENTCOM who has repeatedly warned that the insurgency is large and it is Iraqi), really believe the war was winnable, if only...always be alert when you hear that retrojected conditionality...if only "we" had sent in 500,000 instead of 130,000, if only we hadn't cashiered the Ba'athist troops, if only those prison photos hadn't gotten out, if, if, if.

If only a frog had wings, it wouldn't bump its ass every time it hops. But frogs don't have wings, and this war was *never* winnable, under any circumstances. "We" don't get to decide that. The Iraqis do, and they *have*.

The question of win-ability, which the Generals and their new pals in the Democratic Party continually raise is a smokescreen, even for those who deploy it to delude themselves.

I personally know David Grange, CNN military expert, retired General. We drank and debauched together when I was at Delta. We spotted each other in the weight room. My team trained him when he came to the unit. He was my Squadron Commander, and later my regimental commander at 75th Rangers.

Dave is now tentatively joining the chorus. His father was once the most decorated General in the Army.

I'll use Dave Grange to make my point about the twofold character of this Night of the Generals, and its relation to losing the war because Dave did not participate in this one, except as a spokesperson, as a television personality who put on oh-so-serious masculine airs and repeated mindless mantras about strategy and tactics to a guileless audience in order to paint the slaughter as a contest instead of a conquest.

So why should *he* care; and why should *he* join this chorus? He is not under the gun if Geneva gets dusted off. He can't be blamed for the defeat of the world's most expensive killing apparatus by "sandal-clad barbarians." What obliges him to jump into this new, flame-retardant shithouse?

The answer to that is revealed inside the twofold character of this rebellion.

The first aspect of this Janus is referenced by Hartsock in the lead-quote. Neither Grange, nor the other Generals, are in it for the money...at least most of them aren't. CEOs make 400 times what workers do, but Generals barely make 14 times what a Private does. Nor are they in it, as Hartsock says, for "a quiet conscience."

They are seeking "public esteem, and through this esteem, immortality." They grew up with the history of kings and generals—as we all did; and Grange lived with a highly esteemed General; and this was their collective aspiration. There is a little boy in them all that wants to be the warrior-hero. And the public perception of them—critically important to the whole enterprise of war in this post-modern epoch where heroic spectacles have to be created as overwriting narratives to conceal the banality of evil—is a perception that they will all retain or lose, together.

Losing or winning, as Achilles' tale points out, is not the issue for the warrior, but having fought for the polis: "*...the warrior-hero experienced the conflict between the collective good as an end in itself, and as an instrument of his own glory and honor.*"

In modern imperial warfare, the hero is a mere cipher for the public imagination. That the Generals seek after it makes it no less imaginary. Colin Powell never experienced this conflict, because he has always seen himself first as a cunning bureaucrat—and in war he wanted nothing less than to prove anyone's manhood. Avoid conflict when you can, he said, and when you can't, go in big. Be the bully, or stay home. Not being European, perhaps we are less enamored of feudal warrior myths, their feats of derring-do.

Modern conventional war is deeply and inescapably bureaucratic. Bureaucracies don't require heroes. They require yes-men and yes-women. And at some gut level, people know that this is the antithesis of heroism.

In the superlative film, *Thin Red Line*, there is a scene where an aging Colonel (played by Nick Nolte) blurts out to a subordinate, "I've eaten buckets of shit to get here. You're only 23, and you already have your war. I may never get another chance."

All these Generals signed on. Including Dave Grange. Every last one of them ate shit, in co-signing this war. If they knew something was wrong, they didn't say a word until it was too late. Grange got on CNN and cheer-led the whole thing, while the news-models drooled all over him..."Oh, thank you, General Grange," and he and all the others, when this was still a glorious

war, lapped that shit up like dehydrated Bassett hounds. They thought they could have their bureaucratic cake and eat their hero cake...but it was the same cake, and it had a name and a people: Iraq.

So Rumsfeld will be the conceited civil authority who stabbed them all in the back, and with his sacrifice they can all be restored.

They are engaged in this little conspiracy for the same reason people whisper bargains at the sky in the back pews of churches. The night is long and dark indeed. They are trying to salvage their immortality.

PORTER GOSS SUDDENLY RESIGNS FROM CIA – A SIMPLER EXPLANATION

by
Michael C. Ruppert

May 9, 2006 0700 PST – (FTW) - **M**y inbox is flooded with all kinds of speculation about why Porter Goss suddenly resigned as CIA Director last weekend. Most of it centers around poker games, connections to influence peddling, corruption, and an alleged feud between Goss and National Intelligence Director John Negroponte.

Maybe. But I'm not sold. Goss's resignation has, in just hours, been tied to everything except for the imminent prosecution of former Cheney Chief of Staff Lewis "Scooter" Libby, for the leaks in the Valerie Plame case.

But this is not the first time in recent memory that a CIA Director has stepped down suddenly. The last DCI to resign suddenly did so for reasons that may be exactly the same as the ones that compelled Goss to go.

As *FTW* told you in June of 2004 in our story [Coup D'etat](#), it was highly likely that Goss' predecessor George Tenet resigned suddenly in 2004 so that he would be able to quietly cooperate with the leak investigation surrounding Valerie Plame and secure prosecutions. Sitting Directors of Central Intelligence are exempt from testimony in criminal cases. Former DCIs are not.

As a mounting coup attempt against the Neocons is finally making itself apparent—with Donald Rumsfeld being the first Bush powerhouse under serious fire—a beleaguered administration is preparing for a series of political onslaughts intended to cripple it in time to slow it down from some really stupid moves such as attacking Iran (only one example).

I think it is fairly certain that when the Plame case heats up and goes to trial, George Tenet will be testifying about the Plame leak and the damage it did to Agency morale. During his tenure, Tenet was aggressive about pursuing the leak, and with good reason. He was pissed off and every covert operative in the Directorate of Operations was pissed off too.

Now, with Porter Goss out of office, Goss is free to counter balance Tenet's testimony both at trial and in the press. Two DCIs

take opposite sides in a case, "King's X." To let Tenet alone testify would be way too risky.

I don't think we need to complicate Goss' resignation any further. Goss' job is basically done. He squashed leaks from inside the Agency. He instituted draconian new security measures. He protected Bush's flanks as far as possible.

Now, as both a former DCI and as the previous Chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), Goss can defend Bush and Cheney in public as well.

CIA Chief Goss Quiet on Abrupt Departure

by Jeremy Pelofsky
Reuters
Washington
Saturday, May 6, 2006
<http://tinyurl.com/h8uwj>

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Porter Goss said on Saturday his reasons for abruptly resigning as CIA chief after less than two years would remain a mystery, while the White House denied that President Bush had lost confidence in him.

As Goss left his home Saturday on his way to give a commencement address in Ohio, he declined to explain his resignation, telling CNN that "it's one of those mysteries."

Goss had come under fire inside and outside the agency during a difficult tenure that followed intelligence lapses over Iraq and the September 11 attacks on the United States. Several career intelligence officers left after clashes.

The White House denied a report in the Washington Post that cited senior administration officials as saying that Bush had lost confidence in Goss and had decided to replace him months ago.

"Reports that the president had lost confidence in Porter Goss are categorically untrue," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said as Bush flew to Oklahoma State University to deliver a commencement address. "Porter Goss played a key role in keeping the focus on winning the war on terror and helped transform the agency to meet the challenging times we're living in and the times ahead," she said.

Congressional aides have described growing talk in recent days about unhappiness with Goss, not only with his leadership, but also with reports of connections between CIA executive director Kyle "Dusty" Foggo and a bribery scandal that led to the jailing of former California congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham.

The Washington Post reported that Foggo, whom Goss elevated to the senior post, had attended poker games with a military contractor linked to the Cunningham case.

The CIA inspector general has been investigating Foggo and the newspaper said the probe includes whether he arranged any contracts for the contractor. The Post also reported that Foggo told colleagues he planned to resign next week and he has denied any impropriety.

A CIA spokesman declined to comment.

Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden, principal deputy director of national intelligence, is the leading candidate to replace Goss, according to reports from The New York Times, CNN and Time magazine.

Perino declined to comment on a replacement but said "it certainly will be soon."

The CIA had lost clout when it fell under a director of national intelligence created as part of reforms in response to the intelligence failures.

Tensions between Goss and national intelligence director John Negroponte arose as the new arm sought to assert itself over the CIA, an administration official said on Friday.

The tensions came to a boil when Negroponte decided that many CIA counterterrorism analysts should be moved to the National Counterterrorism Center also created as part of intelligence reforms. Goss objected because he believed that would erode the CIA's capability, an intelligence official said.

Perino said Goss had made "significant steps" to help integrate the CIA into the new structure under Negroponte.

"Then there was a collective agreement that now would be a time we could have a new CIA director come in to take the ball and move the agency forward from here," she said.

[As big solar technology capable of producing many megawatts of energy prepares to hit the market, Mike Kane takes a look at the real-world limitations of Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) installations and the devastating impact that rising commodity prices and energy scarcity will have on the renewable energy industry.]

This is not an indictment of the technology itself, which may be poised to take the #2 spot for viable large-scale renewable energy projects after wind farms. But with the peak of world hydrocarbon production looming the critical question to analyze is whether this technology is capable of mitigating the decline of oil and gas reserves to sustain the destruction known as "economic growth."

The good news is that the answer is no: the bad news is that the answer is no. – FTW]

RENEWABLES

Part Four

BIG SOLAR: Scarcity, Rising Commodity Prices and Reality

by
Michael Kane

March 4, 2006 0700 PST (FTW) - **S**tirling Energy Systems (SES) working in partnership with Boeing has perfected their

Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) technology at Sandia National Laboratories – a Department of Energy lab located in New Mexico operated by Lockheed Martin. At Sandia, six prototypes of the Stirling solar dish currently produce an average of 270 kilowatts (kW) peaking at 900 kW under perfect conditions. President Bush visited this installation last year.¹

The first commercial CSP installation from SES will be installed on 4,500 acres (four square miles) in the Mojave Desert near Victorville, California, feeding electricity to Los Angeles. Construction will begin in 2007 and is scheduled for completion by 2012. If successful, 20,000 dishes will be producing an average of 150 megawatts of energy for Los Angeles.

You may have read claims in the press that this installation will be producing 500 megawatts by 2012, but that is only during peak output. The Stirling solar dish operates at 30% efficiency² (averaging 150 MW). This first installation should be enough to supply an average of 75,000 homes with electricity if successfully completed.³

Is a mere 150 MW by 2012 going to displace much, or any, of the natural gas currently consumed to produce electricity for Los Angeles? Hardly. The state of California consumes nearly 60,000 MW of energy during peak demand and that number grows exponentially every year.⁴ California has an aggressive plan in place attempting to produce 20% of its energy from renewable sources by 2010 and 33% by 2020.⁵

Whether this goal is achievable in terms of real energy or only on paper remains to be seen. The state of California may be talking in terms of peak output, not average output; the same misrepresentation SES is committing in their press releases.

But what is certain is that renewable projects in the Southwest – and throughout the country – are designed to keep up with increased demand as opposed to replacing or phasing out consumption of hydrocarbons. Stirling's website states this explicitly under [Why do we need renewable energy?](#)⁶

To have even a minor impact on Peak Oil and Gas without a Powerdown strategy of massive conservation, there would need to be dozens upon dozens of gigantic CSP installations in America. But that can't happen because CSP technology can only produce massive megawatts in desert conditions where there is plenty of sun and open land to sustain the process.

SES boasts that it would take one CSP installation of 100 square miles to produce all of the electricity consumed in the United States, but that is nothing more than wishful thinking used as a public relations tool. This hypothetical installation – which could never possibly exist – would need to be operating constantly at peak output to produce such massive amounts of energy. Since CSP operates at 30% efficiency, this imaginary project could only be counted on for 30% of America's electricity production.

What would such a mammoth installation do to the ecosystem of whatever desert it was installed upon? How would you transport energy from the desert throughout the entire U.S.? The longer the transmission lines transporting the energy, the more energy lost in accordance with the laws of thermodynamics. So there goes CSP's 30% efficiency down the tubes.

Whether or not CSP technology will make a significant dent in

the energy market is questionable, but the limitations of this technology make it impossible to mitigate the coming energy crisis of Peak Oil even when considered in conjunction with the largest renewable energy source available today, wind turbines.⁷ CSP may offer a “benefit” to the Southwest since there is plenty of arid desert land, but if we consider the growing problems this area already has with available fresh water supplies CSP may be a Trojan horse!

Should we continue to supplement over-consumption and exponential growth in a region that is destined for water wars with neighbors? Increasing available energy in the Southwest will bring economic growth, which inevitably intensifies stress on fresh water supplies that are already being utilized at unsustainable rates. Population continues to rise in this region due to over-zealous real estate investors interested solely in the bottom line.

Rising Commodity Costs

It took between 4,920 and 6,000 lbs of aluminum to produce the six dishes currently operating at Sandia National Labs in addition to many other essential commodities. To install 20,000 dishes in the Mojave Desert by 2012, 8,500 to 10,000 tons of aluminum will be needed.⁸ Aluminum, along with many other commodities, has continued to rise in price despite a few short-term losses caused from big money moves by hedge funds.⁹

Gold isn't the only metal skyrocketing in value.

Deutsche Bank's chief metals economist, Peter Richardson, recently stated that zinc and aluminum prices are poised to post the largest gains of all the base metals in 2006.¹⁰ China's demand for aluminum continues to soar which has forced them to announce restrictions on their exports of the metal. They have also cut down their aluminum production to save energy that is needed elsewhere in their economy.¹¹

Demand for oil and gas differs from demand for aluminum in that the latter may be replaceable by a different commodity if necessary. This is rarely the case for hydrocarbons. According to Bob Liden, Vice President and General Manager of SES, the company is looking into using a synthetic polymer in place of aluminum when their solar dishes are commercially deployed. But they are uncertain if this is a realistic solution to high aluminum prices. Synthetic materials are made from oil. This is not a sound solution in a world of rising oil prices.¹²

Those paying attention to Peak Oil have always maintained that it is when demand for hydrocarbons begins to outstrip supply that we will see real problems unfold regardless of when the exact date of Global Peak Oil occurs. There are many real-world factors that can cause oil supply shortages in addition to the geological reality of Peak Oil. An invasion of Iran, Venezuelan disruptions, or another intense hurricane season could do to America what the Soviet Union's collapse did to Cuba.¹³

There is plenty of aluminum in the earth's crust but it is conjoined with many other sediments and minerals making the smelting process extremely energy intensive. Currently there are worries that aluminum smelters will go out of business as they see their profits eroded by high energy costs.¹⁴ If this happens demand for aluminum will outstrip the available supply not because the world is running out of aluminum but because we are running out of cheap energy to refine it.

Venezuela has just announced it will not export even one pound of aluminum by 2012.¹⁵ Chavez seems to fully understand what Peak Oil will mean for his country. Building infrastructure to smelt aluminum at home is a form of re-localization for Venezuela and recognition that globalization will die with the coming peak in global hydrocarbon production. Chavez can't be the only world leader to realize this. If other heads of state follow through with similar declarations, global commodity markets will see even higher prices.

The global supply of aluminum has been extremely tight and as energy prices rise it is unlikely that there will be a glut of this metal anytime soon. FTW has previously reported on China's commodity buying binge over the last two years. Ultimately Peak Oil is going to send commodities on a seemingly endless climb upward: real goods will gain value while paper wealth such as stocks, bonds, and fiat currencies lose value.

A similar point was recently raised by *The NY Times* regarding commodities:

"We're going through a long-term recovery from stupid oversold levels," said Fred Sturm, who manages the Ivy Global Natural Resources fund. "Prices of many of these commodities were unsustainably low." In the late 1990's and early 2000's, he pointed out, gold and oil traded at nearly 20-year lows after having fallen by more than two-thirds.

The depressed prices helped to force commodity producers to merge — Alcoa and Reynolds in aluminum, for example, and Exxon and Mobil in energy — and to take other steps to improve their finances. That drove the first move in what he expects to be a three-stage rally in commodity markets.

The last stage, he predicted, will be "a true scarcity phase when Mother Nature slaps us in the face and grabs our attention and tells us we're running out of commodities like oil when people keep wanting more."

But that's well in the future, Mr. Sturm said.¹⁶
[emphasis added]

How close are we to a “true scarcity phase” for commodities? The answer to that is directly correlated to the scarcity of the most important commodity of all, oil, which Fred Sturm seems to believe is “way off in the future” despite [substantial amounts of data that suggests otherwise](#).

To produce, process and refine commodities you need abundant and ever-growing reserves of energy. Once those reserves stop growing (Peak Oil and Gas) demand will outstrip supply, energy prices will rise, and the cost of all other commodities will follow upward.

Ironically it is this phenomenon that has sparked the recent boom in renewable energy. Rising oil and gas prices have made renewable energy competitive with traditional energy sources, but that does not change the fact that renewable infrastructure requires oil and gas to be produced, shipped, built and maintained. Whether

we like it or not, oil and gas are fundamental to renewable energy.

Hedge Funds

But the economics does not end there – enter the casino.

Hedge Funds are a way to leverage money or protect money within the never-ending growth paradigm of global capitalism. February saw drops in commodity prices because many hedge funds pulled out of their long positions to liquidate profits.¹⁷

Let's use one commodity as an example: gold. In the first week of February gold hit \$570 an oz. before funds pulled out of the yellow metal,¹⁸ bringing the price down as low as \$540 for a short time before bouncing up to \$563 by the end of the month. When funds buy and sell commodities they are trading paper securities, not the physical commodity itself (such transactions are known as derivatives). And when they buy large amounts of these securities it has a big impact that blurs the true fundamentals of the market by increasing volatility. Fund managers love market volatility since they can make fast money on both rising and falling prices.

What is truly amazing is that most of these funds are fully automated, requiring no human input when making the decision to buy or sell. The automated systems detected market signals that triggered a massive sell-off in gold. Once one system started to sell many more funds joined in simultaneously. This trend in-and-of itself was enough to cause gold to drop in price, and thus we saw \$570 drop to \$540.

But the drop was only temporary. In today's gold market it was seen as nothing more than a momentary blip on the radar screen. When these macro funds sold their holdings in gold, traders (real, live people) who buy and sell based on market fundamentals bought gold at the depressed price because demand for gold is insatiable. This set off another set of market signals that caused the very same automated funds to start buying the commodity they just sold. As gold rises higher in value we will see more of this volatility with quicker turnaround.¹⁹

In "[The Big Dipper](#)," Dan Norcini does an excellent job of describing how this phenomenon is triggered and what it looks like in the rearview mirror for both gold (a precious metal) and copper (a base metal).²⁰

When big funds move big money they send waves throughout the market making it difficult to see what trends will be long or short term. But most analysts agree that there is money to be made by investing in commodities this year and beyond.²¹ Catherine Austin Fitts, former Secretary of HUD during the George H. W. Bush administration and resident *FTW* economic guru, has said, "2006 will be a good year for commodities."

But she cautions that those who don't know what they're doing could be taken for suckers if they carelessly throw their money into the casino. Market volatility performs a unique magic trick with the novice investor's money – *now you see your money, now you don't*.

Regardless of what happens within the casino this year the bottom line is clear: exponential growth cannot continue in a finite world racing toward Peak Oil. Once the demand for hydrocar-

bons starts to outstrip supply we will see long-term price increases in all real goods (commodities) as paper wealth decreases. A quick review of the mainstream news reports referenced in the endnotes of this report shows this trend is happening now.

Securing commodities for massive renewable energy projects will be competitive and expensive and may not be profitable. In such a reality, how many CSP installations will be built? The American military-industrial-complex may ultimately have the final say in the matter since they have funded much of the R&D.

These installations hold absolutely no hope of mitigating the coming energy crisis. There is no free lunch – over-consumption cannot continue and we need to stop desperately praying that it can. To continue doing so is delusional, dangerous, destructive and gluttonously selfish.

Renewable energy works very nicely within sustainable systems, but not within a suicide-economy of exponential growth and over-consumption.

**Special thanks to Dmitry Podborits for inspiring the research into aluminum and commodities as they relate to renewable infrastructure. Good call!*

¹ http://stirlingenergy.com/breaking_news_photos.htm

Scroll down to see pictures of President Bush being shown the CSP prototypes at Sandia National Laboratories.

² Will Wade, "Huge Solar Plants Bloom in the Desert," *Wired*, November 15, 2005 <http://www.wired.com/news/planet/0,2782,69528,00.html>

³ Paul Sharke, "Sun Rises on Big Solar," *Design News*, January 1, 2006 http://stirlingenergy.com/news/Stirling_Energy_Joyce_Design%20News.pdf

This report says the first CSP installation from SES will provide 250,000 homes with electricity when operating at peak capacity of 500 MW. Since the technology operates at 30% efficiency, it is far more accurate to state that the installation should provide 75,000 homes with electricity on average.

⁴ California's Electricity Situation: Summer 2005, Prepared by the staff of the: California Energy Commission, California Public Utilities Commission, California Independent System Operator, February 22, 2005 http://www.energy.ca.gov/electricity/2005_summer_forecast/2005-02-22_SENATE_PRESENTATION.PDF

⁵ Energy Action Plan II, IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP FOR ENERGY POLICIES California Energy Commission, California Public Utilities Commission, September 21, 2005 http://www.energy.ca.gov/energy_action_plan/2005-09-21_EAP2_FINAL.PDF

⁶ http://stirlingenergy.com/why_do_we_need.htm

⁷ Michael Kane, "Renewables Part 1," *FTW*, March 18, 2005 <http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/>

⁸ These numbers come from a brief phone interview with Bob Liden, VP and General Manager of SES, who said each individual dish uses over 8,000 lbs of aluminum but “no more than 1000 lbs.” When asked how much aluminum went into each dish, Liden’s first response was, “That’s a good question.”

⁹ Chanyaporn Chanjaroen, “Commodities: Hedge funds ditch aluminum, dragging metals down,” *Bloomberg News*, February 16, 2006 <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/02/15/bloomberg/bxcom.php>

¹⁰ Tan Hwee Ann, “Commodity Strategists: Zinc, Aluminum to Gain, Deutsche Says,” *Bloomberg News*, January 19, 2006 <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000100&sid=aoyVkeTrD4yU&refer=germany>

¹¹ Xiao Yu, “Aluminum May Rise as China Seeks to Cut Power Demand,” *Bloomberg News*, December 8, 2006 <http://quote.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000006&sid=aQVgLHMrbCuU&refer=home>

¹² When I attended the second Renewable Energy Finance Forum last year ([REFF – Wall St.](#)) the rising cost of wind turbines was discussed repeatedly. While an increase in demand was one factor driving up prices, so was the rising cost of commodities that went into producing the turbines. As commodities increase in value the renewable energy industry as a whole will feel the pressure.

¹³ Cuba experienced their own Peak Oil when the Soviet Union collapsed drastically cutting Cuba’s oil supply. But Cuba is a shining light of hope for what the world *could* look like Post-Peak if local communities so choose. Will American choose as wisely when our turn comes?

See: **Cuba – A Hope**, by Dale Allen Pfeiffer for detailed information on Cuba’s inspiring transition: http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/120103_korea_2.html

¹⁴ Jon Nones, “Aluminum Prices Continue to Rally,” *Resource Investor*, February 3, 2006 <http://www.resourceinvestor.com/pebble.asp?relid=16737>

¹⁵ “Venezuela to phase out aluminum exports,” *Associated Press*, February 1, 2006 http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D8FGGNAO1.htm?campaign_id=apn_home_down&chan=db

¹⁶ Conrad De Aenlle, “Have Commodities Become the New Tech Stocks?” *New York Times*, February 5, 2006 <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/business/yourmoney/05comm.html>

re-published here: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/business/markets-ride-commodities-to-the-top/2006/02/10/1139542404904.html>

¹⁷ Kevin Andrusiak, “Hedge fund hijinks play havoc with base metal prices,” *The Australian*, February 11, 2006

http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,18106846%255E643,00.html

James Regan, “Commodities markets sink as funds cut positions,” *Reuters*, February 13, 2006,

http://za.today.reuters.com/news/NewsArticle.aspx?type=businessNews&storyID=2006-02-13T070736Z_01_ALL325710_RTRIDST_0_OZABS-MARKETS-COMMODITIES-20060213.XML

Martin Hayes, “Metals battered as speculators cash in profits,” *Reuters*, February 13, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=1612003>

¹⁸ Ibid endnote 9:

“It may well be that the stalling in the gold price rally over the last few days reflects a slowing in inflows into the various exchange-traded funds,” said Alan Williamson at HSBC in London.

Gold for April delivery fell \$6.20 to \$542.70 on the New York Mercantile Exchange. “There is some classic, typical profit-taking going on,” said Christoph Eibl at Tiberius Asset Management in Zug, Switzerland.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/02/15/bloomberg/bxcom.php>

¹⁹ Increased market volatility in this form is precisely what occurs before a market collapse, as pointed out in a recent University of Tokyo study.

http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/022006_world_stories.shtml#2

http://www.world-science.net/othernews/060215_stockfrm.htm

²⁰ Dan Norcini, “The Big Dipper,” *Gold-Eagle.com*, February 10, 2006 http://www.gold-eagle.com/editorials_05/norcini021006.html

²¹ Meagan Rees, “Commodities the new hedge funds – Credit Suisse,” *IPE.com*, February 16, 2006 http://www.ipe.com/article_default.asp?article=20292

Nick Baker, “Big U.S. investors keep the faith in commodities,” *Bloomberg News*, February 14, 2006 http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v4/sub/MarketingPage?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com%2FServlet%2Fstory%2FLAC.20060214.RWIEN14%2FFTPStory%2FBusi-ness&ord=1141348595138&brand=theglobeandmail&force_login=true

Jim Rogers, who co-founded the Quantum hedge fund with George Soros, is bullish on commodities even as funds were pulling out their money in mid-February. Rogers added that shares (stocks) of raw material producers are overvalued. “Don’t buy the stocks, buy the stuff itself,” says Rogers.

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